

Nomad families

Travel-loving professionals are taking advantage of remote work to keep the spirit of adventure alive after having children.

Words: MaryLou Costa

A love of adventure is what drew entrepreneur Sarah Hawley to her husband Joe, and keeping that alive after having baby Luka 16 months ago has been central to their family identity. “We want to continue to be who we are,” she says.

US-based Sarah, 41, an Australian expat, and her husband Joe, 34, spend up to two months at a time travelling in their camper. Sarah co-founded remote jobs platform Growmotely in 2020, but has worked remotely since 2014. Joe is a former US NFL player who now runs his own personal growth consultancy. The Hawleys are frequent international travellers, too, but are mindful of maintaining a routine with Luka, as well as their global network of digital nomad families, so they all benefit from a sense of community.

“The most important thing is that every day we can choose to be wherever we want to be, to do what we want to do, and spend time with Luka and each other,” Sarah adds.

The Hawleys highlight how digital nomads aren’t just 20-something backpackers, and in fact many of them now refer to themselves as ‘anywhere workers’.

Anywhere workers

A recent study by Lonely Planet and freelance platform Fiverr surveyed some 1,400 people across 67 nationalities and found 54% of them identify as an ‘anywhere worker’ (rather than a digital nomad), and 70% of those are parents travelling with children.

Like US expats Brian and Katie Davis, 41 and 38, who love to travel with their two-year-old daughter, Millie. Davis runs property rental platform SparkRental remotely from the Brazilian capital of Brasilia. Katie is a school counsellor.

They align Katie’s generous yearly holiday allowance with trips back to the US and around South America. Millie already speaks as much

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▲ **Nomad families** PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

Portuguese as English and loves Latin American food.

“I love that she’s growing up bilingual. There are plenty of studies showing that people who grow up speaking several languages tend to be more open-minded, more empathetic, and are able to see the world from multiple vantage points,” says Katie.

How their children are cared for and educated are top of mind for the Hawleys and Davises. The Hawleys’ nanny joins them, or they split their days into childcare and work shifts.

The Davises plan to base themselves next in Europe, sending Millie to school there and fitting travel into vacation periods.

Childcare and education

For parents who aren’t able to reduce work hours, hire a nanny, or commit to childcare and education responsibilities, extended travel options can be limited. These include finding local daycares or schools that will take foreign children for shorter periods, finding summer camps in suitable destinations, booking a resort with a kids’ club, or finding co-working spaces that offer childcare.

This is a challenge new start-up Boundless Life aims to solve. Its offering combines accommodation, childcare/education and co-working spaces, in locations including Portugal, Greece and Italy. Families join a scheduled cohort and, situated within walking distance from one another, are encouraged to build strong bonds. Boundless Life’s education programme is inspired by the Finnish system, which draws largely on experiential learning, while enabling children to slot back into their home school.

“While we believe that travelling is one of the best things you can do with children, they still need structure to develop social bonds and feel secure, which is what Boundless Life is built around,” says co-founder Marcos Carvalho.

“People in our cohorts develop lasting relationships, since they can meet their friends in other Boundless Life communities around the globe. It’s only been six months since we launched and we can see that this is already happening — families are planning their next stays with us based on the relationships they’ve built and they are also going to places with other families.”

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