

Decorator's Notebook

Simple Design Elements Shape Children's Rooms

(NAPSA)—How is color changing the design of children's rooms in the new century? According to the experts, the hard, saturated colors of the past decade are giving way to clear, watercolor tones that soothe, renew and refresh. Just as adult tastes have moved toward peaceful, relaxing "sanctuary shades," so, too, have children's preferences.

"Today, children's rooms blend playful and charming colors—like lavender and peach—with whimsical design elements," says Linda Trent, CMG, Director of Color Marketing and Design for The Sherwin-Williams Company. "Unusual and unexpected colors and color combinations are particularly appealing right now."

Bright, yet softer colors—such as buttery yellows and seaside blues—versus intense cherry reds and royal blues are less visually distracting for children, and can easily transition to more grown-up décor as children get older.

Literal depictions of themes—complete with cartoon-character designs or sports logos—though still used, are assuming a lower profile as simple, light-hearted interpretations of shapes and elements are moving into the design spotlight. Nature—in the form of flowers, butterflies and fish—also plays a role in the capriciousness of design in children's bedrooms. When vivid or bright shades are desired, Trent says the look is more sheer and light-filled, rather than dark and deep.

"Fanciful colors and loose designs are being used in ways that help shape or influence young imaginations, but don't limit or confine them," she explains.

But before kids start filling in those imagination gaps, Trent suggests considering the individual child's needs. Function, she says, is the first consideration. Will the room be used for one or more children? How often will the

room be redecorated? Depending on the answer, it may be better—and easier—to paint the walls a softer, more subdued shade that can serve as a clean backdrop for colorful bedspreads, pillows or rugs. Is the room a place for sleep *and* play? Rooms for play should have easy-to-clean walls, which are easy to get by using wipe-clean-surface paints like Sherwin-Williams EverClean Interior Latex.

Because children's tastes can change drastically from year to year, Trent advises working with easily adaptable design schemes.

"Flexibility is important in decorating children's rooms. One year, the design of choice may be daisies or trucks, but the next year may be a completely different look," she says. "Décor needs to be able to grow with the child. An easy way to do that is by painting the walls in a solid color that's appropriate for all ages and using wallcovering borders or stencils in addition to accessories to help the room's look keep pace with evolving preferences."

Another way to add flexibility to children's rooms is to choose a colorful bedspread or window treatment that integrates multiple hues and fresh, upbeat patterns. "Companion fabrics in gingham, stripes and even chenille are excellent choices," says Trent.

Another option? Consider staining unfinished wood furniture—which can be an economical choice—with bright shades that are decidedly not traditional. Sherwin-Williams FUN STAINS, for instance, can turn plain pine into Precious Pink, Candied Violet or Jamboree Jade. Simple transitions can keep a room fresh while preserving home décor budgets.

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