

Create an inviting, kid-friendly space



CATHERINE HORBER

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

When designing rooms that involve small children, it is important to take many factors into consideration including dirty little fingers and the spills and accidents that can take place.

I also hear from parents that they should hold off on investing in doing any kind of design in their family room in order to allow their children to have room for their toys, or wait until they are older so that nice furniture does not get damaged.

There are, however, many ways to create a welcoming and practical space for your children in a family room that is also beautiful and inviting:

1. Create ample storage options. One of my favourite design elements are very large funky custom ottomans that open up for storage. You can

make them in any colour, pattern, texture, or make them thick and tufted with studs for added interest. It can also be used as a coffee table as well as provide space for baskets and storage.

2. Built-in cabinetry. I never tire of adding built-in cabinetry to a space — not only because we design and build them in-house — but also because they provide a phenomenal focal point.

Most of all, it is always the perfect place to store all types of children's toys, games, DVDs or books, and can also be used to display a fireplace, TV or a few nice decorative items.

3. Hidden storage. Sometimes depending on the layout, I may even move a sofa forward from a wall or window and put a storage cubby unit behind it with baskets for kids



toys, so it is hidden but within easy reach.

4. Durable fabrics. In high traffic areas, I prefer to use medium to darker colours for large surfaces such as sofas. Ensure fabrics have a very high abrasion factor (the amount

of rubs the fabric can endure). Also useful are fabrics that wipe easily and don't stain. There are many fabrics that are stain-resistant, fire-retardant and eco-friendly.

5. Avoid sharp edges and pointy cornered furniture

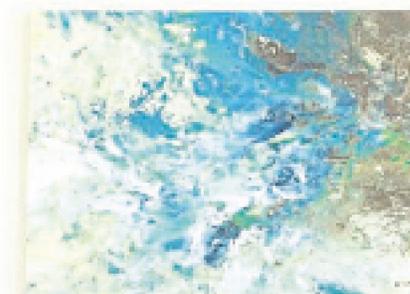
and keep fragile decorations at arm's reach. Round, oval shapes are usually better for little ones. Decorative vases and things that break should be placed up high in wall units that are outside a children's reach.

We love coming up with great design solutions that are mindful of our clients wishes to play with their children during the day and to tuck their toys away at night. With a little planning, you can have the

best of both worlds — letting your family enjoy themselves while having a beautiful space as well.

— **Designer Catherine-Lucie Horber is principal of Royal Interior Design Ltd., which provides decorating, staging and renovating services for small and full-scale residential projects in the GTA. For more information, visit www.royalinteriordesign.ca.**

Large, funky ottomans can offer visual interest to an area as well as provide additional storage space.



There are many ways to create a welcoming and practical space that is also beautiful and inviting.

