



PUPPY LOVE: The Magis puppy chair offers a fun alternative to conventional furniture and is hard-wearing and durable enough to use in children's bedrooms and playrooms.

The magical world of children's rooms

INTERIORS

There are so many interiors and storage solutions available for children these days that there's no excuse for boring bedrooms or playrooms, says interior designer **Jamie Hempsall**.

CHILDREN are a wonderful addition to any household, but it is amazing how many possessions a small person can build up – and how much devastation this can unleash on your family home.

One solution is to create a play area so that your little ones can create havoc, while you can just shut the door on the mess at the end of the day.

An indoor play area needs to be fun! Little minds have short attention spans and require plenty of sensory stimulation so create a vibrant area with fantastic colours (rich light greens, yellows and soft strong blues) to create a light,

invigorating area. It is important to source play furniture, such as chairs and tables, which is the right size for your child so that they can use them unaided. Choose items with round edges to minimise the inevitable bumps all children accumulate. There is a move back towards traditional wooden furniture, but there are plenty of stunning, good quality plastic alternatives.

The sky is the limit on furniture with handcrafted items coming in tops, but places like Ikea provide incredible entry level value. However, for really funky

ideas check out www.awhiteroom.com where items such as the Magis Puppy offer a terrific alternative to the traditional chair.

Ensure any bookcases or cupboards are sturdy and well secured to avoid accidents, but at the same time make certain that they are accessible so that your children feel independent in their own space.

Encourage creativity by making a blackboard wall. Use MDF cut to a height a little higher than you expect your children to grow in the next three years and of a length to span an entire stretch of wall. Coat the MDF in blackboard paint (available from hardware stores) and fix to the wall. Your offspring will then have a great space to draw with either traditional chalks or chalk markers (as used in many pubs) both easily available from stationers. When your team are fed up with their art, simply wash down and start again. Store the blackboard paint to use for an annual refresher.

If you have enough space above the blackboard fill it by enlarging a special family picture (or have a digital image transposed onto a custom-made wallpaper) to create an individual feature.

You can also create a home art gallery to display your children's artwork. First, cover a wall in lining paper and then paint using a matt emulsion in a strong, warm colour. Next, source colour images of picture frames (cartoon clipart ones are terrific) and print off in various sizes; a print shop can help to create larger sizes



TIME FOR SOME FUN: Use vibrant colours and incorporate learning aids like this oversized clock.

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than are possible on a home printer. Cut out the frames and stick to the wall using wallpaper paste. Once dry, paint the whole area with an acrylic satin varnish. You can then stick paintings in the frames and change your displays as you wish. Flooring has many options now from carpeting to soft play mats which incorporate letters, numbers and even

working piano keyboards to allow a little rough and tumble, but plenty of creative play (check out www.softfloorkids.co.uk or www.thechildrensstore.co.uk). Finally, add oversized features or some indoor soft-play structures. ■ **Jamie Hempsall**, a BIDA associate, is a leading interior designer. Visit www.jamiehempalls.com or call 01777 248463.



LEARNING IS FUN: Use durable, tactile accessories like this interlocking flooring from www.softfloorkids.co.uk.