

Snapshot: Senior Caregiver Checklist for 2021

Taking care of an aging loved one is a full-time job that we often take on in addition to our careers and family obligations. Despite the challenges, it is a rewarding experience that can bring you closer to a parent or grandparent. But there are many moving parts, and it's often difficult to keep track of everything. Here is a quick rundown of a few issues not to overlook as you begin your new journey as a senior caregiver.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of your family member is your first concern. Whether they are moving in with you or moving into a new home where they can age in place, you want to ensure they have access to community services that can improve their overall health. In Burke, the Burke Adult Center is a great place to visit, and it offers educational activities, as well as a [Meals on Wheels program](#).

You'll also want to ensure that your senior receives their COVID-19 vaccine so that they can enjoy life with less fear. Keep in mind that the vaccine is [provided at no cost](#) and is highly effective at reducing both the transmission and severity of the virus. This is crucial for seniors who tend to be at the highest risk of coronavirus-related complications.

Financial Matters

Next up are your fiduciary duties. When you take on the role of caregiver, you assume many responsibilities, including helping your loved one handle money matters. The Law Offices of Stimmel, Stimmel, & Roeser explains that [assuming these duties](#) means you must provide the highest care of devotion and goodwill. To act on their behalf in the most responsible way possible, you'll have to first determine their financial situation so that you can make decisions on their behalf.

To get a better idea of your loved one's finances, start by checking their bank balance and calculating any incoming funds they have available each month, such as Social Security, annuities, or a pension. This will help you get a better idea of how much money is available should your loved one need long-term care in a residential community environment. Unfortunately, you'll need to also be prepared to make tough decisions, such as selling your loved one's home to pay for their continuing care.

If you do find that you have to sell a family home, start by hiring a realtor and then doing your research to determine [how much profit](#) they can expect to extract from the home when it sells. While your loved one (and perhaps even other family members) may not agree with the decision to sell a long-held family home, they may ultimately feel relieved that they no longer have that obligation and expense hanging over their heads. Selling now also means you and your family will not have to come together during the highly emotional event of their death [to sort through](#) years' worth of personal belongings.

Emotional Support

As a caregiver, you are also responsible for ensuring that the emotional needs of your elderly or disabled family member are taken care of. You will need to figure out how to plan for socialization opportunities, which are exceedingly crucial for seniors who, universally, [suffered intense loneliness](#) during the pandemic.

Your loved one may also need assistance making the transition from being independent to either living with you or moving to a care facility. Senior Advice cautions that they might feel [angry](#) and even lash out at you and other family members. Because of this, you may also require emotional support so that you do not get overwhelmed with feelings of guilt. Remember, anger and frustration are typically only short-lived.

As a senior caregiver, it is now your responsibility to make decisions on behalf of someone who did the same for you as a child. It's a big job that requires a lot of learning along the way. Start your caregiving journey by focusing on health, wellness, finances, and emotional support, and the rest will fall into place no matter how many struggles you encounter along the way.

*Visiting Burke for the first time? Make sure to visit [The Almanzo Wilder Homestead](#), which is famed as the location cited in the book *Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder.*



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