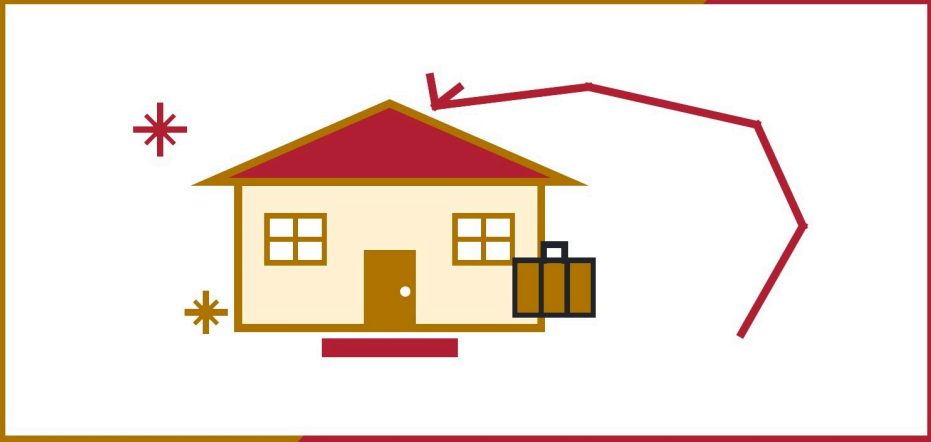
A PLAYFUL GUIDE TO ADULT KIDS MOVING HOME

Boomerang Proof

A Playful Guide to Adult Kids Moving Home



Large print • Plain language • Zero judgement

John Marshall

PROUDLY CANADIAN



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FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

By John Marshall

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A NEW CHAPTER

The Nest Isn't Empty After All

You spent years picturing quiet mornings and a spare room for guests. Then your adult child called, and suddenly the nest is full again. This book is about making the full house work — with warmth, laughter, and a few rules everyone can live with.



1. **You are not alone** Across Canada, more adult children are moving home — between jobs, after breakups, saving for a down payment. In Toronto and Vancouver especially, rent prices have turned the family home into the smartest option in town.
2. **This can be wonderful** Shared meals, help around the house, grandkids down the hall. Plenty of families look back on this chapter as one of the best.
3. **It needs a plan** Love alone does not run a household. The families who thrive are the ones who talk things through early — kindly, but honestly.
4. **Start here** Read this book with a highlighter and a sense of humour. Then have the kitchen-table chat in chapter 3 before the boxes are even unpacked.

Good to know: The kids have a name for this: the 'boomerang.' They left, they flew, and the economy threw them right back. It is not failure — it is arithmetic.

Take care: This book is a friendly guide, not a rulebook. Every family is different; take what fits yours and leave the rest.

> **A familiar moment:** When Karen's son moved back to her Calgary bungalow at 29, she cried for a week — then realized she had missed his laugh at the dinner table. 'The empty nest was quieter,' she says. 'It was also lonelier than I admitted.'

THE WARM WELCOME

Say Yes With Your Whole Heart

If they are moving in, mean it. A reluctant yes — the sighing, the martyred looks — poisons the whole arrangement before it starts. Welcome them like you mean it, or have an honest talk about why you cannot.

Welcome › Agree › Settle › Enjoy

1. **Check your own heart first** Are you saying yes from love, or from guilt? From joy, or from fear of looking like a bad parent? Only one of those lasts.
2. **Say it out loud** 'We are glad you are here.' Those five words cost nothing and buy months of goodwill. Say them on day one.
3. **Welcome the situation, not just the person** They may arrive embarrassed, stressed, or heartbroken. Greet the circumstance with grace: 'Tough break. We will figure it out together.'
4. **Set the emotional thermostat** Your attitude sets the house temperature. Warm and matter-of-fact beats anxious hovering or cold politeness every time.

Good to know: Adult children often feel like failures for moving home. Your warm welcome is the fastest cure — it tells them this is a smart plan, not a defeat.

Take care: Do not say yes if you truly cannot afford it — financially or emotionally. A resentful yes helps no one. See the money chapters first.

> **A familiar moment:** Doug, 68, met his daughter at the door of his Ottawa home with a goofy 'Welcome home, kiddo' banner. 'She laughed until she cried,' he says. 'Best twelve dollars I ever spent at the dollar store.'

THE FIRST MEETING

The Kitchen Table Summit

Before the first box is unpacked, sit down together — coffee, no phones — and talk through how the house will run. This one conversation prevents about eighty per cent of future arguments. Have it early, while everyone is still being polite.

Welcome › Agree › Settle › Enjoy

1. **Pick a calm moment** Not during the move, not after a long drive. A quiet evening in the first few days, when everyone is rested and fed.
2. **Cover the big four** Money, chores, privacy, and timelines. You do not need final answers yet — just open every topic so nothing festers.
3. **Let them talk too** Ask what they need: quiet for job hunting? Space to decompress? This is a negotiation, not a coronation.
4. **Write down what you agree** Even a page of notes on the fridge beats perfect memory. 'We said dishes rotate' ends more fights than it starts.

Good to know: Keep it short — forty-five minutes, tops. You can revisit anything later. The goal is a good start, not a perfect constitution.

Take care: Do not ambush them with a printed list of 47 rules on night one. You are a parent, not a property manager. (More on landlord-free rules in the next pages.)

> **A familiar moment:** The Tremblay family of Winnipeg holds their summit over tourtière. 'We call it the State of the House address,' laughs patriarch Gilles, 71. 'Sounds official, feels like family. The pie helps.'

EXPECTATIONS

House Rules Without the Landlord Vibe

Every shared home needs ground rules — but 'RULE 14: NO LAUNDRY AFTER 21:00' makes people feel like tenants, not family. The trick is expectations that sound like a home, not a lease.

Welcome › Agree › Settle › Enjoy

1. **Frame rules as rhythms** 'We are early risers, so quiet after ten' lands softer than 'NOISE CURFEW 22:00.' Same rule, family voice.
2. **Explain the why** 'The bathroom is shared, so we keep showers to ten minutes' is reasonable. Unexplained rules feel like control.
3. **Keep the list short** Five to seven expectations, maximum. If you need more, the real problem is not the rules.
4. **Agree on consequences kindly** 'If the kitchen is a disaster zone, we will revisit the chore chart' — stated warmly, once, at the summit.

Good to know: The best house rules fit on one fridge page. If yours need a table of contents, simplify.

Take care: Avoid fines and penalties — you are running a home, not a parking lot. Consequences should be conversations, not invoices.

> **A familiar moment:** Margaret, 66, of Victoria, replaced her typed 'HOUSE RULES' sheet with a hand-lettered 'How Our House Rolls.' 'Same content,' she admits. 'But nobody has ever argued with something that looks like a greeting card.'

RESPECT

Remember They're Grown

Your child is twenty-eight, or thirty-five, or forty — not fourteen. The fastest way to wreck this arrangement is to parent them the way you did when they were in high school. Update your mental software: roommate with history, not teenager.

Welcome › Agree › Settle › Enjoy

1. **Drop the interrogation** 'Where were you?' worked at sixteen. At thirty, it starts a fight. Try 'Good evening?' and leave it there.
2. **Advice is by invitation only** Unsolicited career advice, dating advice, and life advice will be received exactly as warmly as it was at nineteen. Bite your tongue; offer help when asked.
3. **Respect their competence** They have held jobs, paid bills, lived on their own. Treat their judgement as real, even when you would choose differently.
4. **Apologize when you slip** 'Sorry, that came out like I was talking to a teenager' goes a remarkably long way.

Good to know: This is the hardest chapter in the book for most parents — and the most important. Reread it monthly.

Take care: Do not confuse 'they are an adult' with 'anything goes.' Respect runs both ways: adults follow house rhythms and contribute.

> **A familiar moment:** After one 'be home by midnight' comment too many, Priya, 34, sat her dad down in their Saskatoon kitchen. 'Dad, I manage a team of twelve,' she said. He laughed, apologized, and never said it again. 'Best talk we ever had,' he admits.

SETTLING IN

The First Week Game Plan

The first week sets the pattern for the whole stay. A little structure now — unpacking, rhythms, one shared meal a day — turns 'guest who never left' into 'housemate who belongs.'

Welcome › Agree › Settle › Enjoy

1. **Unpack within the week** Boxes in the hallway signal 'temporary' and breed resentment. Help them get properly settled — it says 'you live here now.'
2. **Establish one daily ritual** Morning coffee together, an evening walk, dishes side by side. Rituals turn cohabitation into family life.
3. **Learn the rhythms** Who showers when? Who needs quiet mornings? Map it out in week one instead of discovering it through slammed doors.
4. **Check in at day seven** 'How is this feeling for everyone?' A quick, honest chat after one week catches small frictions before they grow.

Good to know: Give them a real key, a drawer, and shelf space in the bathroom from day one. Small territories make a big difference.

Take care: Do not renovate your life around them in week one — no giving up your hobby room 'temporarily.' Temporary has a way of becoming permanent.

> **A familiar moment:** The Kowalskis of Edmonton unpacked their son's boxes together on day two, takeout containers and all. 'It took four hours and we laughed the whole time,' says mom Elaine, 64. 'By dinner, it felt like his room again.'



BOXES AND BOUNDARIES

Their Stuff, Your Space

They arrive with a car full of boxes, a gaming setup, and a kayak. You have a garage that finally fit your car. Negotiating stuff — where it lives, what stays in storage — is really negotiating respect for shared space.

Welcome › Agree › Settle › Enjoy

1. **Assign real territory** A bedroom, closet space, bathroom shelf, and one common-area spot. Named, agreed, theirs.
2. **Cap the sprawl** 'Your things live in your room and the hall closet' is fair. The dining table is not a storage unit.
3. **Talk storage honestly** If the garage cannot hold everything, say so kindly — and help price a small storage locker. In most Canadian cities, a 5x5 unit runs $80–$120 a month.
4. **Revisit seasonally** Stuff creeps. A twice-a-year 'stuff audit' over coffee keeps the creep in check without nagging.

Good to know: Label their boxes by room before the move. 'Kitchen-ish' beats 'miscellaneous' when you are hunting for the coffee maker at 7 a.m.

Take care: Do not throw out, donate, or 'reorganize' their belongings without asking. Their stuff, their call — even the ugly lamp.

> **A familiar moment:** When her daughter's treadmill colonized the living room, Ruth, 70, of Halifax drew a chalk line around it. 'I said, your gym stays inside the chalk.' Her daughter laughed — and the chalk line is still there, two years on. 'It works. Nobody crosses the chalk.'

WARMTH WITH BACKBONE

Kind, Not a Pushover

Kindness is the whole point of this book — but kindness without backbone turns you into the household staff. You can be warm and still hold the line. In fact, the line is what keeps the warmth alive.

Welcome › Agree › Settle › Enjoy

1. **Say no early and kindly** 'I can't cover your car payment this month, love' is easier on day one than after six months of silent resentment.
2. **Discomfort is information** That tight feeling when they leave dishes 'soaking' for three days? That is your boundary knocking. Answer it.
3. **Hold the line once stated** If quiet hours are ten, they are ten — for everyone. Inconsistent rules teach people to test them.
4. **Kindness includes yourself** You matter in this house too. Your sleep, your routines, your peace are not negotiable extras.

Good to know: The parents who burn out are rarely the strict ones — they are the ones who never said what they needed.

Take care: Do not confuse backbone with harshness. 'This isn't working for me' is honest. 'You are so ungrateful' is a wound.

> **A familiar moment:** Frank, 72, of London, Ontario, describes his rule: 'I will do anything for my kids except set myself on fire to keep them warm.' His son has it cross-stitched on a pillow. 'He thinks it is funny. It is also true.'

THE RENT QUESTION

To Charge Rent or Not

The biggest money question, asked first: should your adult child pay rent? There is no single right answer — but there is a wrong one, which is never discussing it and hoping for the best.



1. **Consider their situation** Saving for a down payment? Between jobs? Fresh out of a breakup? The answer can differ — and can change over time.
2. **Consider yours** Can your budget absorb another adult? Be honest: extra groceries, utilities, and wear add up to hundreds a month.
3. **The middle path works well** Many families charge below-market rent — say $400–$600 a month — and quietly bank it as a future down-payment gift. Everyone wins.
4. **Free is fine, if it is chosen** Charging nothing is generous and valid — as long as it is a decision, not an accident, and it comes with other contributions.

Good to know: Whatever you decide, put it in writing — even a simple one-pager. Memories of money conversations are famously creative.

Take care: Do not charge rent as punishment or waive it as a reward for good behaviour. Money rules should be boring and predictable, not emotional.

> **A familiar moment:** The Patels of Mississauga charge their son $500 a month and secretly save every dollar. 'At his wedding we handed him the account,' grins dad Raj, 66. '$14,000 toward his down payment. He cried. We cried. The accountant cried.'

FOOD MONEY

The Grocery Split

Nothing empties a fridge — or a wallet — like an extra adult with an appetite. Groceries are usually the first money friction, and the easiest to solve with a simple, visible system.

Talk › Decide › Write › Review

1. **Pick one system** Three popular ones: split the bill evenly, take turns doing the big shop, or keep a shared grocery fund everyone pays into weekly.
2. **The shared fund is simplest** Each adult puts in, say, $60–$80 a week. One person shops, receipts go in a jar or a phone photo album. No scorekeeping at the till.
3. **Handle the extras** Protein powder, fancy coffee, specialty foods — personal luxuries come from personal wallets. The shared fund covers shared food.
4. **Cook together sometimes** A shared Sunday cook-up feeds everyone for days and turns the grocery bill into family time. Win-win.

Good to know: In Canada, a single extra adult typically adds $250–$400 a month to the grocery bill. Knowing the number makes the conversation easier.

Take care: Do not police every snack. If you are counting their yogurt cups, the system is wrong — fix the system, not the snacker.

> **A familiar moment:** The Gagnons of Quebec City run a 'grocery jar' — everyone drops in $70 every Sunday. 'Whoever shops keeps the change as a tip,' laughs mom Sylvie, 63. 'My son now volunteers to shop. Funny how that works.'

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