



BACK TO SCHOOL

BY ADENE LUCAS

The kids are back in school (hooray for that!!) The yard looks great and the days are starting to get shorter. Now what? What room can you focus time and energy on? Your kids' rooms are the perfect choice, because they are back in class and have no idea you are even in their rooms.

SURE, IT WOULD BE EASIER AND QUICKER to tackle the project on your own without the input of your kids. But, chances are they will not be too happy with what you have done, and in turn you will be frustrated with the process and may feel like your hard work was not appreciated.

Start by asking your son or daughter what they would like to see in the room. Brainstorm ideas together, search websites and discuss what is needed versus what is wanted. Don't be afraid to discuss budget too. There are limitations for any project and kids' rooms are no different. You may be surprised at how practical or creative your child's vision is. Once you have a feel for their style, it's time to do some of the leg work on your own.

Colour is an easy and cost-effective way to change a room. Fanning out a paint deck and asking what colour junior likes is a great start. Kids can look at a huge range of colours and very quickly pick what appeals to them. You can also bring home three different colour combinations in the form of a paint swatch from any paint or home improvement store. Have a few colour palettes to select from that you like and either reduce the intensity of the colour or increase it based on your kids' preferences. For example, if you started with a tan, white and light blue, you could always increase the colour by using chocolate brown and navy blue. I like to limit kids' choices when doing their rooms just to speed up the process. If you decide to bring your "client" to the paint store, prepare for an in-store showdown when they're faced with a myriad of choices.

If paint is not an option, try removable decals that are available online at www.allposters.com or www.whatisblink.com. The graphics are great and it's a unique way to personalize space. There are motivational phrases and themes available in any colour and font. There are also great wall papers out now that are funky and fun. If your child is really set on a dramatic colour like red or black, then wall paper is a perfect compromise and can be easily changed later. Doing one wall in paper is enough when used with a complementary paint colour. Try www.wallpaperdirect.co.uk for fun ideas and inspiration.

Now, we can move onto bedding. This is where personal style can really be emphasized. If your daughter loves poppies, you could have white bedding with big red poppies and black accent pillows. If your son's interests are constantly evolving, make a denim duvet cover and use his hobby as an accent. For example, if it's skateboarding, try mounting an old skateboard on the wall as a shelf. Or use a silkscreen of a skateboard on an accent pillow. As kids grow and change, so will their rooms. It is a lot easier and less expensive to change the accents in the room and not the bedding. My son started with Humpty Dumpty framed on his walls when he was a baby. When he was a toddler, I replaced the egg with truck pictures. In preschool, it was pirates and now, at age seven, it's Star Wars. There is a huge selection of bedding available and one of my favorites is a line called Serena and Lilly www.serenaandlilly.com. They carry beautiful bedding for boys and girls. Another great source is www.rosenberryrooms.com. Restoration Hardware carries nice lines for younger kids and so does Pottery Barn.



Once the room has been painted and the bedding selected, don't forget to change the light fixture, consider practical storage options and furniture that grows rather than dates. Look for fun accessories, pillows and area rugs that tie in with the colour scheme, then let your child tweak it until it's theirs.

Now that your children have the perfect rooms, they may actually want to keep them clean!! If not, just shut the doors, your work is done. [E]



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