

The New York Times

REAL ESTATE

Co-Working Spaces Add a Perk for Parents: Child Care

360 View

By RONDA KAYSEN DEC. 23, 2016



CreditShonagh Rae

That sort of demand is not limited to people living in cramped city apartments. Dani Geraci lives in a four-bedroom house in [Maplewood, N.J.](#) Although she has a home office, it is hardly a respite, with two toddlers banging on the door and two dogs barking for attention. “My home life feels hectic,” she said. “Everyone is little and still on top of me.”

So about two years ago, Ms. Geraci joined [Work and Play](#), a co-working space in nearby [South Orange](#) that offers on-site child care. “I wanted to have some time for myself to figure out what kind of work made sense for me,” said Ms. Geraci, who was starting a new business as a marketing consultant at the time. Now she uses the co-working space about 15 hours a week, dropping off her 2½-year-old daughter, Sadie, at the day care center. “The staff is amazing,” she said. The children “get messy, and it’s great.”

Work and Play, which inhabits a little gray house with a blue fence, is two distinct worlds tucked into one place. The ground-floor work area is a modern space with wrought-iron chandeliers and a decorative wall of reclaimed wood.

But step downstairs and you find a cheerful day-care center, with caregivers surrounded by toddlers and toys.

“I had to think of it as almost two different business models,” said Deborah Engel, the founder of Work and Play, which received its day-care license this month, allowing it to expand its program. Prices for co-working range from \$75 to \$250 a month, depending on how many hours a week you use the space; child care is an additional \$12 to \$15 an hour depending on the plan.

Ms. Engel points to a changing culture to explain the success of her program. “Young parents want to strike that balance,” she said. “They can still have their careers, but want to be able to see their children, too.”

They just want somebody else to watch them for a few hours.