

“We make choices that allow parents and families to live a little more stress-free and a little more efficiently. I don’t feel those choices need to sacrifice style or a particular look.”

Gideon Mendelson | Founder Mendelson Group

Childproof decor

Creating a sophisticated, fun interior design that’s kid-friendly, too

By **Brian Sodoma**
Special to Your Home

MAKING sure a home is safe for children is top of mind for most parents, especially new ones. But there are also those moms and dads who find it challenging to balance “kid-proofing” with something aesthetically appealing.

Designers say you can have both. Sure, there are compromises, but a family home doesn’t need to look overly kid-ish, they say. It can still look great while meeting the needs of everyone in the household.

“We make choices that allow parents and families to live a little more stress-free and a little more efficiently. I don’t feel those choices need to sacrifice style or a particular look,” said Gideon Mendelson, founder of Mendelson Group, a New York City-based interior design firm. In fact, the designer says, working with families (and having one himself) actually makes him a better designer.

“You realize it’s not just about putting stuff into a home,” he said. “It’s about how architecture, layouts, and design choices can improve relationships.”

Modern design in family rooms

Mary Maydan, founder of Maydan Architects, a full-service architecture and interior design firm in Silicon Valley, is known for creating ultra-modern interiors. As a mother of four, she understands the trade-offs when it comes to contemporary aesthetics and the realities of family life, especially in hectic family rooms.

That’s where she turns to coffee tables with rounded edges instead of sharp corners. She also suggests putting vases and fragile items on higher shelves and uses museum putty to hold them in place. With kids in the mix, she also prefers overhead lights to table lamps. And when it comes to sitting areas, Maydan likes modular sofas, which can be easily moved around.

“If they’re ever stained, you



Mendelson Group

Parents can avoid complete room overhauls as their children age by avoiding dark-colored walls and window coverings. Different types of wall decor, such as these hubcaps, can be changed out as a child’s tastes shift.

can replace one of the pieces, too,” she added.

Austrie Messer, a junior designer with Las Vegas-based Lisa Escobar Design, suggests instead of using coffee tables made of wood or metal, go with a vinyl upholstered ottoman in the living room.

“The extra cushion is more comfortable, can act as another seat or stool, if needed, and the vinyl makes for easy wipeable cleanup,” she said.

Impromptu spaces, storage

To Mendelson, kids offer the opportunity to create impromptu spaces to share. A table in his home library, for example, is a great place where kids solve puzzles, read and work on art projects.

Even in his master bedroom, he created a seating area for them to watch television, which also allows his spouse and him to ease into the day on weekend mornings when the kids storm the room.

Storage is another important piece in planning spaces with kids in mind. Mendelson likes to use millwork to build in drawers, shelves and other stow-away opportunities for kids’ toys, games and personal items.

“When the kids’ stuff starts to trickle in from other rooms or the playroom, that’s when mess and clutter start to happen,” the designer noted. “That’s why we design with millwork, closed cabin-



Mendelson Group

Storage is an important piece in planning spaces with kids in mind. Drawers, shelves and cubbies provide stow-away opportunities for kids’ toys, games and personal items.



Mendelson Group

Space under benches stores a wide range of items.

try and other spaces. ... It’s almost like designing a boat. Every inch counts. Everything has a place.”

Maydan looks for ways to incorporate bins, cubbies and shelves on wall units and uses space under benches to accommodate a wide range of items.

“Visually appealing storage in the main living areas allows children to be part of the family while they play, and for easy cleanup when they are done,” Maydan added.

Handling bedrooms as kids age

Every child eventually outgrows his or her “big kid” room. With that comes changing tastes. Parents can avoid complete room overhauls by embracing neutral colors when kids are young and not buying colorful furniture.

“That midnight blue bed



Maydan Architects

Modular sofas can be easily moved around, and pieces can be replaced if they become stained. An upholstered ottoman can act as a coffee table, another seat or a stool.

may look beautiful now, but kids grow out of it,” Maydan said. And avoid colorful touches that are permanent, too, such as tiles that have kids’ patterns or colors in bathrooms. That purple tile adored today won’t be embraced later, the designer cautioned.

Mendelson suggests choosing textiles the child can grow with.

“Things like curtain panels, shades and fabric on furniture are harder to replace, so they should be a more timeless look that can last while a child ages,” he said. “Smaller items — throw pillows, lampshades and linens — are often less expensive and less permanent, so they can be swapped out as the kids get older and tastes evolve.”

Messer will sometimes

suggest removable wallpaper to add some fun and flexibility. “(It) can be changed or taken off when wanted, but can last for years,” she said.

Use black and white frames, added Diana Rangel, a junior designer with Lisa Escobar Design. You can swap out the photos in the frames to keep refreshing the space. The designer also likes to experiment with textiles and rugs.

“Get comfy rugs, blankets and pillows made from faux fur or sheepskin and spread them through the room,” she said.

Materials, floors

When designing with kids in mind, durable surfaces that don’t scratch easily are

See **CHILDPROOF 2D**



Bathroom Remodeling
Made Effortless

\$750 OFF
Complete
Bathroom Remodel

Not to be combined with any other offer.
Expires 1/31/2020.

Schedule your free in-home
design consultation today.

3655 East Patrick Lane
Las Vegas, NV 89120
702-706-0896



Complete Bathroom Remodeling • Tub & Shower Updates • Aging & Accessibility Solutions

NV Lic # 81688, 81689, 81690

Yes, you can live large in a small space

"Small is beautiful," a series of books by E. F. Schumacher (1911-1977), German economist



CAROLYN MUSE GRANT
INSIDE SPACES

ONCE again, small spaces seem to be top of mind for a lot of us. I get a lot of questions about how to live happily in small spaces and wanted to address some easy fixes. Now, I'm not talking about the tiny-house movement, although those shows always make me think.

Honestly, the largest percentage of us do live in small- to moderate-sized spaces. And even those who may live in enormous spaces are thinking down the road to the empty nest syndrome and how they are going to downsize when their children fly away and what kind of small space they will find.

Living in small spaces certainly doesn't mean you can't live large. Choosing appropriate furniture and space planning can make any small space work.

I was reminded of this so vividly recently while shopping for game room furniture. So you can't live without a pool table in your small space, or maybe it's poker night you don't want to give up.

Take heart, gamers. Game and pool table manufacturers are on it. You can easily find these tables with movable or removable tops that quickly convert to dining tables. You can have that friendly — or not-so-friendly — game of pool, pop the dining top on and serve your guests a gourmet dinner.

Another great option for small spaces is more contemporary furniture. Before you say that you don't like it, think again. Browse your stores and the internet to see the latest in contemporary design. Contemporary upholstered pieces tend to be smaller — no overstuffed chairs that take up so much room, physically and visually. The cleaner, sleeker lines are perfect for smaller spaces.

If you don't want the pool table/dining table (I admit, it's not for everybody), choose glass-top tables when possible. Again, glass reduces



This office can transform into a guest room when needed.

the visual volume making the room appear larger and not weighed down with sometimes-heavy wooden tables.

Versatile furnishings can make a huge difference in living in a small space. When space is at a premium, select your furnishings carefully. Make your furniture work.

Buy side tables for your sofa or ones with drawers next to your bed for nightstands. Small cabinets are also available with file drawers for office storage. Buy an ottoman with a flip top that can be used for storage. Ottomans are also great to use as pull up seating.

Buy chairs that work in the dining area but can also be pulled into your sitting area when company comes. Round dining tables don't take up as much space and are easier sometimes to move around.

And, of course, one of the most versatile pieces in small-space living is the convertible bed. Not the convertible sofa (which also works) but the cabinet that opens and becomes a bed.

I redid my guest room last year because it just doesn't make sense in a small space to have a room just for guests when, in reality, how much company do you have? I love it when my friends and family come, but they're not there all the time — and the room sits empty. Furnish your room and make it work for you when you're home alone and have an option to accommodate guests when they come.

And just a few words about a big

selection for a lot of us as we get older: assisted and independent living. I toured a new facility recently and was amazed at the available spaces. When health issues or just the downsizing syndrome hits, you can create a living space that reflects your life and tastes. The lifestyle may fit you and you can certainly make the living spaces all yours.

I know that a lot of folks worry about that, but the facilities allow people to set up their own personal areas. You take your own furniture and accessories and make it the space you want. It's not the same size you're moving from, but you can more than likely take your most favorite things and make it homey and comfy.

I had the pleasure of working with a lady in one of the facilities here in Las Vegas. She had a lot of options for dining, events, etc., at the facility, but her space was hers. She actually had a two-bedroom apartment with a patio and cool kitchen. There are a lot of options.

If you have other questions about living in small homes or spaces, please send me a note. I love helping set up new homes. But if you are careful in your space planning and choice of furnishings, your small space can accommodate all of your interests, your lifestyle and even guests.

Carolyn Muse Grant is a design consultant and creator of beautiful spaces. Questions can be sent to her at creativemuse@cox.net.

EVENTS

Jan. 4

What: Gardening in Small Places
When: 8 a.m.-noon
Where: Cooperative Extension, 8050 Paradise Road
Cost: \$10. Preregistration is required for this class.
Info: Register at eventbrite.com. For information, contact Elaine Fagin at fagine@unce.unr.edu or 702-257-5573.

What: How to Prune Fruit Trees
When: 9 a.m.; also Jan 11 and 25
Where: Ahern Orchard, 601 Clarkway Drive at Bonanza Road
Cost: \$25
Info: Register at eventbrite.com. Contact Bob Morris at Extremehort@aol.com or 702-610-5035.

What: Guided walk through gardens
When: 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.; also on Sundays
Where: Springs Preserve, 333 S. Valley View Blvd.
Cost: Free for members; included with general admission
Info: 702-822-7700

Jan. 12

What: Greater Las Vegas Orchid Society's speaker is Carol Siegel, who will present "How Orchids Got Their Names."
When: 1 p.m. social hour, followed by 2 p.m. meeting
Where: Rainbow Library meeting room, 3150 N. Buffalo Drive
Cost: Free and open to the public.

Jan. 15

What: Growing Under the Stars with Master Gardeners: Creating a butterfly and hummingbird garden
When: 6-7:30 p.m.
Where: Cooperative Extension, 8050 Paradise Road
Cost: Free
Info: Register at eventbrite.com. For information, contact Elaine Fagin at fagine@unce.unr.edu or 702-257-5573.

Jan. 25

What: Pruning basics
When: 9-11 a.m.
Where: Springs Preserve, 333 S. Valley View Blvd.
Cost: \$35 members; \$40 nonmembers
What: Rose pruning demonstration
When: 1-3 p.m.
Where: Springs Preserve, 333 S. Valley View Blvd.
Cost: Free. Regular admission prices include access to museums and galleries.

Please email calendar events to jescheid@reviewjournal.com and label them "Home Events Calendar."

► CHILDPROOF

Continued from Page 1D

important. Today, it's easy to find synthetic, or engineered, versions of marble and stone, and the increasingly popular quartzite looks great and can withstand wear and tear.

Durable fabrics are also important, Mendelson said. Avoid materials like silk. Many of today's synthetic leathers and even vinyl look and feel like the real thing.

"Even acrylics that used to feel hard as plastics are now like velvet," he added. And when it comes to floors, there's always a give and take between style, durability and functionality.

"I love rugs, but try not to get expensive ones, which you constantly worry about keeping untouched," Maydan said. "I try to look for soft rugs with a pad underneath."

Messer even suggests using an outdoor rug, indoors.

"It may be harder to find super soft fabric rugs, but there are a lot of options that will still be comfortable, look good and be easy to clean," she said. "For example, recycled polyester is highly durable, soft, and spills can be blotted up rather quickly. One-hundred percent all-weather polypropylene rugs are durable, waterproof and can be rinsed with a hose. Always read the care instructions to find out what your rug is made from before trying any of these solutions."

Accents, subtle touches

To personalize spaces, Rangel will incorporate different types of wall decor, such as figures or letters that are meaningful to the child but can be changed out as tastes shift. Maydan enjoys framing and displaying children's art projects to add character and unique contrasts to areas of a home.

If your child's old enough, involve him or her in the design process, Maydan advises. Even if he or she only gives input for small accents and personal touches, a feeling of being invested can help.

"It's a lot more likely they'll keep it nice if you get their vision of what they want a space to be," Maydan said.

Blankets can put you in the comfy zone

Simple squares of material can pack emotional punch

By Kim Cook
The Associated Press

Author Lucy Maud Montgomery, of "Anne of Green Gables" fame, loved a good blanket.

"I like to hear a storm at night," she wrote. "It is so cozy to snuggle down among the blankets and feel that it can't get at you."

Congresswoman Barbara Jordan once mused that the world would be a better place if at 3 p.m. every day, we all took some cookies and milk to a blanket for a little nap.

Blankets may be simple squares of woven material, but they can also be emotional touchstones. The one we slept under as a child. The one that soothed us during storms. The one that wrapped a child, a pet, a grandparent, a friend.

And that makes blankets nice gifts. You'll find them in every price range, so here are some suggestions:

Pendleton's national park series is a good place to start. Commemorate a family trip, dress up a sofa, give a present to an outdoorsy friend or drift off to dreamland yourself with one of these blankets.

The wool is brushed to a soft, fluffy nap for extra loft, and each blanket comes with a tag noting authenticity of the design along with an interesting park feature. Yellowstone, Glacier, Rainier, Acadia and Olympic are among those included.

Travelers might also like Pendleton's Meridian Crossing reversible blanket, with a contemporary, crossed-lines graphic design inspired by navigational markings.

Got an art lover on your list? Think about one of the company's limited-edition blankets designed by glass artist Dale Chihuly. His exuberant vision is translated in boldly hued wool, and each blanket comes with a signature patch.



This midweight French organic linen blanket from Coyuchi has a quiet striped pattern inspired by vintage Peruvian blankets.

If you prefer a lightweight blanket, Coyuchi has some nice options. Made of washed organic Turkish cotton, the blankets are perfect for hot sleepers. Choose from pleasing neutral colors like Riverstone, Midnight Blue, Alpine White and Blush. Also here, a mid-weight French organic linen blanket, with a quiet striped pattern inspired by vintage Peruvian blankets.

The company even offers a subscription program called Coyuchi for Life; get new linens at a discount every six, 12 or 24 months, and the old, returned ones are recycled or upcycled.

If you sleep better under something heavier, Bearaby has blankets woven of soft, pliable Tencel — a tree fiber — in 15-, 20- and 25-pound weights.

Want something super luxe? JG Switzer offers English lambswool and cashmere blankets trimmed with silk, in relaxing hues like champagne, raven and snowy white.

A nice whipstitch trims the Alta reversible blanket from Peacock Alley. The blanket is made of combed Portuguese cotton and acrylic, in quiet color pairings like white/linen and pearl/flint.

Garnet Hill has a couple of beautiful wool blankets that are plush but practical. From Eileen Fisher Home, there's a windowpane-patterned merino wool blanket, and from Pendleton, the Eco-Wise wool plaid or striped blanket. Both can be popped in the washing machine on the cold setting and tumbled dry.

Sherpa fleece is the hot fashion material this season, and the trend has found its way into home decor, too, on upholstery, soft furnishings and bedding. Target has a squooshy blanket that's modestly priced and comes in dark green, blush or gray, as well as a Made by Design sweater-fleece blanket in heathered gray or navy. Pottery Barn has one with the Sherpa material on one side and a crisp black-and-white gingham cotton on the other, so you basically have a coverlet and blanket in one.

Want to make your own blanket but don't know how to knit or crochet? The Bernat Alize EZ Wool is a pre-looped yarn that lets you create your blanket — or any craft project — without needles, hooks or really any know-how. There are loads of colors, in soft, chunky, machine-washable chenille wool blends.