

CLOSE, NOT ON TOP OF EACH OTHER

The Multigenerational Living Playbook

Living near family again is one of the most rewarding things people do — and it works best when a few things are agreed on early. This is the playbook for sharing a property with grace: privacy, boundaries, money, and the small rhythms that keep everyone happy.

Two front doors change everything.

For most of human history, families lived within arm's reach. It was normal — grandparents helped raise children, adult kids helped aging parents, and the load of life was shared. Somewhere in the last century we scattered, and paid for it in isolation, childcare bills, and facility costs.

Multigenerational living is simply that old wisdom, redesigned for how we live now: close enough to share the good parts, separate enough to keep our own lives.

The difference between a setup that thrives and one that strains almost never comes down to the building. It comes down to a handful of understandings, reached out loud, early. Here they are.

THE DESIGN PRINCIPLE THAT PREVENTS MOST FRICTION

A separate entrance and a full kitchen aren't luxuries — they're what turn "living with family" into "living near family." Independence you can see and touch is what lets closeness feel like a gift instead of an obligation.

01 Privacy — the thing nobody wants to ask for

Everyone needs it; few say so. Build the understanding before you need it.

Agree on the knock rule. The single most important boundary between two households on one lot: nobody walks into the other home unannounced. A text first, a knock, a "come on over" — pick the norm together and it protects everyone's sense of home.

Protect the separate front door. Each household entering through its own entrance, on its own schedule, is what keeps two homes from becoming one blurred one. It's why KĒĒP designs every family unit with its own private entrance as standard.

Let each space feel like theirs. The ADU isn't "the in-law unit" — it's Mom's home, or your daughter's place. Let whoever lives there decorate, cook, and keep hours as they like. Ownership of the space is ownership of the dignity.

02 The daily rhythm

Small logistics, agreed early, prevent the resentments that build slowly.

☐ Shared vs. separate meals

Will you eat together nightly, weekly, or when invited? There's no right answer — just decide, so nobody's waiting on the other or feeling left out.

- ☐ **The outdoor space**
Who tends the garden, uses the yard, hosts guests? Shared space needs the clearest understanding of all.
- ☐ **Noise and hours**
Early risers and night owls, grandkids and grandparents — a light agreement on quiet hours keeps everyone rested.
- ☐ **Guests and partners**
Each household hosts whom they like, in their own space. Naming it early avoids awkwardness later.

03 Money, kept clean

The clearer the money, the closer the family. Vagueness is what corrodes.

Decide who pays for what — and write it down. Utilities, maintenance, property tax, insurance. Whether costs are shared, covered by one household, or offset by care, put it in a simple written understanding everyone can see. Clarity is kindness.

Value care as real contribution. When a parent watches the grandkids or an adult child handles the yard and errands, that's economic value moving through the family. Acknowledge it. It keeps the ledger feeling fair even when no money changes hands.

Plan the long horizon. What happens to the property in twenty years? Who inherits, who's repaid, who stays? These are easier and warmer conversations to have now than under pressure later. (Guide 02, The Sibling Money Agreement, goes deep on this.)

04 What families gain

When it works — and with these understandings, it usually does — here's the return.

- ≡ Childcare and eldercare shared under one lot, saving both money and the strain of coordinating from across town.
- ≡ Grandchildren who grow up knowing their grandparents as daily presences, not holiday visitors.
- ≡ Aging parents who stay independent and near, instead of alone or in a facility.
- ≡ An asset that stays in the family — and a home that adapts as the family changes.

YOUR FREE NEXT STEP

A home built for closeness starts with a design built around your family. KĒĒP's free 48-hour feasibility assessment shows what fits your lot — private entrance, full kitchen, aging-in-place details, all standard — at a fixed all-in price. Start at keepadu.com.