



DECOR

ROOM FANTASY

PARENTS often find that having a young child gives them the opportunity to rediscover their artistic side and imagination. A lot of the most exciting decorating programs on TV show how to create rooms that are a mixture of window dressing and stage design adapted for the home. Children's bedrooms can be treated in the same way; all we need is a little imagination and innovative ideas.

This week we will focus on a young child's room, decorated based on a theme. Children have strong preferences for particular cartoon characters, animals, activities and colour from a very early age. They love attention and decorating a room especially for them will always put a smile on their faces.

As a designer it was a great challenge for me, when I started decorating eight-year-old Sam's room. After an amazing conversation with Sam, son of a diplomat father and a lawyer mother, I discovered Sam's hobby of reading pirate comic books and his unrest

desire for a room similar to a pirate ship.

For children, there is no reason why their beds should look like normal beds - so long as they are safe and comfortable to sleep on. They can be anything from caves to castles or backdrop of mountains to seas.

The same approach can be used to transform the whole room into a world of complete fantasy. My diplomat client had their furniture from the embassy, so we had limited option for customisation. Regardless, I made a different plan for the pirate room.

We took two single beds and removed the head boards and all other accessories from the bed. We attached two beds horizontally and used blue, sea-fish printed bedcovers, so that a seemingly long approach of a sea line can be recreated. For further enhancement we made a ship body as the bed's back drop. We arranged boards, foams and covers with brown fabric, and attached ropes and posts just like an ani-

mated pirate ship. At last, Sam asked me for a buccaneer flag and an artist was arranged for this. Sam was very happy with his 'ship bed' and pirate's flag, but his mother was quite worried about the mosquitoes in Dhaka. Hence a long custom sized mosquito net was made for him.

A school going child needs some sort of work area for building models and painting. S/he needs to feel that they can relax and make a mess without the parents getting too fussy about spills or scatters. If your child is older and wants a more sophisticated arrangement then go for cork or laminated floor boards with a soft rug by the bedside, and colourful rugs to laze on. For this room, we used soft, handmade, local 'satronji', which is very bold.

You can arrange low, accessible bookshelves but also have high, out-of-reach cupboards for storage. This is especially useful when young children go through the

stage of throwing everything out of drawers and cupboards. Buy a set of matching toy and boxes on castors, which can be pushed away under the bed or into the bottom of a wardrobe. Sam also has lots of Lego and other toys and we had placed them in the cabinets, the side tables, the tabletop, and toy boxes.

We often spend a great deal of time organizing children's activities, lessons and social events. Large floor cushions, vintage plastic chairs or small colourful sofas will encourage them to think of the room as a place to snuggle down and think, read and listen to stories.

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