

ROOM TO GROW

SHOW OFF YOUR FLAIR FOR INTERIOR DESIGN WHEN DECORATING YOUR BABY'S BEDROOM BUT PLAN AHEAD FOR THE NEXT STAGE WHEN HIS NEEDS CHANGE

Nesting is a well-known phenomenon when expecting a baby. Decorating a bedroom in anticipation of its future tenant can be a mixture (in equal or varying parts) of excitement, imagination, confusion and inability to make a decision. The important thing to realise is that a child's room needs to grow with him. The way the room is used for a newborn is quite different to the demands of a toy-wielding toddler and a precocious preschooler. On the following pages we break it down for you, giving advice on decorating your child's room step by step.

NEWBORN NURSERY

RULE ONE: KEEP IT SAFE

If you're pregnant, you'll want to be particularly wary of paint fumes and ladders. So, it may be best to appoint yourself the "supervisor" and let hubby get his hands dirty.

Many teething babies chomp down on the edge of their cot, so it's important that the cot (or any of their other toys) are free from lead-based paint. You can't tell by looking whether the paint is lead-based or not, but if you take a flake of any paint you suspect may have lead in it to your local Resene ColorShop they'll test it for you. You're best to presume that anything built before the 1980s is likely to have been painted with lead-based paint.

Baby whisperer and OHbaby! expert Dorothy Waide says in her view the most important piece of furniture in your baby's room is the change table. It needs to be the correct height so your back isn't put under any strain and should be wide enough and long enough to hold a toddler and have clothing and nappies readily accessible.

There are many change table styles but Dorothy prefers a change table on top of a chest of drawers (see right). You could even just use a standard change table mat on top of a sturdy, well-dimensioned chest of drawers. Dorothy has a handy tip to keep babies entertained during nappy-changing time — pop a mirror up on the wall beside the change table.

It's not a good idea to put the cot next to furniture or curtains where a baby who's learning to stand can lean over and pull things off. Also avoid curtains with tassels, and cords that can be a strangulation risk.

RULE TWO: KEEP IT CALM

A baby's nursery should be a haven for sleep and restfulness. Anything too bright or boldly patterned may over-stimulate the baby. Opt for soft warm tones that are comforting and soothing. If you know the sex of your baby you can do the traditional soft blue or pink, but also consider yellows, minty greens, peach and beige.

With sleep the holy grail of new parenthood, you need to do whatever you can to encourage a calm restful environment. Black-out curtains or blinds are a good option to encourage your baby to sleep well, and are great for those summer days when you don't want your toddler up with the bird song at 5am. When looking for a mattress, we recommend all natural fibres, organic cotton or flame-resistant wool.

RULE 3: KEEP IT COSY

The optimum temperature for a newborn's bedroom is between 16-20°C. Good insulation will help you achieve that, as will good heating. (See page 106 for more advice).

But you can achieve a warm welcoming room with nice rugs, cosy cushions, and subtle lighting.

A light with a dimmer is an advantage. You'll also be up a lot in the night for feeds or nappy changes, so the nursery needs to be a place where you'll be happy spending time at any hour of the day. You could invest in a proper nursing chair, but a comfy armchair with a good supportive back, and an ottoman or footrest to let you rest your weary feet will do the job perfectly. Dorothy says it's not necessary to have one that rocks or glides, as you should stay still when feeding your baby anyway. But if you do have one with a rocker make sure it can't trap a toddler's fingers. A small table next to your nursing chair is a must as a place to keep a glass of water and a snack.

In terms of layout of your room, try not to put the cot on the outside wall as it'll be damp and cold in winter. Bassinets are nice, but they're not a necessity as a newborn can go straight into a cot.

COLOUR CHOICES FOR NURSERIES

- Green can be calming. Blue-based greens are good for cooling down hot or north-facing rooms, but opt for a yellow-based green if you're in a cold or dark room. Use as an accent in soft orange or red rooms to give balance to the warm and stimulating colours.
- Blue can be good for over-active children, but can be cold and make a child susceptible to colic and colds. However, you can warm it up with contrasting warm colours. Pastel blue is appealing but a very dark blue could increase fear of the dark and cause nightmares.
- Pastels in pink, peach, pale almond, beige and lavender are comfort colours that equate to love and security.

From top: Resene Quill Grey, Resene Swiss Coffee, Resene Conch, all from www.resene.co.nz



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A mobile over a change table is a great distraction for baby

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- 1 Grey Marl Blanket, \$174 from www.louandolly.com
- 2 Owl Mobile, \$94.95 from www.uniqueboutique.co.nz
- 3 Bassinet Futon Mattress, \$129.95 from www.naturebaby.co.nz
- 4 Gro Time Kimberly Change Chest, RRP\$969 from www.babyonthemove.co.nz
- 5 Blue Butterfly Cushion Cover, \$41.60 from www.boltofocloth.com
- 6 BabyBliss Bassinet with Canopy, \$395 from www.dimples.co.nz
- 7 Babu Cot Sheet Set, \$145 from www.babu.co.nz

A baby's nursery should be a haven for sleep and restfulness. Anything too bright or too boldly patterned may over-stimulate the baby

TODDLER TERRITORY

RULE 1: SPACE TO PLAY

When your little one gets her legs she'll want her own space to roam and play. So make sure her toys are accessible but easy to tidy up. There are plenty of storage solutions available now, from baskets to bins and boxes.

A rug makes the floor an inviting prospect for play, particularly when the days get cooler.

With furniture around the outside of the room you'll create space in the centre for play. If the room is large enough, you could erect a teepee and use cushions or bean bags to make a cosy hideaway for them. If you really want to push the boat out, opt for swinging rings attached to the ceiling, or a climbing wall (obviously you'll need to make sure these activities are appropriate to your child's age and development).

RULE 2: SPACE TO INSPIRE

Wall art is a great way to inspire your little one, and again, the options are endless. You can use your own family photographs as decoration, or opt for wall decals which stick to the wall and can easily be removed when your child outgrows them. Also think of words as art — an inspirational quote in a beautiful framed graphic print will help her dream great dreams. A growth chart is another neat idea to inspire your child as she grows.

Your child's room should also be a place that makes her feel like she belongs. Imagine how frustrating it must be to reach for a light switch that's just beyond your fingertips, or how exhausting to have to clamber onto adult-sized furniture all the time. By mounting hooks on the wall at your child's height, you can hang up her clothes and encourage her to get dressed by herself each morning.

RULE 3: SPACE TO REST

Of course, the focus of the bedroom remains the bed. Many cots now offer the longevity of having removable sides so they turn into a bed for a toddler. We adore the Ubabub Pod Cot — that's a bed that'll inspire a great love of design in its young occupant.

It's important that cots meet safety guidelines. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs says the cot must be more than 600mm deep when you measure from the top of the mattress base to the lowest point on any end or side. The mattress needs to fit in firmly with gaps around all sides less than 20mm. Spaces between the bars of the cot must be between 50mm and 85mm. Also check that the dropside catches lock securely — you don't want any jammed fingers. And until your child is ready to transition to a big kid's bed, make sure she can't climb out of the cot by standing on any bars, ledges or other footholds. Dorothy Waide's cot-buying advice is that as long as your cot meets safety requirements, you're better to spend your money on a quality mattress that lasts at least two years.



An inspirational quote will help them dream great dreams



- 1 Ubabub Pod Junior Bed Kit (to convert cot to bed) \$259 from www.urbanbambini.co.nz
- 2 Ubabub Pod Cot \$2599 from www.urbanbambini.co.nz
- 3 Citta Design Laundry Bag RRP\$86.50 from Corso de' Fiori, ph: (09) 307 9166
- 4 Vintage Retro Pink and Lime French Stripe Cushion with Pink Drill Backing, \$64 from www.gorgi.co.nz
- 5 It's a Hoot Cushion Cover, \$41.50 from www.boltofcloth.com
- 6 41 Orchard Once Upon A Time wall decal, \$72.95 from www.tinyrevolution.co.nz
- 7 Elephant Storage Box, from \$80 from www.snugasabug.co.nz
- 8 Your Dreams art print, AU\$30 from www.printspace.com.au
- 9 Dwell Paper Dolls Duvet Set (main picture), \$329 from www.alliuminteriors.co.nz
- 10 Paint samples from top left, Resene Retreat, Resene Bonanza, Resene Eighth Oilskin, all from www.resene.co.nz

BIG KID'S DOMAIN

RULE 1: LET THEM CHOOSE

It might be a bit of a risk to give children a colour chart and say "take your pick". But, it is important to let them have some say in the look of their room. There are some fantastic accessories available that'll appeal to the younger generation of interior designers. We love the bright papier-mâché rhino head and the Karlsson clock (pictured) both from Allium.

Bunk beds are always a kid favourite and they can be a practical solution too, especially in shared rooms and for sleepovers. Many bunk beds can separate out into single beds which makes them much more versatile. Or you could look at saving space with a bunk that has the bed on top and an in-built desk below.

Your little racing driver might be mad keen on Lightning McQueen now, so you can still indulge him with a cushion or a pillowcase, but keep the larger bedding investments in plainer, good quality linen that'll see him through as he grows.

Also, find ways he can show off his treasures and special toys. You can source some old boxes and paint them or line them with wallpaper and hang them on the wall as display cabinets.

Magnetic and chalkboard paints are becoming increasingly popular for children's spaces. Magnetic paints are great because your child can use magnets to display their posters or artwork without ruining the walls. Pinboards are also a great option, and if you cover them in complementary fabric it can unite the colour scheme.

RULE 2: LET THEM GROW

When you're decorating a room for your big kid you need to create an area that will accommodate homework and hobbies as well as sleep.

A desk will be a worthwhile investment as you look toward the future, as will a mirror as they grow ever more aware of their appearance.

They'll also need a good bedside light so they can read to themselves, and at the risk of sounding like a broken record — storage, storage and more storage.

Buy second-hand and upcycle where possible. Simply give an old second-hand chest of drawers a lick of paint and some new handles for a new lease of life. There are plenty of objects that can have a new life with a little imagination — a skateboard shelf perhaps?

The older your children get the more social they are, so pop a couple of bean bags in to make it a space the kids are happy to hang out in.

RULE 3: LET THEM LEARN

As children get older and they start studying hard at their desks you'll want to create an environment that encourages learning, not distracts from it. Resene says it's important to consider which colours will bring out the best in your child. An energetic child who has difficulty focusing will do better with softer tones to calm him down, while a more sensitive child might do well with the stimulation from splashes of sharper colours.

- 1 Milan Bunk Bed, \$1925 from www.urbankids.co.nz
- 2 Cocoon Couture Captain Shaggy Bean Bag Cover, \$120 from www.snugasabug.co.nz
- 3 Famille Summerbelle World Map Print, \$82.95 from www.tinyrevolution.co.nz
- 4 I Think I Can print, NZ\$43 (approx) from www.etsy.com/shop/missjillmcdonald
- 5 Rice Papier-mâché Rhino Head, \$290 from www.alliuminteriors.co.nz
- 6 Time Brick Digital Clock \$22.90, from www.ikoiko.co.nz
- 7 Karlsson Embossed Clock, \$119 from www.alliuminteriors.co.nz
- 8 Lego Storage Head, \$34 from www.designdenmark.co.nz
- 9 Trestle Desk, \$169.95 from www.mocka.co.nz



The older your children get the more social they become, so pop a couple of bean bags in the room to make it a space the kids are happy to hang out in.

COLOUR CHOICES FOR BIG KIDS

- Yellow has been known to help logical and clear thinking, but you need to be very careful selecting yellows because acidic or greenish tints can cause headaches and irritability.
- Coral red is good for inspiration and imagination so is a good choice for social areas. True reds stimulate but don't encourage achievement so are not so good for study areas.
- Violet opens up both the logical and creative sides of the brain.
- White can be too chilly in a working environment and is better used as an accent or contrast colour.
- Grey has no direction or purpose, so is not a good choice for encouraging achievement.

From top: Resene Daredevil, Resene Cork, Resene Spray, all from www.resene.co.nz

