

the kids



Penny single duvet set, £30 (double duvet set £55), Penny flower cushion, £12, Penny Jess Toy Cushion, £8, all from Kas

dreamy rooms for kids

WHETHER THEY'RE TODDLERS OR TEENS, YOUR CHILDREN DESERVE THE BEST BEDROOMS YOU CAN GIVE THEM. LUCY CORRY LOOKS AT THE LATEST TRENDS.

Remember when you were expecting your first baby and the time you spent deciding on the look for the nursery? That tiny babe probably paid little heed to your carefully chosen colour scheme, but children are just as affected by their surroundings as adults.

“In many ways it’s no different from designing an adult environment,” says London interior designer Ursula Wesselingh.

“The space needs to address practical aspects such as sleep, dress, play, learning and storage, and it should also reflect the child’s personality, their uniquely individual interests and desires.

"I personally recommend that a child's room should express the child's personality, as it's important for children to feel ownership and have a space that is uniquely theirs."

But, as Ursula points out, the tricky thing about kids' rooms is making sure they grow with the child - and harmonise with the rest of the home.

"Furniture sizing and positioning are also important considerations for kids' rooms," she says. "Their requirements may be obvious at the time you do your design, but they have a habit of growing at an alarming speed!"

Ursula's solution is to keep the major features in a room simple and add accessories which can be replaced as tastes and needs change.

"Resist themed rooms - these will be difficult and costly to adapt later," she says.

"Take a cue from adult design and don't smother a room with oversimplified childish décor."

Sarah-Jane Matthews, who designs handmade nursery furniture for her company Bambizi, agrees it's important to buy pieces that will grow with your child.

"Good quality furniture will last forever and you can easily use different paint finishes on furniture to evolve with your child that can be stripped and re-painted quite cheaply," she says.

"While a Ferrari bed will delight a 10-year-old, by the time they're 12, this could be seen as babyish and an embarrassment when their friends come round."

But keeping things simple doesn't mean you have to banish your child to a Spartan cell.

Sarah-Jane says paint, bright throws and rugs can add colour and excitement, but can be easily changed when the child grows out of them.

"Wall stickers are also becoming huge. They're cheap, easy to apply and can easily be removed when the child gets bored with them," she says.

Chalkboard paint is another winning way to change the decoration of a child's room, particularly when scaled up to cover an entire wall.



Bespoke felt tree mural by **Marianne Smink, POA - Room To Bloom**
Rofylld Rocking Chair, £29.99 - **Ikea**
Anne Claire Petit Crochet Mushroom Moneybox, £32 - **Little Baby Company**
Rill Knitted Creature, £35 - **Donna Wilson**

KIDS DESERVE THE BEST ROOMS

TRENDS FOR 2011

Ursula Wesselingh predicts all things handmade and vintage will be right at the top of our wish lists in 2011, along with handmade toys and 'up cycled' furniture found in junk shops or on eBay.

She says this softer, more nostalgic approach to interior design reflects the continuing impact of the global economic crisis and increased interest in sustainability.

"Mixing and matching new and old replaces rooms with standard three-piece bedroom furniture sets," she says, adding that children's furniture is becoming increasingly multi-functional and designed to change as the child develops.

Mixing and matching old and new furniture also adds character to a room - and you can even get older children to help, Ursula says.

"Revamp a second-hand bedside table, chest of drawers, desk, wardrobe or bed with a lick of fresh paint and decoupage. It's a great way to involve kids hands-on with the design of their room."

But there's no need to despair if your children are like caged animals indoors - floral, forest and jungle themes will still be big in 2011.

"Trees, deer, mushrooms, birds and rabbits abound this year, in the form of lighting, furniture, toys and print," Ursula says.

"Oversized stuffed jungle animals and trophy heads will be popular. Green and earthy tones complement the trend while blond wood dominates."

Ursula says adult design influences are filtering down to children's rooms and more sophisticated kids will love scaled down versions of adult classics, such as the Eames lounge chair and Arne Jacobsen's Egg chair.

"Greys have been popular in the adult world of design and will enter kids' interiors, as will monochrome schemes," she says.

"Zesty brights replace primary colours and bold patterns and print influenced by 60s design will also be popular."

Whatever their age, adventurous kids will be entranced by map-themed decorations and will love using old travel trunks for storage as well.



Handmade 'Jasper' rocking horse, £200 - Little Bird Told Me

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GETTING IT RIGHT

Parenting experts often recommend you choose your battles with growing children and Ursula suggests finding a happy medium if some of your kids' design ideas don't suit your own ethos.

If your stropky teenager wants to paint the walls black, compromise and let them paint one wall, she says. If your little princess has her heart set on a fairytale bedroom, try to capture the magic with a sheer canopy over the bed and lots of sparkly cushions that will be easy to replace when her taste changes.

Sarah-Jane Matthews says parents should consider where the furniture comes from and how long it is likely to last.



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"It will make life much easier if you can make one purchase that will last forever, rather than having to buy more pieces every few years because the child has been jumping on them.

"It's important as parents that we educate our children to stop thinking as a 'throw away society'," she adds. Ursula Wesselingh says while it's easy to get carried away, it's important to keep focused on providing a calm backdrop for your child's changing tastes.

"There's so much gorgeous stuff out there, it can be tempting to keep buying. You usually end up with lots of stuff that doesn't sit well together, whereas a few carefully chosen pieces against a calm background will get the opportunity to shine. Restraint is the recipe for success," she says.

Room furnished using fabrics from **Harlequin**
Blind: **Bonbon 6059** (£28/mtr)
Curtains and Duvet Cover: **Go Go Retro 3232** (£26/mtr)
Cushions: From a selection of **What a Hoot** fabrics
Bean Bag: (top-sides) **Rush 3250**, **Go Go Retro 3233** (both £26/mtr)
Wallpaper: (l-r) **Candy 70540**, **Go Go Retro 70504** both £25 a roll

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THE ESSENTIALS

Charlie Sunda, artistic director at interior design company Kia Design says proper storage is the most important feature of children's rooms.

"Even the best-designed room will instantly look a tip if there's nowhere to put everything," he says. "If you get the storage solutions right you've won half the battle."

Getting the amount of storage right is tricky as well. Ursula Wesselingh suggests estimating how much is needed - then doubling it!

"The built-in variety will be quite an investment, but it will pay back in dividends," she says. "I favour freestanding armoires as they add lots of character. Ikea is brilliant for modern cost-effective shelving."

Whatever the ages of their children, Ursula says parents should splurge on the best quality mattresses they can afford for them.

"Restorative sleep is incredibly important for children's development. Their bodies might be light, but they're still growing and need good support. For a cot or cot bed, a good quality mattress made of anti-allergenic materials that complies with all the British safety standards is one of the best investments you can make," she says.

"The bed is often the focal point of a child's bedroom, so it makes sense to get this right too. It doesn't have to cost the earth - vintage painted wood or metal beds look stunning in boys' and girls' rooms alike - and are right on trend."

Charlie Sunda says investing in the desk area is also important: "Doing homework can be highly unappealing as we all know, so create a workstation that is not too gimmicky, but that does encourage a child to sit at it."



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Dino single duvet set, £30,
Dino Bronte Toy cushion, £12,
Dino Rexie Toy cushion, £10,
all from **Kas**

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