

AUTUMN 2012

The Portland Hospital Parenting Magazine

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Storage Solutions

By Tamara Abraham

THERE'S NO NEED TO MESS AROUND when it comes to keeping kids' clutter under control. Inspired storage solutions and simple ideas will keep your living space looking like your own home sweet home.

As any parent will testify, it can be a constant battle to contain the pre-school paraphernalia at home.

Savvy storage is the answer and, even in the most compact urban spaces, there are smart ideas that will help retain some semblance of order.

Babylist parenting expert Anita Worlidge admits parents-to-be are often daunted by the prospect of turning their elegant homes into child-friendly zones.

"They imagine garish, plastic baby products in primary colours and feel desperate," she says.

"Many of our clients live in urban environments where space is at a premium. Most have put a lot of effort and care into making their homes look beautiful; their style is set before the baby arrives."

But there is no need to sacrifice your personal style, she says. Fitted and built-in cupboards are the least obtrusive way to store children's various bits and pieces, while versatile furniture, such as a cot that converts into a bed, also cuts down on clutter.

Rachel Heller, co-founder of baby store Huggle.co.uk, insists you don't need to play it too safe though.

"Make your storage solutions fun as well as practical, and always stylish so they add something to the nursery," she says.

"I love the 3 Sprouts collection. The range includes a small caddy, small bin, large bin and boxes – they are fab! In my opinion, this is the best way to get little ones to want to store their bits and bobs away."

If you haven't got a designated playroom, create a play area in the living space where you spend the most time with your child to keep toys contained, says Ursula Wesselingh of Room to Bloom.

The interior designer, who specialises in creating children's spaces, says a mix of open and closed storage works well in terms of style, keeping messier stuff out of sight and cleared away in a snap, with more presentable items on display.

She suggests parents be inventive and consider repurposing old trunks, suitcases and crates to create storage with a vintage chic aesthetic.

And some strategic positioning means you won't have to do all the hard work. Ursula believes that by making it easy for children to store their own toys, clearing it all up can be a relatively effortless activity.

"Kids love organising their stuff so with adequate and easily accessible storage it's easy to encourage a habit for a lifetime," she says. "Just don't call it 'tidying up!'"

She advises placing toy storage at child height, such as low-level hooks or easily-accessible baskets for loose items.

"Larger baskets, tubs or containers on castors can help with a quick tidy up at the end of the day or store large, irregularly shaped items," Ursula explains.

"Smaller pieces should go in small containers – or else they will have to be turned upside down to get to them!"





Multi-pocket hanging organisers for daily necessities such as cloths, lotions, and small toys are perfect for keeping in bathrooms and near a baby changing table, she adds - and can be hung high out of reach of tiny hands.

Another key way to maximise storage space is to clear out unused toys, clothes and equipment, once the child has outgrown it.

"Purge regularly to keep the amount of storage you need the same and clutter at bay," Ursula advises. "It's easier to stay on top of this - and avoid big, painful declutter sessions - if you take something out for every new piece that comes into your house on birthdays and Christmas.

"Give to charity clothing that's not worn, books your child doesn't read, and toys that have been outgrown, or are broken or incomplete."

Don't be afraid to be ruthless when clearing out, adds Anita.

"Make the most of the second-hand marketplace and use platforms like eBay to re-sell or pass on to friends," she suggests.

www.babylist.com
www.roomtobloom.com
www.huggle.co.uk

Plank Top Numbered Storage Lockers
 £425, The Old Cinema
www.theoldcinema.co.uk



All The Lovely Stuff Moose Hooks
 £30, Little Yellow Birds
www.littleyellowbirds.co.uk



Colourful Metal Hooks
 £6.50 each, Little Baby Company
www.littlebabycompany.com

3 Sprouts Organic Storage Bin
 £40 each, www.huggle.co.uk



Wooden Safari Toy Box
 £124.16, Becky and Lolo
www.beckyandlolo.co.uk



Labrador Peg Bag
 £8.50, Sophie Allport
www.sophieallport.com

