

# Moving a Senior Into Your House? Make Sure Home Isn't a Parent Trap

*Summary: The increasing number of seniors now living under the same roof with at least one other generation is more than just political news. According to a recent survey conducted for the international caregiving company Home Instead Senior Care, 43 percent of adult caregivers in the U.S. ages 35 to 62 live with the parent, stepparent or older relative for whom they or someone else in their household provides care.<sup>1</sup>*

Omaha, NE (PRWeb) June 19, 2009 -- It's a trend that's sweeping the nation, from Pennsylvania Avenue to Main Street USA. When President Obama's mother-in-law, Marian Robinson, settled in with her family in Washington earlier this year, they became part of a growing national trend.

The increasing number of seniors now living under the same roof with at least one other generation is more than just political news. According to a recent survey conducted for the international caregiving company Home Instead Senior Care, 43 percent of adult caregivers in the U.S. ages 35 to 62 live with the parent, stepparent or older relative for whom they or someone else in their household provides care.<sup>1</sup>

That's why it's important that home is a safe haven for older adults and not a parent trap. According to the Home Safety Council, which observes Home Safety Month in June, falls are among the leading causes of home injuries. "What's more, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons reports that one in every three Americans older than

65 experiences a fall, making it the leading cause of injuries to seniors,” said Home Instead Senior Care Co-Founder and CEO Paul Hogan. “So that’s a notable statistic for anyone who is living with a senior loved one.”

Adult children who move a senior into their home, or who move into a senior’s home, should ensure that their loved ones are safe by conducting a physical inventory with an eye toward safety and comfort, according to Dan Bawden CGR, CAPS, GMB, owner of Legal Eagle Contractors in Houston and the founder of the Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) program for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Bawden worked with Home Instead Senior Care to offer these suggestions for quick fixes and affordable remodeling projects to help make a home safer if you’re living with a senior:

1. **Falls** – Seniors may be vulnerable to falls, particularly on or near stairs. To make a home safer, remove area rugs on and near the top and bottom of stairs. Make sure railings are on both sides of the stairs. Cost to add railing on one side: between \$200 and \$300.
2. **Security** – Osteoporosis changes the height of some seniors, making it difficult for them to look through a door’s peephole. Why not add an additional, lower peephole to your front door for about \$40.
3. **Tripping** – Changes in floor height between a hallway and the bedroom door entry can be a tripping hazard. A wood transition strip can be installed to even out the difference for a cost of about \$100.

4. **Entry Hazards** – Seniors coming to the front door with groceries or other packages may be at risk of dropping their merchandise or, even worse, falling. Family members or a contractor can construct a shelf on the outside of the house on which to set keys and packages. Shelves and brackets can be purchased at home improvement stores. Cost for materials and installation, about \$75.
5. **Burns** – Older adults with mobility issues can be vulnerable to cooking accidents. Ovens on the market now open from the side, making it easier for someone in a wheelchair or with a walker. Cost is between \$800 and \$1,000.
6. **Lighting** – Macular Degeneration and other eye issues can make older adults susceptible to vision problems. Recessed lighting – four lights placed about four feet from the corners of the ceiling – provides excellent bedroom light for older adults. Cost installed: about \$150 per light fixture or \$600 for a bedroom.

Home Instead Senior Care's comfort and safety program is part of the company's Too Close for Comfort? public education campaign, which also addresses the emotional and financial aspects of intergenerational living. At the center of the campaign is a handbook, available to download from the Web site [www.makewayformom.com](http://www.makewayformom.com).

The Web site provides additional support and information, including a virtual tour of an intergenerational home where visitors can hear from a real family and see firsthand how they've adapted their home.

*For room-by-room suggestions to make your home senior-friendly, visit [www.makewayformom.com](http://www.makewayformom.com).*

*1. Survey Methodology: The Boomer Project (www.boomerproject.com) completed online interviews with 1,279 U.S. adult caregivers, ages 35-62, with a parent, stepparent or older relative for whom they or someone in their household provides cares. Of the 1,279 family caregivers interviewed, 548 live with the senior receiving care.*

For more information about the challenges and benefits of intergenerational living

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