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Remodeling Design Trend

Child-Friendly Remodeling

Kids are a joy...and often the reason your home may need some remodeling. If you have kids, here are some great tips to help you plan your remodeling from Laura Orfield-Skrivseth, remodeler and mother of two boys, 9 and 10.



This bath was gutted and redesigned as a new kid's bathroom complete with tiled tub walls, ceramic tile floor and wainscot, cultured marble countertops, and custom painted cabinets. Simple, refreshing changes were made to create impact, and give this outdated home a new look and feel for a younger generation.

Photos by Orfield Design & Construction



Think Safety First

- Make sure you and your remodeler discuss how to keep children and pets away from construction areas during the process. Designate specific areas where kids and pets are allowed. And, make sure all tools and materials are picked up every day.
- Although it's fun to let children watch the bobcats and trades at work, parents must make sure that older kids wear hard-soled shoes and protective gear and younger children do so from a very safe distance or behind a protective barrier.
- Make sure your remodeler always keeps you informed about the specific hours anyone will be working at your home and who will be there. Being aware of the schedule allows you to take any precautions necessary with children or pets.
- If your backyard is a kid magnet, consider putting in French or patio doors

when you remodel, you'll have a big view of the yard and quicker access.

- Definitely go for gas if you're planning a fireplace. They're safer, more convenient, cleaner, and today's models look and warm every bit as well as wood-burners.
- Think twice before adding a cooktop to the island. If you really want this feature,



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consider "induction" stove tops which heats the pot not the cooktop. Although remember, the pots will get hot so always keep children away when cooking.

- Cool new drawer microwave ovens are

handy for adults, however they can be a safety hazard for small children. Microwave heights are recommended at or above counter height, no lower.

- Consider choosing door handles with privacy locks for all bathrooms and other private rooms. It will be impossible for children to lock themselves in a room as

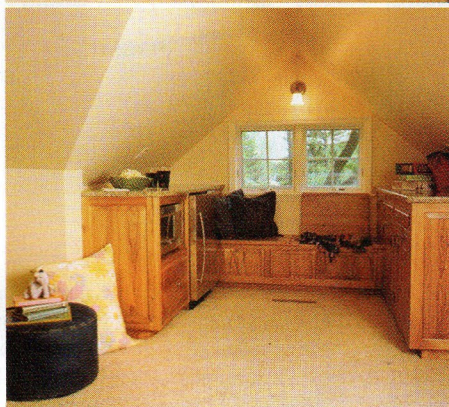
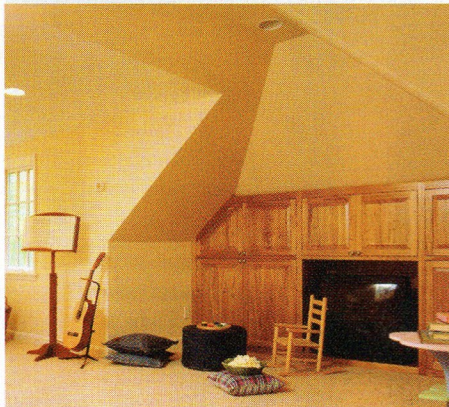
the door can be opened from the outside with a small metal pin.

- Look for dishwashers, microwaves and ovens that have a child lock-out switch option which disables the appliance even

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This third-floor attic was finished off into a large children's play room, with a rear stair for comfortable access. A front dormer addition and Velux skylights allow additional natural lighting. And new knee-walls were turned into additional storage space by building custom butternut wood raised-panel cabinets with roll-out drawers.

The custom entertainment center was built at child height and the soft playground is Bluff Colombia carpet. A snack area features microwave, under-counter refrigerator, venetian gold granite countertops and butternut wood cabinets with a matching flip-top window seat for additional storage.



if a child is pushing buttons or flipping switches. Select a dishwasher that turns the washer arms off when the door is opened.

- It can be a scary world in cyberspace, so remember to plan computer space in a location that allows you to monitor the kids' web access.

Think Today And Tomorrow

- Make sure your remodeling is designed to grow. For example, plan your basement remodel so it can be a play room for your five year-old today, but easily transform to an entertainment area for those pre-teen/teen years
- If the kids have flown the nest, they may be bringing grandkids home one of these days. When you remodel to suit your new lifestyle, think about designing spaces that will work for your enjoyment today but also provide bath and sleeping quarters to make sure everyone is comfortable when you host those future holidays.
- While kids spend a lot of time on the computer and TV, you'll want to ensure



space for more active and creative development as they grow. Look into products and features like sensory tables (with sand, water, etc), art areas (with easels, paints, chalk, crayons, etc) and music areas (well insulated rooms for piano playing, voice lessons, drum practice, etc.).

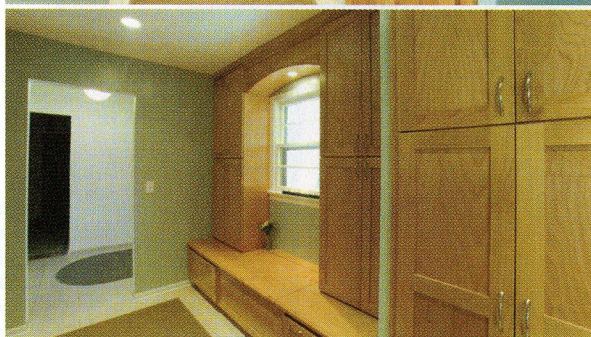
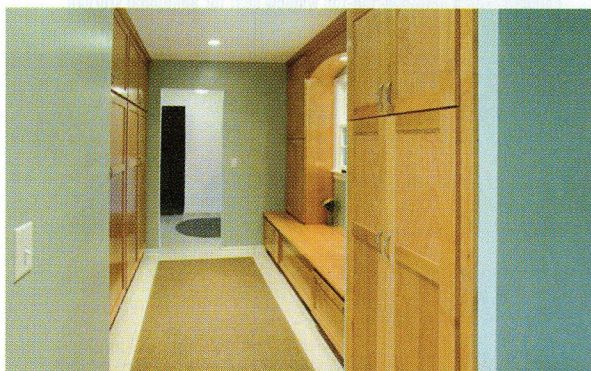
- Make sure you plan for enough storage space! Toys for today and tomorrow can take up a lot of room, especially collectibles. With more and much larger toys, storage spaces are an ideal way to keep a home clutter free while keeping everything accessible. Built-in cabinets for toys and storage eliminate clutter, and can be tucked into rec rooms, family rooms, and found spaces like beneath the stairs (maybe a secret play room can go there, too). Think about including cubbies and a

Think about wood or tile wainscoting on walls to create child-friendly areas. These choices wear better than sheetrock against abuse from toys and active hands and feet.

combination of drawer sizes and shapes to fit items of various sizes.

Think Easy Clean

- Stainless steel appliances may not be your best bet with children in the house; it fingerprints easily and magnets don't stick. Talk to your remodeler about appliance options with durability and easy care in mind (even some stainless steel look-alikes).
- Easy-to-clean choices that are good for families with children and pets include floors like tile, marmoleum and wood in kitchens, mud rooms and baths. You should also stay away from painted white cabinetry which tends to show fingerprints and smudges.



A large new mud room tucks into the former galley kitchen. Located between the front and garage entries, it's functional and accessible. The owners gained hanging space, flip-up benches, and cubbies for children's mittens, hats and shoes.



- Countertops can be selected with children in mind. Granite and Cambria® or Silestone® (quartz) are recommended in kitchens and bathrooms for their durability and ease in cleaning. Look for undermount sinks, too, no lip to accumulate gunk, and messes can be wiped right in.

- Think about wood or tile wainscoting on walls to create child-friendly areas. These choices wear better than sheetrock against abuse from toys and active hands and feet.

Think Convenience

- Add a mud room space between living spaces and the garage or main entrance when you remodel with children in mind. This area is a must to keep outdoor dirt and messes confined and out of the main living spaces. Look at adding built-in cubbies, flip-top benches, hooks and lockers, too. It's a great way to teach kids to hang up their coats and put their mittens, hats, and boots away right when they come in.

- Consider designing the laundry room and a bathroom/powder room adjacent to the mud room. It's your first line of defense for cleaning up children who like to play in the dirt (and all kids do!). If they need to run in and go to the bathroom, it is easily accessible, and if they come in from playing in the snow or playing sports, their dirty and sweaty clothes can go directly in the laundry room – keeping the mess (and the smell) contained.

- Another great location for the laundry room is near the bedrooms where it's convenient for everyone to use.

- Plan to include handheld shower spouts in bathrooms. They can make bathing and hair washing a child a whole lot easier. You may also want to install a flip-top bench near the tub to create a comfortable place for parents to sit for bath time.

- Look at defining areas for entertainment where noise can be contained. Consider a basement or lower level entertainment room where it's OK to indulge in wild video games or host the slumber party (and consider sound-proofing the ceiling), but also plan for a living room upstairs where the noise and chaos is outlawed.

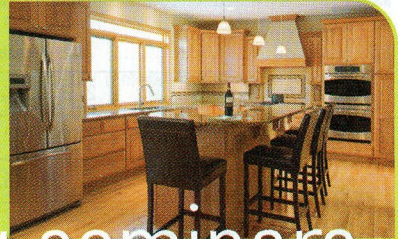
- Instead of the traditional wet bar in the lower-level family room, consider designing in a kitchenette area with fridge and microwave. You'll be able to keep the party (and the mess) contained.

- If you have room for a designated play room, look for soft, warm flooring to create a safer and more comfortable environment, especially for small children who crawl, play and tumble on the floor. **POH**

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