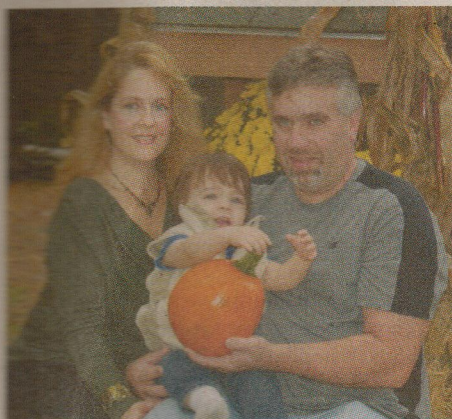


From Crib To College. Design Ideas That Grow With Your Child.

by Nicole Skinner-Graudons

From the anticipation, to the miracle of bringing home your very own precious bundle of joy. Having a baby is magical! One of the first things many couples start with is the babies room. My husband Jim and I had our first child, Preston almost 17 months



ago. I can personally attest to the fact that it was very easy to get caught up in all the amazing themed baby accessories. I had to keep telling myself; "Nicole, remember all of the advice and guidance you have given to your Client's over the years, design the nursery to grow with your child."

Here are a few of my favorite design tips to help you design as you begin:

Color: When choosing your color palette, you may want to think beyond the traditional baby pink and baby blue. While these classic colors look sweet in a traditional nursery, they usually need updating in just a few short years. Fast forward in your mind a few years when your baby becomes a preschooler. I know it's hard to believe, but the time will be here before you know it.

Theme: Once you have decided upon a theme, instead of purchasing themed wallpaper, look for simple patterns and textures that could compliment multiple designs. And use accessories to make the theme statement. There are great wall decals available to suit most any theme and they remove easily. Keep expensive items like rugs and window treatments as neutral as possible.

Furniture: If I can advise you on anything, I truly believe the convertible crib is one of the best investments. They may seem a little pricier than your standard crib. However, you will save more

money in the long run. This crib is designed to take your precious newborn from those first few weeks of life, all the way to Collegel One of the most important tips is to skip the changing table.

You're saying; "What? That's a must have!" Let me explain.

While a place to change your wiggle monster is a must have, a changing table is definitely not. Expensive changing tables quickly outgrow their usefulness. Instead of a changing table, use the sturdy dresser you are already using for the nursery and convert it into a temporary changing station. Choose a padded changing mat with raised sides and secure it to the dresser. These can be found at any baby store. While you are at the store, be sure to consult with a Baby Store Specialist to show you exactly how to properly install the mat on the dresser. Install a deep set of shelving that can accommodate a set of wicker or fabric baskets (buy the baskets first) on the wall beside the changing table. Make sure the baskets will be easy for you to reach when changing your baby. These are a great place to store diapers, wipes and extra onesies. And who doesn't need extra storage?

Transitioning: As your child now transitions from toddler to tween then teen, I have a few key design tips to keep in mind. Your tween/teen is really developing an opinion and unique, creative style of their very own. What a way to express their uniqueness and creativity, than through decorating their very own room with your guidance. This is a good time to bond with them and update their room together. Many tweens/teens prefer fun, colorful and bright colors. Since you've already created a fantastic foundation to their room, you may only need to update their accent Wall, if that's what you decided on. If you did create an accent wall, update the wall with colors, patterns, styles, that appeal to both of you and create the style or theme your child desires.

Bedding: If the room is already busy and bright, I recommend a solid bedspread/comforter and add pattern and texture with throw pillows. For personalization, have throw pillows monogrammed with their initials or name.

Seating: If there is enough room, add a funky, cozy chair for lounging. Interesting pendant lamps, table lamps, and clever chandeliers are a must to create their theme/style. This is an area you can really have fun with!

Work Station: A desk for homework, crafts or hobbies is a must. tweens/teens need a place to learn and create. A practical desk with drawers to hold all homework papers and supplies will help to keep them organized.

Inspiration: Chalkboards or cork boards are perfect for this. The walls won't end up with a ton of holes in them. Your tween/teen will love to tack up their favorite photos from magazines, photos of them and their friends, ticket stubs and other mementos. A Chalkboard paint wall is also a great way for kids to be creative no matter what age they are.

To recap, always plan for the future as you decorate your child's room. Providing seating, a simple bed design, storage and a place to do homework are elements that will never need to change. Built-ins provide plenty of storage and display space. Even if you redecorate after your child leaves the nest, these elements will work well for a home office or guest room.

For more information, contact your home town Interior Designer, Nicole Skinner-Graudons of Designer Interiors of Ballston, (518) 399-6240, or e-mail: designinter@aol.com.



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