

STYLISH CHILDREN'S ROOMS

From contemporary cool to pretty and practical, the latest schemes incorporating a study zone, smart storage and fun decorative effects are sure to be loved for years to come



IN FULL SWING You can afford to be a little more adventurous in a child's room with fun and unusual features, such as this swing, which adds a playful touch to a whimsical bedroom. An eclectic mix of bohemian patterns and retro charm complete the look. For a similar swing, try the Lilagunga swing, €149, Finnish Design Shop, finnishdesignshop.com.

▷ **WORLD VIEW** Add some visual interest to a study area with a striking mural that is also educational. This feature wall will have particular appeal for budding explorers, who can stick mementos on the map to show where they've been, or mark where they would like to go in the future. World Map wallpaper, 396x264cm, £124.95, Stanfords, 020 7836 1321, stanfords.co.uk.



△ **CHALK IT UP** Bring a touch of light-heartedness to organisation with a blackboard calendar. To recreate this look, lay out a grid using masking tape and apply adhesive letters that can be peeled off once you've filled in the squares with paint. Try Ecos Organic Paints, 01524 852371, ecosorganicpaints.co.uk, which sells chalkboard paints in a range of 180 colours, £32.70 for 1 litre.

▷ **PICTURE PERFECT** Encourage creativity by dedicating a wall in a child's bedroom to their best drawings and paintings mixed with other images of their choosing. Leaving some of the pictures unframed keeps the look informal and is a stylish match for an industrial desk and stool. You can source similar vintage furniture from Elemental, 020 7247 7588, elemental.uk.com.



ADVICE STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Choose designs with longevity

FREE-STANDING The benefit of this sort of furniture is that it allows a room to be reconfigured as your child grows up. Pieces can be repositioned to create specific zones: for example, a study area can be made using a wardrobe or bookshelf as a room divider with a desk placed against it. Low-level storage for books and toys only tends to be useful for younger children, so it makes sense to select inexpensive products. "It's often better to choose standard furniture rather than pieces from children's ranges. It may cost a little more, but your children will grow into the pieces and you can also use the furniture elsewhere in the home at a later date," says Charlie Marshall, founder of Loaf, 0845 468 0697, loaf.com. "Ample storage for toys and knickknacks is also vital, so look for accessible pieces, such as colourful stackable boxes."

BUILT-IN If you're tight on space, built-in furniture is an effective solution. Raising a bed and integrating a desk space, wardrobe, drawers and shelving underneath or building a wardrobe or a desk area in an alcove makes good sense. "The main consideration should be the position of the large pieces of furniture now and in the future," says Barbara Genda, founder of Barbara Genda Bespoke Furniture, 020 7978 2349, barbara-genda.com. "First, think about the ideal place for a bed and then plan the other elements around it. Specify adjustable height rails and removable shelves to change the internal configuration of wardrobes." Built-in furniture is often made of better-quality materials than off-the-peg pieces and wooden designs can be refinished if damaged, whereas laminates will be difficult to recover.



ON A HIGHER LEVEL In compact rooms, raising the bed and installing storage beneath is a practical solution. Simple bespoke cabinetry ensures the space doesn't become cluttered, while a vertical striped wallpaper makes the ceiling feel higher. Sandbone, 020 8617 0939, sandbone.co.uk, can create made-to-measure built-in furniture like this.



△ **RIGHT ANGLES** This clever combination of storage and beds makes good use of every inch of space, while bursts of vivid yellow, which can always be painted a more neutral shade later on, add a bright contemporary note. This is the Nidi Collection by Italian design firm Battistella, around £4,500 for the configuration shown, at Go Modern, 020 7731 9540, gomodern.co.uk.

▽ **RAISE THE ROOF** Innovative use is made of the eaves space in this shared bedroom, with the top bunk sitting above a doorway, beyond which is an ensuite bathroom. The lower bunks also have handy pull-out beds for sleepovers, leaving plenty of floor space for play. This five-bed bespoke structure by Barnes Vanze Architects, barnesvanze.com, cost around £13,500.

EXPERT VIEW CREATING A SCHEME TO LAST



URSULA WESSELING, interior designer and founder of Room to Bloom, 07590 403997, room-to-bloom.com.

■ Invest in getting the basics right to make updates easier. Check you've got enough sockets for the room's current and future uses to avoid trailing cables and extension leads. Moving radiators or choosing vertical ones opens up more options for furniture placement, but changing their position can mean taking up floorboards, so do it before putting down new flooring.

■ **Durable surfaces are key to longevity. Neutral flooring is best, with timber a practical choice as it is hard-wearing and easy to clean, however, sound insulation will be required in the floor void, as it conveys more noise than carpet. A washable rug can be easily updated and will soften the look. Furniture is best finished with paint, varnish or lacquer that can be wiped clean. Select a washable emulsion for walls and eggshell for woodwork.**

■ Decorative details such as prints and pictures are easy to update, especially if displayed on a ledge, or left unframed and casually stuck on walls with Washi tape, for example (use it cautiously on wallpaper, though). Fairy lights, garlands, bunting and pom-poms make inexpensive finishing touches.

■ **When buying furniture, go for classic or modern styles with clean lines in neutral finishes. Avoid age-specific themes, patterns or cut-outs and child-sized wardrobes, as you'll need more storage before you know it. Vintage pieces, such as wrought-iron beds, school furniture and French armoires, can be charming.**

■ Ceiling spots are useful for lighting specific areas, but don't install them in a grid-like fashion as it has an energy-draining effect. Ensure the main light is dimmable to signal a change of pace as bedtime approaches. Although sconces can provide indirect light, they can limit layout changes, so it's worth considering clip lights, which work just as well.



SHOPPING WALLPAPERS FOR CHILDREN'S ROOMS



1| Twinkle, twinkle. Stars in Navy, £92 a roll, Bobo Kids, 020 7838 1020, bobokids.co.uk.



2| Get in line. Stripes in Cream and Green, £60 a roll, Paperboy Wallpaper, 020 7193 9135, paperboywallpaper.co.uk.



3| Fun florals. Daisy Patch in Lemongrass, £38 a roll, Designers Guild, 020 7351 5775, designersguild.com.



4| Creature comforts. Portraits, £70 a roll, Hibou Home, 01580 243188, hibouhome.com.



5| The write stuff. Scribbler in Vintage/Multi, £36 a roll, Sanderson, 0844 543 9500, sanderson-uk.com.



BOUTIQUE BEAUTY A modern chandelier and hanging chair give this room a chic feel, with the striped ceiling adding to the whimsical yet sophisticated look. For similar wallpaper, try Mimi Stripe, £32 a roll, Harlequin at Wallpaper Direct, 01323 430886, wallpaperdirect.com.



BAGS OF STYLE Making the most of every surface, including the back of the door, will reduce mess. These labelled canvas bags can be taken down for playtime and easily tidied away afterwards. Try Personalised storage bags, £35 each, My 1st Years, 0844 409 7020, my1styears.com.



MADE FOR FUN This interactive and playful space features built-in circular seating and a climbing wall. Recessed shelving and a wall of storage units ensure the floor is left clutter free, with a striking rug for comfort. This concept was designed by Roselind Wilson Design, 020 3371 1779, roselindwilsondesign.com, and Michaelis Boyd, 020 7221 1237, michaelisboyd.com.

SLIM FIT Bespoke bunk beds that are narrower than usual make the best use of space in this long bedroom, with a striped carpet giving the illusion of width. A compact study area, which is well lit with spotlights for evening homework, is also a neat solution. Box Room Beds, 0114 230 7003, boxroombed.co.uk, specialises in modifiable designs for small spaces, try the Trendy Whitewash bunk bed, from £419. □

FURTHER CONTACTS

These companies also sell furniture and accessories for children's rooms.

Aspace, 0845 872 2500, aspace.co.uk.

Blabla, blablakids.com.

Bouf, 020 8816 8284, bouf.com.

Feather & Black, 01243 380600, featherandblack.com.

Ferm Living, fermliving.com.

Great Little Trading Co, 0344 848 6000, gltc.co.uk.

Molly Meg, 07971 691327, mollymeg.com.

Noa & Nani, 01303 872957, noaandnani.co.uk.

Olive Loves Alfie, 020 7241 4212, olivelovesalfie.co.uk.

Olli Ella, 020 7713 8668, olliella.com.

Roddy & Ginger, roddyandginger.bigcartel.com.

Rose & Grey, 0161 926 8763, roseandgrey.co.uk.

Smallable, 020 3445 0146, en.smallable.com.

The Kid Who, 0845 548 5440, thekidwho.eu.

The White Company, 020 3758 9222, thewhitecompany.com.

SHOPPING FABRICS FOR CHILDREN'S ROOMS



1| Feathered friend. All Over Plume, cotton, 160cm wide, **£30.40m**. Casa Deco, 0844 369 0102, casadeco.fr/en.



2| Figures of fun. Peopleton in Indigo, linen, 142cm wide, **£68m**. Cloth & Clover, 020 7013 0847, clothandclover.com.



3| Geometry lesson. Kaleidoscope in Bright Multi, cotton, 137cm wide, **£32m**. Harlequin, 0845 123 6815, harlequin.uk.com.



4| In full bloom. Multi floral, cotton, 125cm wide, **£19.50m**. Lulu & Nat, 07527 812260, luluandnat.com.



5| Fine pedigree. Hot Dogs in Blue, cotton, 138cm wide, **£38m**. Jane Churchill, 020 7318 6000, janechurchill.com.

