


Snugli, making sure my two-year-old daughter wasn't harassing children in the store's play-area, while trying to serve customers and keep it all together, wasn't easy. These types of challenges also awaited Oakville-based Julie and James Carroll when they decided to enter the volatile retail world after Julie witnessed the explosion of the scrapbooking industry after living in Illinois for six years. This had also become a huge passion of her own with the birth of her daughter Faith, now four. She decided to fill a market need in Ontario, and opened up "Remember This" in Oakville. With the addition of baby number two, Marti-Rose, now 17 months, James and Julie took turns running the store and minding the kids, for the first year and a half. James has recently returned to an outside position, which has required them to hire staff both at home, and in the store. "We had never had a non-family babysitter before, so we were surprised at how costly childcare really is. We were torn about leaving the girls with someone, but felt that the store needed our presence more often than just on a Saturday," says Julie. Balance is tricky, but Julie and James have been able to organize their time to be with their family and their business... for the most part. "The girls do come to work with me when a scheduling conflict occurs," explains Julie, one of the many factors a parent-prenuer has to take into account when starting their own business. Julie also offers the following advice to those considering the plunge: "Starting your own business is not something to jump into. Don't underestimate the amount of capital that will be required. Secure access to emergency financing. Research things well. Be aware of the risks. Don't assume your children can always be with you when you're working. They will want attention when you're busy. Make sure to set aside time dedicated to them. Children don't always understand that they can't have your full attention all the time." That being said, Julie feels her children are benefiting from their arrangement. "If you really include them in the venture, then they feel some ownership and pride in your work too. Faith is always talking about going to the store, or wanting to show someone her scrapbook."

Easy? No. Manageable? Sometimes barely. Rewarding? Absolutely. Running your own business while tending to the needs of your family is a balancing act from morning until night, but with some finely honed organizational skills, a portable phone (to run away from screaming children!), and a supply of kid-friendly videos, you might just make it. (Excuse me now while my three-year-old son Nicholas takes over my computer to play on Thomas the Tank Engine's website!) 

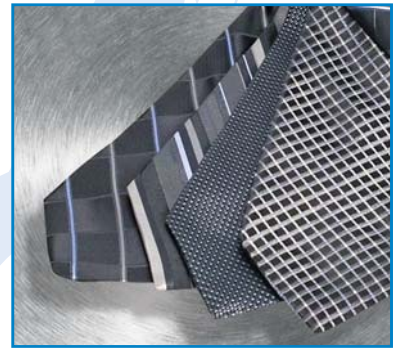


For the first year and a half following the birth of their second child, Julie (pictured above) and James Carroll took turns running their Oakville-based scrapbooking shop and minding the kids.

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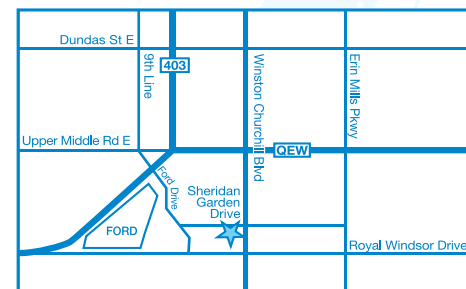


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