



Photography by Belinda Bradley

Designing with heart

Anya Brighouse



Two instant additions in the form of nine-year-old twin boys, mean some big challenges for this household. Friend and designer Anya Brighthouse transforms a nursery into a great space for growing boys

I have always been more than a little in awe of large families. I actually secretly love the idea of a large family but just know it is a bit beyond me. The logistics of it all appear pretty intimidating – large vehicle, the car seats, prams, beds, clothes, food, and even how you manage holidays. It makes me realise that I am actually very happy with my three lovely kids aged 3, 6 and 8 years of age.

However I have a friend who thought she was happy with her lot too, until fate threw them a bit of a curved ball. She and her husband have three lovely girls aged 18 months, 4 and 7. They were just finishing their new three bedroom home, and she was gearing up to return to work, when wider family circumstances caused them to make a rather radical family change. They are taking into their home nine-year-old twin boys who are part of their extended family. So overnight their family is expanding from a comfortable five to seven. They have a supportive wider family on both sides as well as a church family but it will still be a big adjustment. They have

managed to acquire a new vehicle, sort out schools, get the girls excited about the new 'brothers' coming... and now its time to sort out the house.

As you can imagine all this is stretching the budget a lot further than they thought they would ever have to – and so we have stepped in to help.

The project

The baby is moving into the study and the boys are taking over what was the nursery. Luckily the study was painted in Resenes Chalk Beige, so it wasn't hard to adapt to its new function as the baby's room. The house isn't large, but it is painted throughout in one colour. Consequently rooms' uses can be changed without too much fuss.

The transformation

We took down the lilac gingham curtains, and put in painted wooden blinds. The room is small and space is at a premium as we didn't want curtains taking up wall space. Blinds are

PRICE LIST

Beds from FARMERS (mattresses were donated)

Shelving Shelves and desk unit come from LUNDIA and are made up of two 'kids study packs' at \$270 - \$316 depending on the finish. 'Add on packs' \$189-\$236.

Boxes Plastic storage boxes from PLASTIC BOX. Come in a great range of colours and only cost \$1.95 with lid.

Mop Buckets PLASTIC BOX about \$6 each.

Drawers TARGET do a great MDF roller box with castors for \$39.95 (Gem under bed drawer) which you can paint yourself. In this case they are painted in RESENES Red Berry.

Bedding SPOTLIGHT - denim \$9 per metre - wide enough for a duvet. Also picture frames.

Frames SPOTLIGHT has a great range of desk accessories and picture frames in unpainted wood

Artwork The Tintin Store



WHERE TO GET STUFF

The Tintin Store
(for the TIN TIN
posters and file boxes)
ph 09 5246071
347 Remuera Road,
Remuera Auckland
www.tintin.co.nz

ACKLAND HOLDINGS
ph 09 6306177
Distributers nationwide

AB Fabrics
Shop 3 235 Broadway
Ph 095224161
pennycox@ihug.co.nz

special thanks to the following stores that donated product...

EZIBUY
0508500500
www.ezibuy.co.nz

TARGET Stores in Auckland and Chch
096232910 or www.targetfurniture.
co.nz for more info

LUNDIA SELVING LIMITED
095285304/0800860460
or www.lundia.co.nz

RESENE 0800 737363
(0800 RESENE)
or www.resene.co.nz

For giving the family much needed
desks, shelves, (Lundia) bedding,
(EZIBUY)roller boxes, storage boxes
(Target) and paint (Resene).

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easy for older kids to use and not too fussy if you are a boy! We chose a bed with brushed stainless steel finish so it doesn't dominate the room. We made sure that the bunks were sturdy, simple and could be easily dismantled into two beds if the living arrangements changed. In a small room you have to choose carefully what features and colours you are going to use as accents.

I have to be honest and say I adore strong colour, so quiet neutral colour schemes are not my forte. For this room I decided that the bedding would be a strong focal point, but I still wanted to keep it simple and within budget. You can't really go wrong with navy blue for boys and denim is a perfect fabric to use. It is a strong, doesn't show the dirt and for boys certainly doesn't have too much of a 'wuss' factor. The down side is that the fabric dye is prone to 'running' in the wash. Before we made the bedding up we took it to an industrial laundry and got them to do it in a very hot wash to get as much of the excess dye out as possible.

Duvets are actually fairly simple to make – just a large pocket and we made simple ties for the bottom. We chose a red striped ticking for the under side of the duvet. Spotlight again do a range of cheap French striped tickings for approx. \$12 per metre. The sheets on the boys' beds are from Ezibuy. They are polycotton which I personally think are great for kids rooms, and especially for bunks (which are notoriously difficult to make). They have a new range which is very reasonable for the price-conscious, starting at \$17. The rugs on the end of the bed were made from polar fleece, Ezibuy have a great range that wash up really well and double as summer bedding when the duvets need to come off. The CITTA Candy Kids Range from Ackland Holdings are also a great

price at \$49.50. These also come in winter weight and some are double sided with great colours.

The small cushions on the beds were made with fabric from one of the new fabric remnant shops that are popping up all over the place. If you are in Auckland try ABFAB in Newmarket, who have a mountain of little fabric treasures to trawl through. They have fabrics starting from as little as \$5 per metre. Make sure you have some time on your hands. I would suggest that you don't want to take the kids while you are hunting. The staff are great - so just ask if you need help.

One last point about the bunks. It always pays to be safety conscious with the placement of the bed. Tie up or plait the cords to blinds, curtains or roller blinds. If the bunks are near windows make sure you use safety glass.

The room is too small to fit in a conventional chest of drawers and two desks, so we got creative. We put in two roller boxes under the bed for the boys clothes. In our house all our books get put under the bed.

The Wardrobe

We took the the doors off the wardrobe so they are not taking up space in the room and we painted the interior the same colour as the walls. We installed a storage unit from Plastic Box so it looks like it is supposed to be that way. The down side of this of course is that the wardrobe needs to be kept tidy. We put in two large MDF boxes (\$35 from Target - GEM cube unit) and painted them in Resenes True Blue. One is for shoes and the other for laundry. You need to keep things as simple for kids as possible and the more things have an 'easily assessible home' – the more chance we have of them finding their way back there!

At home we have the Lundia study pack with two add on units for lots of storage. Here it is a great idea for such a small space and means the boys get their own individual space to personalise, and we get much needed storage. The desks come as one unit and we have joined the two with a set of shelves. They come unpainted – so you can paint them yourself, or they are polyurathaned. Lundia paint them to your spec also – but this costs a little more.

The storage boxes are from Plastic Box. In our house the boxes are labelled with a Polaroid picture of what should live in each. The blue 'boxes' at the bottom hold the lego (scourge of mothers everywhere ...) and are actually nice square shaped mop buckets. I liked the shape and the handle means they are easy to move around.

Finishing Touches

Spotlight has a great range of desk accessories and picture frames in unpainted wood – and I left them like that so the boys could paint them. I think that it is wise not to 'finish' a room too much – so the occupants can do that themselves. As you can see from the photos – the room doesn't look very lived in yet. When we took these photos they hadn't actually arrived. I imagine it looks a lot different now! The boys coming into this family are going to have some big adjustments – we want to make it as easy as possible. Hopefully this easy, fun, space of their very own will help them with this transition. ■

