

selfbuilder + homemaker

SEP/OCT 2022

Ask the Expert: Home Security

Have you heard of the police-backed initiative Secured by Design? Our expert provides all the answers

Dream kids' bedrooms

Interior designer Cat Dal offers tips on how to create a sense of magic in kids' bedrooms for the dream combo of function and fun

Fitting in with the community

Young couple Tope & Lanre managed to realise their family's home on a tight, triangle-shaped London site

Work, rest & play

The Siegels managed to blend old and new parts seamlessly in their refurbishment and extension in East Lothian, which also gave them ample space for home working

Kids have the rest of their lives to have 'normal' lighting, now is the time for clouds, stars, animals and spaceships!

for a low VOC paint, or use a natural paint company. Also, if such health factors are important to you, and/or you have allergies in the family, remember to research rugs and blind materials, and be aware of any wallpaper adhesives.

'Colour blocking' is a fantastic way to break up the geometry of the room, there are so many fun ways paint can be applied if you open your imagination. This can be a bright pop of colour within a wardrobe, or a frame around a piece of artwork or mirror. Creating blocks of shapes (mountains, triangles, circles) can create focal points that completely change the feel of the room. If you have a low ceiling, bring the wall colour up over the cornice to 'push the ceiling' further up.

There are so many fantastic mural and wallpaper patterns these days, so that you can go 'wild,' or have a 'jungle,' 'sea,' or 'forest' theme. However, try to keep most patterns to one aspect of the room so that you maintain a calming environment that doesn't risk overstimulation. If you keep your design to a theme (say a jungle for example) then work with just a few colours (green, light beige, blue) across the whole room, to harmonise and bring it all together.

As a company, we try to use our designs to encourage as many moments together as a family as possible. Therefore we advise using a large sofa or armchair, or futon if the space allows, to encourage reading moments together. I have also seen from my own home that books displayed with their covers outwards helps children to select one at night-time, while working as beautiful, happy 'artwork' to decorate the shelves. This is done best with narrow depth 'art' shelves. We also recommend keeping



these shelves within easy reach for kids, to inspire self-reading.

When it comes to blinds, we advise a 'double layer' approach if possible. A linen sheer for privacy if you are overlooked, but still keeps the light in, and then a blackout lined curtain to block the light for sleeping. If you believe your child needs total blackout, maybe consider a pelmet or returning curtain pole.

Don't forget to have fun with accessories. There are no rules with these spaces, so don't limit yourself to 'bog standard' choices when it comes to wardrobe handles, mirrors, curtain ties, coat hooks or door stops. We use trims such as pom pom or fringe trims

on our blinds or curtains to create little details that bring a smile. Texture and materiality are important. Leather handle pulls can create a tactile connection, or a sheepskin rug evokes cosiness. Photos of happy memories and family can be hung in colourful frames, or if you are handy with a sewing machine, perhaps match the teddy's outfit with the same fabric as the bedspread.

My number one piece of advice is you don't have to spend a lot of money, but just some time and thought, to create a dream-conjuring, atmospheric environment for your little ones.

Cathrine Dal is an interior designer and founder of Cat Dal Interiors

HOME STYLING

MAGICAL BEDTIMES

In designing a children's bedroom, it's possible to create a sense of magic, and if you allow yourself to move away from the standard approaches there are no limits. Interior designer Cat Dal offers some practical tips

As with any design, it's important you work out your boundaries, in terms of budget and timeline. Then, make a list of your requirements. What needs to happen in this room? Homework, clothes storage, toy storage? Does it need to be flexible

for accommodating guests? Once you have this list worked out, you should keep it next to your desired budget and timeline, and refer to it regularly.

Next, you need to start with your floor plan. The bed is often the most important feature to focus on, as for the

majority of clients, the brief will be for a flexible and futureproof layout. For example, the cot will only be a cot for a year perhaps, so how will a toddler's bed fit, or a single bed? Would you like to read to your child in bed (in which case maybe a small queen is better than a single); ideally plan ahead for the next two to five years. A bed generally takes up a large amount of floor space, so consider the footprint, would you like to use the space below it for storage? This can be simple drawers, but also if you have the head height you could raise the bed, so you can create a reading nook or small desk underneath, or a bunk bed.

Next, consider lighting, atmospheric and task lighting. Yes, you want to be able to see the corners of the room when hoovering, but when you are reading, or you are having downtime, it would be great to have various levels of lighting. A charming, cosy or sweet bedside lamp, a wall lamp, and even a floor lamp if it's safe. Children have nightmares, so a light positioned away from the bed that offers a dim, low comforting light is always a plus. When it comes to wall lights, I encourage people to have fun in their designs. Kids have the rest of their lives to have 'normal' lighting, now is the time for clouds, stars, animals and spaceships! These inspire and delight and help create magic in their growing minds.

COLOUR & PATTERN

If you are considering paint rather than wallpaper, I would encourage you to look

