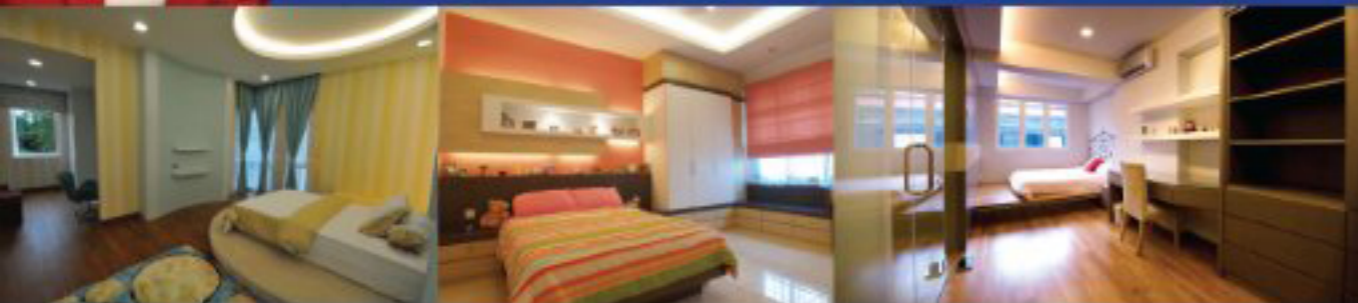




Designing Great Bedrooms For Kids

By Denise Turner,
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'Have fun, but do not get too crazy!'

That is good advice for a child attending a birthday party — or for parents designing their children's bedrooms. Unlike the rest of the home where most people select versatile neutral colours, children's rooms can be fun and whimsical. This is the place that invites creativity, where you can wildly spin the colour wheel.

Get the kids involved. They are a great source of inspiration when brainstorming for unusual ideas. Include them as much as possible in the planning and execution of the project so that their bedroom genuinely reflects their taste.

Kids want to get involved. So give them simple projects to do. When you are painting, lightly load the roller and let them make a few swipes of colour on the wall. Their sweat equity will instill a sense of pride and ownership.

Colour

Bedroom colours can affect your child's sleep, schoolwork and how they feel each day. Children spend more time in their bedrooms than adults. It is where they begin and end each day, therefore, serious thought should be given to the colours that it will contain. This is why, it is important to select the right colours for their bedroom to support their physical and emotional growth rather than hinder them.



Red

Red is a warm colour that increases energy, excitement, raises the blood pressure and stimulates the appetite. For these reasons, you will only want to use red sparingly; otherwise, your child will not sleep. And you know what that means? Mom and dad will not get any sleep either.

Combine red with lighter, neutral colours such as white, off-white, grey or pink. Yellow or orange will further heat up the room. A few sprinkles of red in a black and white room can create interest without going overboard. Red, being a primary colour, also works well with many other colours such as blue.

Yellow

Yellow is the warm colour of sunshine, joy and optimism. Pale yellow combined with neutral hues creates an inviting, peaceful bedroom. Use bright yellow sparingly; it is cheerful at first, but can be exhausting over time. It causes frustration, irritability, more arguments and can even make a baby cry more.

If you are set on using a bright, sunshine yellow in your bedroom, consider a lighter, toned-down hue of yellow. It can add warmth to a child's bedroom without over stimulating them. A combination of white and yellow creates a bright, cheerful bedroom. Yellow and pink is a sweet colour combination for a girl's room.



Pink

Pink is sweet, romantic and feminine; it is ideal for Victorian style bedrooms. Pink has 2 personalities. A light pink room is quiet; it is sugar and spice and everything nice. A bright, bubblegum pink room is fun; it is for babies, little girls and teens, while being grounded with white and lighter hues of pink.

Combine pink with purple for a frilly bedroom, or to create a diva or princess theme. Combine darker or lighter values of pink to create a romantic retreat that is not too feminine.



Blue

Blue is a cool colour that calms, relaxes and lowers the blood pressure. For these reasons, blue is a favourite bedroom colour. Too much blue (such as dark blue-grey) however, can lead to boredom or depression. Light blue or aqua blue creates a calming environment as they are found in the sky and water in nature.

Dark blue, such as navy, is crisp against a lighter colour, such as off-white. Blue and white is a classic bedroom colour combination and works with many different design styles. Mix blue and yellow for a vibrant bedroom with contrasting colours and touches of warm and cool colours.



Brown

Brown is the grounding colour that is dependable and plays well with practically all other colours. Brown is the ambiguous colour family commonly found in earth-tone, neutral palettes. Subtle hints of colour, such as green or blue, create interest in an otherwise brown and neutral bedroom.

Combine light brown or beige with other neutrals such as off-white, white, light grey and various values of brown for a calming nature feel. Neutral beige can provide a soft background for most colour schemes. Cream and dark brown coordinates well with purple, red, green, pink, blue, yellow and orange.



Green

Green is the nurturing colour of nature, balance, healing and new beginnings. This is exactly what children are about. Earthy green hues can create a tranquil bedroom that is peaceful, refreshing and calm.

Combine sage green with yellows, pinks, browns or practically any colour if you want an unassuming, tranquil room. Mossy greens combine beautifully with off-white, tan and chocolate brown. Combine light, clear greens with turquoise or aqua for a tropical island feel.

Bright greens, such as lime green, can emphasise other colours and create a modern or vibrant bedroom which is more suited to teens. Lime green with neutral colours such as cream, chocolate brown, grey, and black and white adds freshness to a room. Lime green also coordinates beautifully with various hues of purple for a young girl or teen's bedroom.

Designing Great Bedrooms For Kids (Part 2)

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Theme Decorating

Theme bedrooms are the easiest way to go. The colour palette is already decided for you, which is a relief for colour-losing adults. If you choose to adopt the theme approach, do it with inexpensive decorative items, such as comforters, pillows, window valances and throw rugs, that are easy to change as your child grows.

Do Not Over Do It

Theme rooms can be a lot of fun to decorate, but it is easy to go overboard. So consider these tips. The room can look too busy when the bedding, curtains, wallpaper and border all have a bright colour scheme combined with a strong theme character.

Instead, try a character-driven bed spread next to a solid painted wall in a complementary colour and maybe a theme border. Or do an 'over the top' wallpaper with a more subtle bed spread. Theme lamps, wall decals, window valances and decorative pillows help create a unified look.



Creative Storage Solutions

Kids may be small, but they accumulate a lot of stuff. One of the most challenging tasks as a parent is helping kids keep their stuff organised, or at least corralled in one location. Get creative with storage and think dual purpose.

When my children were small, we had a large antique trunk that substituted for a coffee table. It was filled to the brim with costumes, fancy shoes and silly wigs. My two kids and all their friends loved to come over and play dress up. IKEA has mastered the art of organisation. They have containers in every shape and colour that will not break your budget.

Wall Decals

So you want to add a design to the walls but do not want to paint or are restricted from painting? Then use wall decals. They require little commitment and you can instantly decorate a room. Decals come in colourful designs and, best of all, they are reusable. Children's preferences are constantly changing, so kids can have fun arranging and rearranging their decals to fit their many moods.



Have Fun With Paint

Paint a mural of your child's favourite characters. Do not worry! You do not even have to be an artist. If you can colour between the lines, you can do this. Just make copies from colouring books on to transparency film. Then borrow an overhead projector (from work, school or library) and shoot the image on the walls. You can either paint it directly on the wall or trace it with a pencil first.

Flooring Solutions

Modular carpet tiles are a great substitute for carpets in kids' rooms. If an area of the carpet gets destroyed or you just cannot clean out a stubborn stain, you can easily replace a square or two rather than buying a new rug or carpet.

Furniture

Invest in core furniture that your child can grow into. If you are on a tight budget, look for a used bedroom set, but purchase a new mattress. You do not need to waste your money on a toddler's bed; they will only use it for a few months. Instead, purchase a twin bed with a mattress that fits under the bed, which can be pulled out for weekend sleepovers. Be sure to cover the mattress with a plastic cover, because accidents will happen.

Bedrooms For Kids Safety Tips

Cribs

Be sure that the crib you are using is solid and properly installed, and in compliance with the latest safety standards. Safety guidelines require that all cribs have slats, spaced no more than 2"-3/8" inches apart. Although antique cribs may have charm and hand-me-downs can save you money, they may not meet safety guidelines such as being coated with lead-based paint and may contain dangerously loose parts or missing pieces.

Bedding

Although you might be tempted to fill your baby's bed with adorable decorative bedding, this is not a good idea. Fluffy soft comforters or pillows in the crib can possibly smother a small child. A safer alternative is to hang the comforter on the wall as textile art.

Windows

Never place a bed, crib, playpen or any type of low-standing furniture near a window. Whenever possible, place the furniture on a non-windowed wall. Drapery controls are dangerous. Children exploring their environment can become entangled in a nearby window cord, or they can accidentally fall through an open window or window screen.

Other Details

Be sure to cover all electrical outlets, put safety locks on cabinet doors and store poisonous chemicals out of a child's reach. If your child's toy box does not have a spring-loaded lid-support device, install one. It will prevent the lid from falling on a child's neck, smashing small fingers or from closing and trapping a child playing inside the chest.

