

Back

Articles & Guides | Child care | Parents reveal why they regret moving —...

Parents reveal why they regret moving — or not moving — closer to family

Six moms share how they struggled to decide whether to move closer to family for support and child care.



Emily Starbuck Gerson

May 18, 2023



Centuries ago, we lived in [multi-family, multi-generational villages](#) where everyone pitched in with everything — from caregiving to cooking. That’s a far

distance may feel freeing. But after having kids, some couples find the isolation and lack of familial support difficult, especially if they struggle to find a community they can rely on for [child care](#). These challenges lead some parents to consider [moving](#) closer to relatives. But living near family members is not always what it's cracked up to be. In some cases, a move has led to parents to regret moving closer to family.

We spoke to six parents who struggled with deciding whether to move closer to family for more support. Four of those we interviewed ultimately decided against moving while two others took the leap. Here, these real parents share whether they regret moving — or not moving — closer to family and the lessons they've learned along the way.

1. Pandemic childcare challenges made me long for family closeby

Name and location: Meghan M., Boston

Parent of: One son, 5 years old

Why I have regrets:

I am from New Jersey, and, over recent years, have [wished to move] back there, closer to family. When my son was 2 months old, [my husband and I] began seeking child care. While we worked with some [amazing nannies](#), we faced many challenges finding reliable care.

We eventually found our groove with a day care until March 2020. We were fortunate to keep our jobs, which meant taking care of a 2-year-old while working. [Day care](#) eventually reopened, but we faced challenges with closures due to COVID exposures.

Now that our son is in public school, we have had some new stressors, like when our work schedules conflict with school pick-up and frequent sick days. We have had a hard time finding reliable [date night and weekend babysitters](#) who are trustworthy and don't cancel last-minute or show up late.

I have found myself packing up and visiting my NJ family more frequently. It can take six hours to get there, but it feels like a true rest to have them surround him with love and support while I get work done. My sister's kids are older, and they can spend hours playing with my son.



I feel like I can let my guard down and don't need to check in every 15 minutes. I am sure there would be plenty of challenges if we had moved there, but when I visit, I don't want to leave.

What I've learned:

I've somewhat learned to just let things go, but this is something I am still working on. With my husband and I doing it all, all the time, I have had to let go of a picture of perfect parenting I might have had before. There's plenty of takeout and screen time, and our house might be in disarray at times, but our son is still thriving, healthy, happy, social and so much fun.

“I have found myself packing up and visiting my NJ family more frequently. It can take six hours to get there, but it feels like a true rest to have them surround him with love and support while I get work done.”

— MEGHAN M., A MOM OF ONE FROM BOSTON

2. Unexpected single parenthood made me wish I wasn't so far away

Name and location: Shakira J., military base in Suffolk, United Kingdom

Parent of: One-year-old boy

Why I have regrets:



single mother alone in a different country as an active duty military member.

My leadership offered to put in what's called a humanitarian reassignment. Ultimately, I decided against it; just because I'd be leaving England doesn't mean that I'd be stationed anywhere near my family in New Jersey. I just didn't want to risk being stationed somewhere completely random, nowhere near family, still all alone with a brand new baby.

Sometimes I regret not taking the reassignment, because being [a single mother](#) is HARD. Thankfully, I did not get picked up for another overseas assignment, so hopefully I can get a chance to be stationed near family soon. Now that my son is older and I've gotten the hang of this mom thing, I don't feel the need to absolutely be at the base closest to my family, but I would at least prefer to be in the Northeast.

What I've learned:

I am a strong Black woman who can persevere in the face of obstacles. Facing pregnancy alone, being in the hospital alone after having my son and taking care of a premature newborn completely alone is not an easy task. But my son is happy and healthy, I am happy and healthy and that's what matters. I got so used to caregiving alone that when I needed to take breaks, I wouldn't ask, but I learned to lean on my support system.

3. Our jobs and budget made it too hard to move closer to family

Name and location: Karlee Vincent, Petaluma, California

Parent of: Two daughters, 5 years and 8 years old

Why I have regrets:

My husband is a firefighter paramedic in Sonoma County and is often away for days or weeks at a time. While he was in paramedic school, I was pregnant with our second daughter, [and we] discussed moving to the Sacramento area to be closer to his mom and our siblings. We also found Sacramento's affordability appealing, especially compared to the Bay Area. Most of our friends had already made the decision to move closer to their families.

and shipping milk from around the world. Sometimes I traveled with my daughter and a family member who could care for her between feedings. I was lonely and needed support. I thought it would be easier to live near family who could lend a hand or even offer encouragement.

After my second daughter was born, and my maternity leave ended, my husband and I spent nearly [half of our annual income on child care](#). It took nearly five years for us to recover from that financial decision, and it really made me question whether we ought to have moved to a less expensive region. We ultimately decided against a move because neither of us wanted to risk being unemployed. It felt too much like starting over. The choice continues to weigh on us. We're rooted for now, but that could change.

What I've learned:

I [yearned] to find a home in Sacramento that would allow me to break through the lonely evenings and hard days. In hindsight, all I really needed was someone to step in occasionally and take care of my little ones so I could take a nap.

Slowly, we created a community of friends that feels mutually supportive. It makes all the difference. New moms returning to work after maternity leave began to seek me out for advice about the transition. I realized very quickly that I could help by creating resources and tools to ease the harsh realities of motherhood for other [working women](#) who needed support.

After we decided not to move closer to our family, I put a lot of energy into pushing for more equitable employee benefits at work. My persistence led to new company policies, including breast milk shipments sent from the road at company expense. I also worked to help establish a private space for nursing moms at every conference. My passion for empowering nursing moms in the workplace is the inspiration behind the [Traveling Milk Truck](#).

“We ultimately decided against a move because neither of us wanted to risk being unemployed. It

— *KARLEE VINCENT, A MOM OF TWO FROM
PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA*

4. I sacrificed proximity to loved ones for my spouse's career

Name and location: [Deborah Porter](#), Washington, D.C.

Parent of: Three adult children

Why I have regrets:

When our kids were 14, 11 and 8, we moved 500 miles from our family, friends and our church for a job opportunity for my husband. In all the excitement of looking for a home, finding a new school and other activities for the kids, I didn't consider how lonely it would be for the first few months.

Because we moved in the summer the kids weren't in school. I filled our days with getting to know the area and all it had to offer our kids and our family. I'm an East Coast city girl, and we moved to a very rural area, which forced my city-way of thinking to have to take a back seat. Prior to the move, we lived 20 minutes from our family, friends and our church. After this move, we were a nine-hour drive from everything familiar. As the empty moving boxes stacked up, the loneliness moved in.

What I've learned:

The silver lining was that the community we moved into was full of families and kids that matched the age of my two boys. Many of them needed a babysitter, and my daughter fit the bill. As I saw the kids adjust, and my husband adjust to his new job, it became evident that this was home and that I had to get on board, too. Ten years later, we moved back to the East Coast and many of those families are still dear and close friends who have become family.

1. Don't compare now to what was.
2. Stay close to your friends and family back home [by taking] trips, [using] FaceTime, [and planning] long summer stays.
3. Life is full of adventure, and a change of location may be part of yours. Leaving family and friends is a big decision. Don't take it or make it lightly.

“[My husband’s family] have been to my house one time in three years, and in the other handful of interactions, we drove to them. In all honesty, I still regret moving my child here.”

— *CHRISTINA K., A MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA MOM OF ONE*

5. The family we moved closer to has let us down

Name and location: Christina K., Muskogee, Oklahoma

Parent of: One son, 5 years old

Why I have regrets:

We decided to leave my home state of Utah so my child, who was 2 at the time, had a chance to know his dad’s side of the family. We left good-paying jobs and a great little house that my family grew up in. We loaded up a U-Haul and my truck with our lives and headed to Oklahoma.



When we saw them, they kept saying how it was going to be “family this” and “family that.”

The next weekend, we drove 45 miles to the in-laws for a family dinner. It was great, but we tried calling numerous times to set up another get-together, and there was always an excuse.

Last Christmas, my father drove from Utah to spend the holiday here with us. My husband’s family took offense to this, because they wanted us to come to Christmas at their home. They have been to my house one time in three years, and in the other handful of interactions, we drove to them. We are a low-income family living paycheck to paycheck, and they all have a little extra money. It has yet to be fixed, and in all honesty, I still regret moving my child here.

What I’ve learned:

I regret moving away from a family who went out of the way to see my child and interact with him, but we have decided to make Oklahoma our home. I have a great job and my coworkers have become family. They all love my son and go out of their way to be a part of his life; they are always happy to see him.

“It is nice to have the kids spend the night with Grandma some weekends, but the overall safety and life experience in this city particularly outweighs the convenience of a caregiver I trust.”

— *CINDY L. A MOM OF TWO IN LAS VEGAS*



Name and location: Cindy L., Las Vegas

Parent of: Two girls, 9 and 11 years old

Why I have regrets:

As a military family, we have moved around the world every three years for the past 10 years. Living in Germany during the pandemic was exceptionally challenging. When the opportunity to get stationed in the Las Vegas area came up, we jumped at the chance to be closer to family.

My career as a social worker and criminal justice paralegal has impacted my parenting style, and we did not allow our kids to be watched by anyone other than ourselves while stationed away from family. The chance to come to Vegas brought a sense of relief as parents for a break. Unfortunately, the grass is not always greener on the other side.

We can only live in a specific area of Vegas to keep my husband's daily commute under two hours. My family lives over 25 miles away, close enough for a weekend trip but not close enough to help with after-school care, school activities, etc. Moving to Vegas with two young girls is very intimidating, especially coming from Europe. The risk of human trafficking, kidnapping, school shootings, etc. have made us seriously wonder if the ease of having a trusted family member in the same city is worth all the day-to-day stress American families face.

I still have to balance a professional life and care for my kids while my spouse's military career takes the lead. What military families tend to forget is as we travel the world, our family members back home learn to live without us.

What I've learned:

I don't think I ever would have turned down an opportunity to come back to Las Vegas if I hadn't come and experienced it as a parent. It is nice to have the kids spend the night with Grandma some weekends, but the overall safety and life experience in this city particularly outweighs the convenience of a caregiver I trust.

Related Child Care Articles



This is how much child care costs in 2023



19 fun and easy summer crafts for kids



How to know if your child is ready for kindergarten



How much does a babysitter cost?



20 ways to save money on child care



21 questions to ask a daycare during your tour



About Care.com

- [About us](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Terms of use](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)

Get help

- [Safety](#)
- [Articles & Guides](#)
- [Help Center/Contact Us](#)

Popular topics

[Babysitters](#)

Discover

[HomePaySM – nanny tax help](#)



[Log in](#) [Join Now](#)

[Housekeepers](#)

[Tutors](#)

[Senior care](#)

[Become an affiliate](#)

[Care directory](#)

Find local caregivers by state

Care.com does not employ any caregiver and is not responsible for the conduct of any user of our site. All information in member profiles, job posts, applications, and messages is created by users of our site and not generated or verified by Care.com. You need to do your own diligence to ensure the job or caregiver you choose is appropriate for your needs and complies with applicable laws.

Care.com® HomePaySM is a service provided by Breedlove and Associates, LLC, a Care.com company.

Care.com is a registered service mark of Care.com, Inc. ©2007-2023 Care.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[California Privacy Notice](#)

[Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information](#)