



Designing a Home for Elders and Persons With Disabilities

A home that works for a grandparent also works for a toddler, a visitor and you in ten years. Planning for every age costs less at the drawing stage than after the house is built.

We are not accessibility specialists for every case, so treat this as a list of things to plan and confirm with your architect and the local rules.

01 Think about the whole day

Walk through a normal day for each person in the house: getting up, bathing, cooking, going out. Note where the steps, doors and corners cause trouble.

Ask which rooms may need to move to the ground floor if someone cannot use stairs.

Ask each person what they find hard today, not just what the rules say. Real habits shape a better plan than a checklist alone. Walking through a normal day shows problems a checklist misses. Example: an elder who can manage the stairs in the morning may struggle at night, so a ground-floor bedroom may be worth planning. Why this works: designing around real habits fixes the problem each person actually has.

02 Doors, floors and bathrooms

Plan once: It is cheaper to leave room for these features now than to cut into walls later.

Wider doors, level thresholds and non-slip floors help wheelchair users, people with walkers and anyone carrying a load. Ask your architect what clear widths and turning space the rules call for.

A bathroom with space for help, blocking in the walls for grab bars later and a shower without a high step can make a big difference. Small details at doors, floors and bathrooms decide whether a person can move on their own. Example: planning blocking in the bathroom wall now lets you add a grab bar later without opening the wall. Why this works: a low-cost provision at the start avoids costly changes when the need appears.

03 Light, switches and reach

Good lighting and switches at reachable heights help people with weak sight or limited reach. Plan for a path from the bedroom to the bathroom that is lit at night.

Lever handles are often easier than round knobs.

Think about nights, rain and power cuts too. A path that is safe in daylight may not be at 2 a.m. Light and reach are about independence at any hour. Example: a lit path from bedroom to bathroom lets

an elder move safely at 2 a.m. without waking anyone. Why this works: a path that works at night works in the day too, so everyone benefits.

04 Rules and standards

The Philippines has an accessibility law that applies to certain buildings. Ask your architect which parts apply to your project and which are simply good practice.

Adopt the standard where you can, even where it is not required.

Where a rule applies, your architect should show it on the drawings so the contractor builds it correctly. Rules set a minimum, and good practice often goes further. Example: your architect can mark accessible features on the drawings so the contractor builds them to the right size. Why this works: a feature shown on the plan is more likely to be built correctly the first time.

05 Plan these early

- 1. A ground-floor bedroom and bathroom.**
- 2. Wider doors and level thresholds.**
- 3. Blocking in walls for grab bars.**

Have a project in mind? Book a free 15-minute consultation.

<https://ramadesignstudio.com/#book> | WhatsApp +63 917 812 6815

Read online: <https://ramadesignstudio.com/design-for-every-age/>