

# ROOM TO GROW

Take our experts' tips on planning a room that will last throughout childhood



Leading designers of eco-friendly nursery furniture, Oeuf delivers once again with its sleek new Rhea collection.

Planning your child's room is one of the things that parents-to-be often spend the most money and time doing. And for good reason; it's the room that needs to evolve over years to suit you and your child. What may be important at the baby stage, won't necessarily be so crucial as your child grows into toddlerhood and beyond, so it's worth thinking ahead to make sure that your décor has the flexibility to adapt. Corina Papadopoulou, founder of Kidsen Scandinavian children's store has sage advice: "See your child's bedroom as a blank canvas that you can slowly add to over time. It doesn't have to be picture perfect immediately as your child will grow and evolve more quickly than imagined."

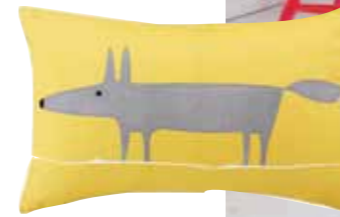
## NURSERY PLANNING

Ask any expectant mother what is at the top of her list as her pregnancy progresses and she'll probably say the nursery. Our human desire to nest before our babies arrive means that mothers (and fathers) often spend the most energy ensuring the nursery is just perfect for their little addition – usually spending the most on the cot.

It's important for both mother and child that a baby's room is a comfortable, calm place that you'll be happy spending plenty of time in – day and night! Interior designer Ursula Wesselingh is the founder and principal of Room to Bloom, a London interior design company for children. Her advice in room planning is to start with the basics.

"Consider the room's location and other practicalities. If you have a choice, choose a quiet room close to your bedroom so you don't have to walk far at night. Newborns are sensitive to light and temperature, so check you have enough sockets (think ahead to how you might use the room in

Mr Fox cushion from Scion, £40, John Lewis



a few years' time), install a dimmer switch, and enable adequate temperature control and ventilation."

## FURNITURE

In terms of furnishing the room, again it's key to think of longevity of the items you want. The place your child will sleep is the most important choice. Cribs are often beautiful heirlooms, but if budget is a factor you may prefer to consider a cot that turns into a toddler or junior bed. The Stokke Sleepi is a popular choice with a cool Scandi aesthetic; it grows from the Mini (up to six months), at which point it converts to the Bed (from 0-18 months) and then again to the Junior Bed when your toddler is ready for a touch more independence. Oeuf, the must-have New York children's design brand recently



The minimally chic Stokke Sleepi Bed



launched the Rhea cot which can also convert into a modern daybed. Whatever you decide, Corina reminds, "Make sure you have a good bed and mattress – your child's spine and back is the core of their being – look after it."

A changing zone and somewhere comfortable and supportive to sit are essential. Remember that you'll be sitting in this chair feeding for many hours and reading stories in years to come. It's worth investing in a chair that will last. Bobo Kids Momo Glider is a contemporary take on the traditional. John Lewis also have a wide range of changing units and more traditional feeding chairs and foot stools for the ultimate in comfort. Jody Ewan, a buyer at John Lewis, advises, "Make sure you physically measure the space to ensure your furniture fits!"



## STORAGE

"You won't need much storage to begin with, drawers will often suffice for babies", says Room to Bloom's Ursula. "Wardrobes or armoires are often not necessary when your baby is very young, but they do add character to a room and can be useful for toys and other storage until you need it for clothes. Don't be tempted by child-sized versions – your child will outgrow these very quickly."

Bobo Kids co-founder Niloufar Bakhtiar-Clignet lists storage options:

- Underbed storage is ideal for a child's bedroom when space is limited. Large, roomy drawers such as those in the Bobo Kids 50s-inspired retro collection can help keep clothes or toys at bay.
- Bookshelves are always a good idea when creating a child's room and as they grow up, you'll wish you had more!
- Multifunctional furniture won't date, such as the Amsterdam cupboards (above) which are good for clothing, DVDs or toys.
- Baskets and large receptacles are great for children who accumulate knick knacks at an alarming rate! Easy access to these makes tidying up simple for any child.



Storage solutions always have a stylish edge at Bobo Kids



Acapulco chair from [www.Molly-Meg.co.uk](http://www.Molly-Meg.co.uk)

### DÉCOR

“We are a generation of luxury paint-obsessed parents,” points out Corina from Kidsen. “Most of us know every shade of white and grey available. This makes for a good basis for a child’s room on which you can build.” She advises bearing in mind these principles:

- Mix old and new – a room filled with IKEA is not inspiring. Combine it with an old chair or vintage chandelier. Don’t be scared to mix and match.
- Leave space for play – don’t over-clutter a room with furniture and toys.
- If colour scares you, keep the base of the room plain and have colourful focal point such as a rug or shelf.
- Remember who the room is for and don’t get carried away with what you want – even if it hurts the inner designer in you!



The clean lines of Oeuf’s Merlin dresser make it a perfect fit in any nursery – and it comes in a spacious six-drawer option, too.

### BE CREATIVE

How can you make sure your child’s room is unique and reflects his or her own personality? Ursula from Room to Bloom has plenty of ideas:

- A huge trend right now are beds built into walls or cupboards, creating an intimate sleeping nook with incorporated storage – a sure way to impress little friends!
- Bunk beds are great for adventurous play and sleepovers for older children. If children share a bunk you

can create their own little space with curtaining.

- Be inventive and repurpose old trunks, suitcases or crates to create storage. Stay away from see-through plastic containers – it sounds practical but creates visual chaos and unrest. Use labels instead.
- Industrial shelving and locker style furniture add instant style to a boy’s room.
- Create a mini-library or gallery with picture ledges on a wall to display books with their covers facing outward,

so children can choose a book easily (change the display from time to time). A crate on wheels with books to flip through is another flexible way to encourage reading.

- Add floor cushions or flat mattress-like cushions for little people to sit on and play with – perfect for making dens.
- A child’s room is their safe haven for play and sleep so involve them in the process as they grow, and most of all have fun planning together!



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