



Carving out Space

Professional advice

BY Margot Ramsay

Whether you live in a home that's 500 square-feet or 5,000, carving out space for your children—space that they feel is their own and where they feel protected and able to express themselves—is important as they deal with the complexities of growing up.

Jennifer Hoey Smith, local interior designer and mom to four-year-old Sophie and two-year-old Vivian, used built-in drawers and cabinets in Sophie's room to utilize the small space and provide lots of storage—because a little girl most certainly needs a spot to keep her “dress-up clothes!” Jennifer also recommends under-bed storage, noting that “generally this space just gets dusty or wasted so it's nice to be able to use it.” Creatively utilizing storage space in a child's room also adds to its uniqueness and provides endless possibilities for play and “make believe.” Kids need these areas to keep their things orderly and organized, but more importantly, these nooks and crevices create fodder for imaginative play.

Besides being mindful of space, creating an area that is filled with images, colors and fabrics that represent your child is another element to building a spot that is special and just for them, but remember to modify the idea so that the child can grow with the space. For example, though a pink room filled with fairies painted on the walls may seem amazing to a six-year-old, she will most likely not feel that way when she's 13. As Jennifer said about her daughter, “Sophie loves butterflies so I used a butterfly print for her Roman shades, but kept the bedding a mix of solids.”

Making the most of these tips will help you create an extraordinary space for your child that serves as a retreat, a comfortable place to simply relax . . . or a room that can become anything they imagine.



NUTRITION TO GROW WITH

A few healthy eating tips for kids



Berries and yogurt are great fuel for growing bodies.

As parents, we're constantly pressed for time. We run from one kid's activity to another with barely enough time to fit (and sometimes shove) in a “meal,” let alone time to provide the wholesome foods our kids' growing bodies and minds need.

Kathryn Guylay knows a thing or two about nutritional needs for children from her work at Nurture Idaho, a local non-profit organization with a mission to empower family members of all ages with the tools and resources needed to prepare healthy and delicious meals. We asked Kathryn to pass along a few tips for feeding our kids well at every age.

From birth to three years, Kathryn said parents should aim to help kids develop “healthy” taste buds. Studies show that when children under the

age of three are not exposed to added sugars, they are less likely to develop a “sweet tooth.” Kathryn recommends including a rainbow of colors, at least three, on your toddler's plate.

Snacks are essential for the elementary group's overall nutritional intake, as they're always on the move. Since their tummies are small, breaking up food intake into three meals and two snacks per day is the way to go. Snack-time is also a great way to sneak in one of the five recommended servings of fruits and vegetables as well as a protein, which helps to regulate blood sugar and provides longer lasting energy.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day and studies have shown that kids, especially teenagers, who eat breakfast perform better on tests and have more energy throughout the day. Teens crave independence, so Kathryn suggests arming your kids with a repertoire of five or so healthy recipes they can make on their own.

In addition to nourishment, our active kids need proper hydration as well. Encourage water and balanced meals and you'll have happy and healthy kids!

- Margot Ramsay