

## LIFE home

# Kid Friendly Rooms That Last!

BY LARRY BLUM

Once your baby is past the crib stage, it's time to figure out how to design that perfect 'big kid' room. With a little planning, you can create a room that works now and for years to come – without requiring multiple major investments.

The best place to start is with quality furniture. If you buy furniture with lasting style and quality, you can mix and match as your child grows. In the beginning, keep it simple. Toddlers pretty much need a bed, a dresser, and a place to put the toys away. Skipping the toddler bed and going straight from the crib to a twin with a rail will save you time and money.

As children grow, you can add pieces like bookshelves, student desks, vanities. If you think ahead as you choose your furniture for the "little" person's room, the pieces you'll need for your bigger kid will be available. It's a good idea to shop for your kids' furniture at a store that specializes in children's bedroom pieces. They have more options and the experience to help you make the best choices. Kids are tough on their stuff. Be sure to pay attention to safety issues and warranties.



Making the best use of space is the first priority for most parents when furnishing the kids' rooms. Especially if that space is shared by multiple kids. Efficient and sufficient storage is the single biggest factor in making kids' rooms livable. You (and your child!) have to be able to easily stow all the clothes and toys – preferably out of sight!

Look for multi-purpose pieces. For the same floor space as a single bed, you can have bunk beds for two kids, loft beds with storage or desk beneath, or an elevated captain's bed with a dresser as its base. Kids as young as three or four can manage an elevated bed if you use a stairway vs. a ladder for the climb to the top.

Additional pieces can help with storage. When kids are ready for a desk, be sure to look for drawers or coordinating pieces that can hold the books and supplies. Thinking vertical is a great way to optimize space in a smaller room. Choose full height bookcases and put the stuff the kids use on the bottom. Place decorative pieces or toys that are out of rotation on the top shelves. Baskets and/or doors can hide the mess and save time and sanity with the daily (hourly) clean-up process.

When you're ready to head to the store, be prepared. Take a minute to measure and draw out the room you're outfitting. Include windows, doors, closet sizes, and features. Indicate ceiling

height (or heights if you have a slanted ceiling or dormers) – it can make a difference for loft beds and tall pieces. You can use that layout to figure out what will fit now and what your options are for additional pieces. Be sure to ask about delivery times. Some stores offer delivery within a few days while others can take eight to twelve weeks.

Buying "real" furniture doesn't mean your kids' rooms can't be fun and personalized. If you opt for a bed that will last vs. the plastic race car bed, just add themed linens, decorations, even a racing stripe across the wall. Then when his new love is football, you only have to change up the accessories. You'll find a great selection of kid friendly décor at children's furniture stores.

Decorating kids' rooms can be so much fun for kids and parents alike. Take your kids with you when you're shopping to be sure everyone is happy with the selections. Parents have the final word on what comes home, but the little people literally have to live with the decision. [wFm](#)

*Larry Blum has over 30 years of experience with furniture and has outfitted hundreds of kids' rooms. He owns Kids2Teen Bedrooms in Tysons, Rockville, and Annapolis. Kids2Teen offers half the usual lead time for delivery and displays more pieces than any other DC area store. Contact Larry at [kids2teenbedrooms.com](http://kids2teenbedrooms.com).*

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[kids2teenbedrooms.com](http://kids2teenbedrooms.com)

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[bergfurniture.com](http://bergfurniture.com)

[ne-kids.com](http://ne-kids.com)