

## *We asked actual children to test-drive some of NYC's fanciest playrooms. Here's what they said*

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Almost everywhere you look in New York City, a shiny new building is going up, and most of the time, that building is part of the growing inventory of condos and rentals in the high-end, or luxury sector of the market. Whether you're renting or buying, those apartments aren't cheap, and competition is fierce to get tenants to sign on the dotted line.

One way buildings try to lure residents is with fancy amenities, like gyms with yoga studios and rock climbing walls, or party rooms with kitchens. Of course, some are more ridiculous than others, but to each his own.

With more and more families with young kids electing to stay in the city (and couples deciding to start families here) the playroom has emerged as one perk that's no longer an afterthought. A basement space with colorful, padded floor tiles and an assortment of toys no longer cuts it when it comes to attracting residents paying top dollar. Now playrooms are themed, feature custom play structures, outdoor areas, and diversions for kids of all ages.

They all look pretty cool to us, but it's not our opinion that matters, is it? Which is why we recruited a few kids (ages five and six) to test out several play spaces around town and give us their review.

### **1. The Easton, 205 East 92nd St.**

Built in 2016, The Easton has 20,000 square feet of amenities. Its kid-friendly offerings include an under-the-sea themed playroom with an outdoor play area, as well as a separate game room for older kids loaded with arcade-style games (Pac-

Man, Galaga, NBA Jam), foosball, and a console game area with lounge chairs. A large and serene study area is attached to the game rooms, and beyond that, soundproof music rooms (some with Steinways) for practicing Mozart or heavy metal.

**Kids' Take:** The kids were definitely impressed. The "yellow submarine" play structure, with a lookout perch and slide was a hit, as was an "oyster" play area, complete with silver-hued oversized ball acting as a "pearl." (The Easton gets high points for its execution of the oceanic theme; even the elements for younger kids, like the illuminated and bubbling, touch-activated tubes and bead mazes, were sea-inspired.) Also engaging: a wall of cubbies, or reading nooks the kids immediately gravitated to, and classic choices like oversized soft LEGOS. It's probably not a surprise that the arcade-style video games were a huge hit, but foosball was very popular as well.

Live there: A two-bedroom, two-bath rental is currently available for \$8,770 a month; a three-bedroom is \$17,680 a month. (Both no-fee!)



## 2. 456 Washington St.

Also built in 2016, Tribeca's 456 Washington St., features a children's playroom with a space exploration theme, anchored by an impressive, custom rocket ship play structure. There's also a mini ball pit, play kitchen (with shopping cart), wall-mounted puzzles and bead mazes for little ones, a nook stocked with a variety of toys and games, a tiny basketball hoop, and a mini electric BMW convertible.

**Kids' Take:** Again, the main play structure, with lookout and slide exit, was popular with our kid panel. They also had fun in the ball pit, which, of course, the kids used in an unexpected way: They attempted to hit the "target" of the sun (part of the mural on the wall) with the plastic balls. Big big hit? The tiny electric car, naturally. (Also slightly problematic, due to its desirability and the resulting temper tantrums—but that of course is of no fault of the building.) We were relieved when the car lost its charge and had to be retired. But it's not every day you get to drive around in a mini car—unless, of course, you live at 456 Washington St.!

Live there: A three-bedroom, three-bath rental is currently available for \$16,520 a month; a five-bedroom, four-bath apartment is open for \$39,500 a month. (Also both no-fee.)

## 3. 100 Barclay

An Art Deco tower built in 1927, 100 Barclay has been stunningly restored. The building offers 40,000 square feet of

amenities, with kid-friendly spots including a children's playroom designed by Playgarden, a teen room and lounge with foosball, beanbags and gaming area with Playstation, Xbox, Wii and (one of our favorites), a large wall-mounted Scrabble game. There's also a 330-square-foot children's wading pool, which we didn't visit.

**Kids' Take:** While not a play space, the street-level foyer area of 100 Barclay, with its intricate gleaming brass details, marble floors, and majestic vaulted ceilings took all of our breath away—including the kids. (It inspired what was perhaps the favorite comment of the day, which did not seem unreasonable: "Does God live here?")

That said, the kids' spaces had a lot to offer, too. Interestingly, the main play room at 100 Barclay felt less flashy than the other ones we had visited—there was no Technicolor decor, or thoroughly-executed theme beyond soft and soothing carpet and some chic alphabet wallpaper. It was, however, the biggest, which gave the kids lots of room to run, and play old-school style. (A game of hide and seek broke out, for example.) The space did have lots of diversions: a large play structure with slide, and a smaller one for little kids; a play kitchen, a see-saw (a favorite of the kids), a rocking boat, and numerous large pillows and mats. At the far end, a padded area provided a safe space for babies to explore. (The space also included a table and chairs for adults to sit and relax.)

In the "teen room", our kid panel again gravitated to the foosball table, as well as a multimedia area, where large bean bag chairs provided a perfect place to collapse. (At that point, we all needed a nap.)

Live there: You can buy or rent at 100 Barclay. A two-bedroom, two-bath is \$13,000 a month, and a two-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath is for sale for \$2,995,000. (The \$59 million penthouse is also still available.)