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# interiors+sources



**Designer of the Year:**

Jennifer Sobecki and  
the Designs for Dignity team

# A Family-Friendly Solution

TMC Furniture creates a custom workstation to accommodate library visitors with young children.

Parents and caregivers with infants and toddlers can now rest with more ease while using the computer workstations at the Fairfield Area Library in Henrico County, VA. Nearly double the size of the community's former library, the new two-story facility features four innovative, family-friendly workstations that include an adult-sized desk attached to an interactive play space, so visitors can work while not worrying about wandering little ones.

Architectural firm Quinn Evans worked closely with library administrators, staff and members of the community who suggested the need for the family-friendly spaces. Realizing no furniture existed on the market that fit the description of what the firm was looking for, Quinn Evans partnered with furniture and design manufacturer TMC furniture to create the four custom workstations, branded as the "Fairfield" in honor of its inaugural installation.

Each space features a desktop computer and privacy panels, and caregivers working at the desk can easily see into the attached play area designed for infants and toddlers up to two years of age. The inside of the play space includes a mirror at the lowest level and a series of interactive learning panels above that can be switched out by staff to provide a variety of content. Shannon Wray, CID, LEED AP, a senior associate for Quinn Evans, says the design team positioned the workstations in the children's area of the library to

enable parents and caregivers to use them while their older children are reading or playing nearby.

"Libraries have evolved to be so much more than places for books," Wray notes. "Because they are spaces where people come to learn, work, collaborate, create, reflect, network and play, libraries are taking design cues from education spaces, hospitality environments and co-working and corporate spaces."

The Fairfield's materials and colors were designed to complement the rest of the library's interior aesthetic, and include organic forms, a palette of warm wood and berry tones. Constructed of non-toxic maple, the workstations are designed to be durable and easy to clean, including their removable vinyl mats on the floor of the play spaces.

Wray says the initial response from the community has been outstanding. She believes the popularity of these family-style accommodations suggest they might be useful in workplace settings as well as libraries. "The design team, as well as the library staff, were blown away that they were in use on opening day, despite the patron who was using the workstation being surrounded by thousands of people touring the space," she says. "Seeing this really affirmed how necessary these stations are for caregivers and parents."

Peek at the rest of the Fairfield Area Library's fresh features through these accompanying images, including the products used within. [es](#)

**RIGHT** While seating at the desk, parents have privacy from adjacent workstations and can easily see their child in the adjoining play area.

**FAR RIGHT** The Fairfield's materials and colors were designed to complement the rest of the library's interior aesthetic, and include organic forms, a palette of warm wood and berry tones.

