

Child-Proof Your Remodel

The aspects of designing a space with kids in mind

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Safety is a major concern among homeowners with children.

For some, safety means keeping kids at home. These homeowners are securing their properties with alarm systems and fences, and building sport courts, entertainment rooms and more to make their home a safe, one-stop shop for child's play, under the parent's supervision. Another safety issue of concern to homeowners is ensuring their children are not harmed during the remodeling process. The following tips can help:

- Keep children and pets away from construction areas.
- Choose a company that will keep all tools and materials picked up and in designated places.
- Make sure your remodelers use floor protection and dust barriers before and during construction.
- Set designated working hours for your remodelers, so you can coordinate their schedule with your children's schedules.

Play Rooms

Often, a family's basement or loft/attic is the children's play area. Here are common trends in these spaces:

- For younger children, play areas consist of toys and storage. For these types of spaces, install soft, warm flooring to create a safer and more comfortable environment. Also consider built-in cabinets, to make the toy storage an attractive part of the area.
- For older children and teenagers, play areas are often about entertainment. For these types of spaces, consider soundproof materials for the floor, walls and ceiling, to lessen the disruption of the rest of the house. Of course, surround sound, home theater systems, televisions, stereos and equipment unique to your child's interests should also be considered for inclusion in this room.
- Bars are a common trend in basements. Make your bar kid-friendly by creating a kitchenette area with a fridge and microwave, so your children and their friends can easily make snacks and keep soft drinks. Lock up any and all alcohol in a hard-to-reach area of this kitchenette.
- Consider adding a bathroom to the basement or loft/attic space, so your children have easy access when nature calls. ➤



Child-Proof Your Remodel *Cont'd*

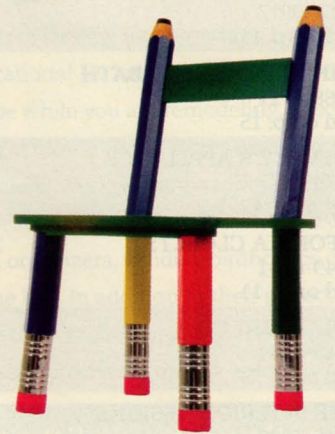


Kitchen Design

The heart of every home, kitchens are a common place for children to frequent. Here are some precautions homeowners are taking to child-proof their kitchen design:

- You can achieve the sleek look of stainless steel with kid-friendly benefits. Whirlpool's new "Satina" line and Frigidaire's new "Easy Care" line look like stainless steel, but accept magnets and do not fingerprint.
- Unless they are induction cooktops (cooktops that don't get hot when cooking), don't place them on an island or near a breakfast bar where your children might sit to avoid potential burns.
- Consider purchasing appliances with a child lock/switch, disabling the

design for growth



Flexibility is a main factor to consider when designing areas with children in mind. As children grow, their needs and interests change. The spaces they occupy should also change to keep up with the growth. Keeping this in mind when choosing storage options, color schemes, furniture and more is an important step to ensure the space's long-term functionality.

DESIGN & DECOR

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appliance from being turned on even if a child is pushing buttons or flipping switches.

- Avoid placing a built-in microwave in an island or anywhere lower than counter height (think Play-Doh in the microwave).
- Choose easy-to-clean flooring for the kitchen to reduce your stress with common kitchen messes.
- Select a cabinet finish that is natural or stained woodwork. Painted cabinetry tends to show fingerprints and smudges.
 - Consider including a computer work area in or near the kitchen, so you can supervise children while they are on the computer.
 - Under-mount sinks allow you to wipe directly into the sink, whereas lipped sinks are more difficult to clean around.

The Mudroom

A widely popular, new trend in homes is the mudroom. This is a convenient area where families have cubbies, benches, hooks and lockers to keep the mess from outside contained. The most purposeful place for a mudroom is near the garage or main entry, and also near the laundry room (especially important for kids who like to play in the dirt). Install easy-to-clean, water- and stain-resistant flooring in this area.

Bathroom Trends

Designing a bathroom with children in mind can be creative and fun. Here are some tips:

- Look into bright paint colors for the walls and brightly colored

- Wood or tile wainscoting is recommended in a child's bathroom, as it wears better than drywall against toys and water-splashing.
- Consider installing a handheld shower spout, for ease with bathing a child and washing their hair.
- Flip-top benches are popular near the tub to create a comfortable place for parents to sit and dry off their children, and also serve as storage for bath toys.
- Kohler created a toilet that incorporates a potty chair. The Transitions Quiet-Close Toilet Seat has a flip-up lid and two seats. The top seat is smaller so children can sit comfortable, and the second seat is normal-sized for grown children and adults. The seats are easily removable for ease of cleaning. 🏠

