

ELDER CARE



Canada's population is aging. Those above the age of 65 now exceed the number of children under the age of 15, and the proportion of seniors is expected to continue growing in the coming decade. As the population ages, we have increasing opportunity and responsibility to invest in effective care for Canada's seniors.

Most Canadians prefer to not enter a long-term care facility until absolutely necessary, and most live in the community until they are 80 or older. Elder care should be focused on ensuring that seniors have and can maintain critical social connections with family or other community groups. Canadian families should be encouraged and enabled to be active participants in the care of their elderly loved ones. This prioritizing of family involvement can be supported by public policy around age-friendly communities: communities with local home care services, adequate respite support for family caregivers, and accessibility to public spaces for seniors with limited mobility.

Not all seniors will be able to age at home even with the support of family, and elder care policy must also address conditions in assisted living or long-term care. Care homes often over-focus on resident safety and under-focus on resident satisfaction. As much as possible, long-term care homes should feel like home, where residents can maintain social connections and have freedom to live their lives in a way that is meaningful to them. Visitor access should always be prioritized, and families should be encouraged to continue being active participants in care for their loved one.

ARPA Canada's policy recommendations focus on supporting elderly Canadians through a holistic system that considers what makes life meaningful to them, whether at home or in long-term care. This includes social supports for family and other caregivers, increased home care services, improved community accessibility, adequate staffing and pay in long-term care homes, and respect for choice in long-term care so that homes can reflect the cultural and religious diversity of Canadians.

For more information about this topic, please refer to our related policy report document. This report can be found on our website at [ARPACanada.ca/publication/elder-care](https://www.arpacanada.ca/publication/elder-care).