The Harris Family Financial Plan

A sample case study showing how integrated planning turns big life decisions into a clear, confident path forward.

Planning focus: Home upgrade readiness • Retirement confidence • Education funding • Risk protection • Cash-flow clarity

Meet the Family

Michael Harris

- Age: 38
- Date of Birth: June 14, 1988
- Occupation: Self-employed electrician (sole proprietor)
- Health: Good, non-smoker

Sarah Harris

- Age: 36
- Date of Birth: September 2, 1990
- Occupation: Elementary school teacher (OMERS member)
- Health: Good, non-smoker

Children

- Emma — Age 5
- Noah — Age 3

Location: Ontario, Canada **Marital Status:** Married

The Planning Opportunity

Michael and Sarah are a young family balancing career growth, childcare responsibilities, and long-term financial goals. Their current home, purchased in 2018, has served them well, but with two growing children, they are beginning to feel the need for more space. They hope to upgrade to a larger home within the next three to four years.

At the same time, they want to ensure they remain on track for a secure retirement. Sarah's OMERS pension provides a strong foundation, while Michael's self-employment income requires intentional retirement savings and risk management planning. They also want to continue building their children's education fund and strengthen their overall financial resilience.

Why this matters: A financial plan is most valuable when it connects today's decisions to tomorrow's possibilities. For families like the Harris family, that means understanding how a future home purchase, retirement savings, education funding, insurance, and day-to-day cash flow all work together.

Key Planning Areas

1. Home Upgrade Planning

- Estimated Value: $620,000
- Remaining Mortgage: $380,000
- Interest Rate: 4.85% fixed
- Renewal Year: 2027
- Monthly Payment: $2,250

Future Housing Goal

- Purchase a larger home in 3–4 years
- Target Price Range: $850,000–$950,000
- Down payment sourced from existing home equity + ongoing savings
- Planning considerations: land transfer tax, moving costs, potential renovations, mortgage affordability

2. Income & Employment Picture

Sarah (Teacher)

- Annual Salary: $78,000
- Pension: OMERS defined benefit plan
- Contributions: As per OMERS rates
- Career Outlook: Stable employment with incremental increases

Michael (Self-Employed Electrician)

- Net Business Income: $95,000
- CPP: Self-employed contribution rates
- No employer pension
- Long-term goal: Reduce physical workload by age 55

3. Savings, Investments & Education Funding

Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs)

Sarah RRSP

- Adjusted Cost Base (ACB): $36,000

- Fair Market Value (FMV): $42,000
- Annual Contributions: $3,600
- Investment Mix: Balanced (60/40)

Michael RRSP

- ACB: $24,000
- FMV: $28,000
- Annual Contributions: $4,800
- Investment Mix: Growth (75/25)

Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs)

Sarah TFSA

- ACB: $17,000
- FMV: $19,000
- Annual Contributions: $3,000
- Investment Mix: Conservative balanced (50/50)

Michael TFSA

- ACB: $10,000
- FMV: $12,000
- Annual Contributions: $2,400
- Investment Mix: Growth ETF portfolio

Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP)

- Plan Type: Family
- ACB: $8,500
- FMV: $9,500
- Contributions: $200/month
- CESG: Approx. $480/year
- Investment Mix: Target-date education portfolio

Joint Non-Registered Investment Account

- ACB: $14,000
- FMV: $15,500

- Contributions: $300/month
- Investment Mix: Canadian equity ETF + global equity ETF
- Tax Attribution: Michael 60%, Sarah 40%

Emergency Fund

- Balance: $8,000
- Location: High-interest savings account
- Purpose: 3–4 months of essential expenses

What the Financial Plan Helps Answer

Planning Question	How the Plan Creates Clarity
Can we afford a larger home?	Models purchase price, down payment, mortgage renewal, land transfer tax, moving costs, and cash-flow impact.
Are we on track for retirement?	Integrates Sarah's OMERS pension with Michael's RRSP, TFSA, CPP, OAS, and self-employment savings strategy.
How much should we save for education?	Projects RESP contributions, grant opportunities, and the funding gap for future undergraduate costs.
What happens if income is interrupted?	Reviews life insurance, disability coverage, emergency savings, and the unique risks of self-employment.

Home Upgrade Strategy

- Determine affordability of a larger home
- Optimize down payment strategy
- Model mortgage scenarios and interest rate sensitivity
- Plan for transaction costs and cash-flow impact

Retirement Confidence

- Target Retirement Ages:
    - Sarah: 62
    - Michael: 60
- Desired Retirement Income: $80,000/year after tax
- Integrate OMERS pension, CPP, OAS, RRSPs, and TFSAs
- Model early retirement options and bridge benefits

Education Funding

- Continue RESP contributions
- Goal: Fund 50–60% of undergraduate costs for both children

Risk Management

- Life insurance needs analysis
- Disability insurance for Michael
- Review teacher benefits for Sarah

Cash-Flow Optimization

- Manage childcare costs
- Balance home savings with retirement contributions
- Evaluate tax-efficient investment strategies

Why Integrated Planning Matters

This sample case study demonstrates how a comprehensive financial plan brings clarity to complex decisions. By modeling multiple scenarios—home purchase timing, retirement ages, income changes, and investment strategies—families like the Harris's can understand the long-term impact of each choice and move forward with confidence.

For prospective clients, this case study shows the value of looking beyond isolated financial questions. Instead of treating the mortgage, investments, education savings, insurance, and retirement as separate decisions, an integrated plan helps the family understand the trade-offs, prioritize confidently, and make adjustments as life changes.

Ready to see what an integrated financial plan could reveal for your family?
Use this case study as an example of the questions we can model, the trade-offs we can clarify, and the decisions we can help you make with confidence.