

This Surfin' Safari theme was a big hit with the homeowner's beach-lovin' daughter



Adorable Kids' Rooms

Tips for Decorating Your Katy Cutie's Bedroom

Written by Cathy Sze



Custom window treatments can add a lot of flair to any child's room



Wall murals can be customized to suit a child's interests and hobbies



A nautical themed room works for little and big kids alike



Painting the walls lime green made a big difference in this girl's room

Do you find yourself wondering how you can gain more time to relax - to take a break from keeping your kids constantly busy and entertained? Decorating your child's room into their personal sanctuary just might do the trick. From choosing the proper theme to installing the last light, Katy area designers and mothers offer decorating tips and ideas to create the best setting, one that will help keep your child occupied in their room while you enjoy some peace and quiet.

Choosing a Theme

Let your child ride on the back of a dolphin and escape into a tropical oasis. Give them the chance to steel the mike and take center stage as they belt out their favorite Miley Cyrus song. Why not let them run with the zebras and cheetahs as they take a safari ride through Africa? The choices of themes for your kids' rooms are endless. All it takes is a little creativity combined with your child's likes to complete the perfect atmosphere. Cathy Sneedon, mother and part time interior decorator of her home-based business, Mapacha Designs, understands what it takes to successfully complete a room. "It's just incorporating and taking an idea and actually using a lot of different resources to pull and make things exciting for kids," says Sneedon. Aimee Chaisom, interior decorator for Designs of the Interior, says that some people pull their ideas from nature or character cartoons, but it can be even easier than

that. "An idea can be as simple as a pattern you're working with or a picture," says Chaisom. "Some people try to stick to contemporary themes like certain patterns or colors and having accents here and there in the room." By choosing a pattern, you allow the child to grow into the room as they age. Chaisom advises the use of some popular patterns, like Harlequin or plaid. "Textured fabrics are fun too," she says. But Sneedon has found certain ideas to be popular among children, such as a dance room for young girls, complete with mirrors on the walls, handrails, and a little stage. On the list of popular themes for boys is sports. "I've seen a golf theme where AstroTurf was actually placed on the walls," says Sneedon. "Super cool for young boys."

The Perfect Palette

After choosing a theme comes choosing the wall color. For girls, pinks and purples are popular colors, as are blues for boys. But Sneedon says you should choose wisely when picking the right shades. "You need to be careful with pink colors because they can become too bright or too stark," says Sneedon. "Fluorescents I would totally steer away from." Even though pink, purples, and blues are popular colors, Chaisom says that more people are incorporating neutral tones into their child's room. "Depending on what your color palette is around the house you can pull from that, working up and down the gradient," she says. Katy mother Angela Pregler

Use paint creatively and it can double as wall art



recently decorated her son's nursery following this trend. "I did the room in different colors of blue and espresso brown," says Pregler. "It's kind of the classic look. Our house is really neutral greens, reds, and browns. We thought we would make it flow with the rest of the house." Despite the color differences, both young girls' and boys' room colors share one commonality. "Soothing and calming colors for young kids," suggests Sneedon. "Louder colors work well for teenagers and children who are a bit older."

Spice It Up

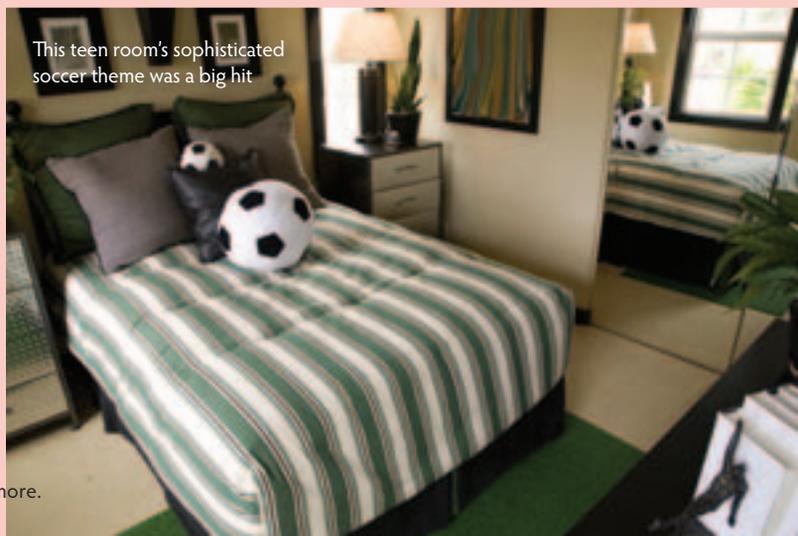
The background color of your child's room is complete, but why not add some zest by painting a mural or adding attractive designs? The Rainforest Café inspired Sneedon to decorate her eight-year-old son Stratton's room with a tropical rainforest theme, including painting a wall with an eye-catching scene. "I painted a mural of a volcano on the wall," says Sneedon. "I have to say it's pretty cool. It's one of those things when you walk in the room it's the first thing you see and your eye just kind of works its way around it." Picking a focal point will immediately attract attention to any eye, but Sneedon and Pregler also say that hanging various decorations will also help to add some zest to the room. "I got a bunch of different sized espresso colored frames and I made a collage kind of like the Pottery Barn look," says Pregler. "I got a bunch of pictures taken of him, different body parts, so basically I have a wall of just him. That's my favorite part about the room."

Thinking outside of the box can help make your child's room a one of a kind, especially when it comes to decorating the headboard. Try using various materials to create an unusual work of art. Decide on a barn theme? Why not use part of a white picket fence as your child's headboard? Gluing fake flowers in rows on a headboard can easily spruce up your little girl's flower room. Maybe you decide to go tropical? Sneedon suggests chopping up

Choose a design that can grow with the child



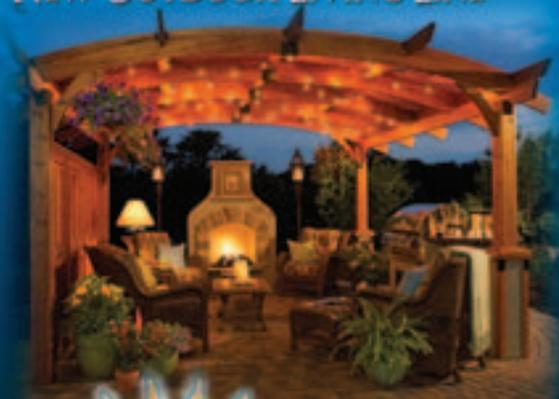
This teen room's sophisticated soccer theme was a big hit



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Shocking pink is a popular color for girl's room

bamboo to make a headboard, just as she did for her son. "It's a big hit," she says.

A Few Must-Haves

Whether the theme is sports, animals, music, or movies, the room décor may vary, but there are general features that all children's rooms should share. "A book shelf definitely, a comfortable chair for them to hang out in, or a bean bag," advises Sneedon. "Papasan chairs are very popular right now for all ages." Chaisom says that rocking chairs are a nice addition to a little child's room, as are other functional chairs. "Choose different pieces that are versatile," advises Chaisom. "Ones that they can grow into and that they aren't stuck with after a certain age, or ones that can be moved to another room later on."

And of course, what room would be complete without the lighting to admire it in? "Track lighting is a really cool feature, especially if you have a piece of artwork, something that you'd like to show off in your room as a focal point," suggests Sneedon. But don't forget the bedside table lamps, or tall lamps to place by a comfy chair to make for a cozy, well-lit reading area. Chaisom suggests soft ambient lighting. "That way it won't glare a lot, and you won't have to worry about it creating too much heat," she says.

Whether you do it yourself or leave it to the professionals, the outcome of decorating your child's room can be both fun and enjoyable. Who knows? Maybe you'll find yourself having more free time to relax in your own room while your child enjoys theirs.

KM

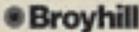
CATHY SZE is a freshman at the University of Texas at Austin where she is majoring in journalism. She can't wait to decorate her new dorm room in the fall.

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5 Tips for Cute Kids Rooms

Here are some easy ways to spruce up any child's room.

- 1 WALLS**
Let your child help choose a paint color, but make sure it's one he can live with for a few years.
- 2 BEDDING**
Buy theme bedding and pull elements from the theme throughout the rest of the room.
- 3 FLOORS**
Add a large, colorful throw rug to accent a drab carpet.
- 4 LIGHTING**
Buy a funky touch lamp or add track lighting over desk areas.
- 5 ACCESSORIES**
Accent pillows, wall art, picture frames, and throw rugs will add instant pizzazz.

A basketball net serves as the focal point for this boy's bedroom



For smaller bedrooms, it's smart to incorporate extra storage into the design



This teen chose a feminine black and white room with only a pop of pink

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