

# Long-Distance Moving with Kids



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My world feels a bit upside down. Or at least sideways. I am part of the “sandwich generation,” trying to balance raising my family while caring for aging parents. My mom was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s a few years ago. In the next month, we will be moving halfway across the country to be closer to my parents.

Our family has had many conversations about the move, as we process the pros and cons of starting a new life in the Midwest. While my kids are excited about the big move, each of them has unique concerns.

## Getting a Job

My oldest is excited to move close to family and already has a new job lined up. As the most extroverted of my children, his apprehensions about the move surround leaving close friends behind. It is important to help

him to find ways to stay connected with old friends while he makes new ones in the coming months. We toured his new school on a recent trip to our new state, which helped him get excited about new opportunities and friendships.

## Keeping Life Simple

My middle daughter has a rare genetic syndrome. Change is difficult for her to process. Keeping some type of normalcy during this transition is very important for her. We talk often about the places, people, and activities in our new home that she already knows and loves. I researched and found that my daughter's inclusive sports organization here in California has a league within driving distance of our new home. Her amazing speech therapist, who has worked with our daughter for almost ten years, offered to get licensed in our new state and continue services via Zoom. These familiarities help ground and stabilize my daughter during this big change.

## Caring for the Pets

My youngest daughter has many friends, but loves animals most of all. Because of the long-distance move, some of our animals from our hobby farm had to be rehomed. I knew this would be the hardest part of moving for my daughter. I gave her full license to approve and suggest new homes for the animals we could not move with us. We planned a way to move our three cats ahead of us. They are now waiting for us at my parents' home and in typical feline fashion, are not homesick for us at

all. Our Bassett Hound, Betsy, will be riding shotgun in the U-Haul next month, drooling her dog-breath in my face for all 2500 miles! We have plans to buy new baby chicks soon after landing in the Midwest, and my daughter has reminded us about the importance of buying a property with enough room to house her new menagerie of animals.

## Accepting Change

The excitement and anxiety about this moving transition are unique to each child. Allowing them to grieve, plan, and discuss the move in their own ways gives them a sense of agency over this big life change.