

Designing Family-Friendly Spaces

Urbane Design's Jessica Love on Smart Ways to Make Your Home Welcoming for All *By Jane Coloccia*

COVID-19 has forced us all to spend more time at home, and suddenly we are looking at where we eat, sleep, work, learn and play through a completely different lens. The same square footage now needs to be multifunctional, and many families are redesigning their homes to reflect these lifestyle changes.

Jessica Love of Austin's Urbane Design has some practical and thoughtful tips for *Waterways* readers on how to create space for the family, whether you are about to welcome a child or pet into the home for the first time, moving into a new home that needs to be made kid/dog-friendly or simply want to make a few adjustments.

Design with Children and Pets in Mind

Love defines family-friendly in very simple terms: "Where all applications are selected with the family in mind, ensuring fabrics and rugs are easily cleaned, and the layout and furniture are suitable for children and pets."



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CHASE DANIEL; JACOB BODKIN; SARAH NATSUMI MOORE

Consider Lifestyle, Purpose and Sustainability

When Love meets with clients at Urbane Design, she has one primary goal. "It is so important to understand a family's lifestyle before talking about the pretty stuff. Who are you? What do you do? What do you use the space for? Will you be in the house long-term and, if so, who and what will the house need to accommodate in five years, 10 years or 15 years?" She added that when designing a space, sustainability should be kept in mind so the purchases you make will last for the long-term. Don't design only for today.

Begin with Space Planning

Before you purchase any item, think about what the room is going to be used for. Is it just for entertainment, or will it be multipurpose with a desk for Mom or Dad and workstations for the kids where they can do their homework and crafts?

Love recommends that once you determine your floorplan, you can then make smart decisions regarding furniture scale and proportions. If you are working with a large 'great room,' area rugs are a perfect way to establish clearly defined sections.

Keep What You Can Salvage

For those designing on a budget, it's important to be mindful of what you already have in the space. Take a look at the overall layout, and work with the furniture you have. Sometimes, just repositioning some key items—for example, installing a kids' play area in the center of the room and then sofas off to the side for adults to watch television or entertain—may be all you need to do. It's also important to consider fabrics, which should be more rugged for the younger set. Love advises staying away from silk or viscose draperies and light-colored rugs that will stain. >>



Check Out Durable Textiles

You need to be sure the materials you put in the room are kid- and animal-friendly. Sunbrella and Perennials both make fabrics that look like linen but can be machine-washed or spot-cleaned. These are great choices for sofas, chairs and ottomans. Love is also a big fan of microfiber because it's easy to clean and soft to the touch.

Consider the Shape and Construction of Everything

Where children are going to be running around and playing, you want to make sure you steer clear of glass and pointy furniture edges. This is a great time to be looking at a round coffee table or round ottoman for safety. You also might want to reconsider white fabrics or light draperies, which will stain. As you select each item for a room, consider the functionality as well as the aesthetics. Love also notes that a popular recent trend is for people to incorporate plants in their inside spaces. "You need to consider the care and maintenance of plants. For example, is a pot that is regularly getting watered going to ruin a wood floor underneath? Are the plants poisonous to children or pets? Pothos plants are very trendy right now, but they are dangerous when ingested, so consider safety before you buy anything."

Visit Mainstream Stores for Kid-Friendly Products

For those looking to purchase sofas or chairs with fabrics that will withstand messy hands and dirty feet, Crate & Barrel, West Elm and Restoration Hardware all offer family-friendly fabrics with choices from light blue to dark colors that withstand more wear and tear.

Consider Wool or Vintage Rugs

If you're not on a tight budget, Love recommends checking out vintage rugs. "Many of these rugs have been around for



a long time, and if they can withstand the years and still look great, they'll survive your kids!" If you are opting for new floor coverings, a tightly woven wool rug can always be cleaned and is made to endure.

You Can Never Have Enough Storage

Kids come with a lot of stuff, and there's no reason everything needs to always be all over the floor. Legos, cars, trucks, stuffed animals and other toys all deserve their own spaces out of sight. Take a good look at any furniture piece you plan on buying, and ensure it can do double duty. A TV table with open shelves at the bottom isn't great for storage, so Love advises a closed console table that gives you built-in storage under the TV or an ottoman with a removable top to stow things inside.

For any family-friendly space, when things are organized and everything has its own space, it will be easier for everyone to spread out and enjoy the room. It will also be less stressful on the entire family to not have to navigate around toys, books and other items left around, which will create a more relaxed and happier environment for all.

DEVILLE CUSTOM HOMES

212 DUCKHORN PASS, LAKEWAY, TX 78738
 Price \$1,920,000
 Bedrooms 5 | Total Full Baths 4 | SqFt 4,128

LEADING YOU HOME

COMPASS

WWW.TOWNESREALESTATE.COM

STACEY DEVILLE, M.F.S

BROKER ASSOCIATE | TOWNES GROUP AT COMPASS

14001 BEE CAVES PKWAY,
 BLDG B #100 | BEE CAVE, TX
 M: 512.650.6364

30 YEAR LOCAL & YOUR LAKE TRAVIS EXPERT

Tailored to Perfection

HARRISON
 JEWELERS

2127 Lohmans Crossing Rd, Austin, TX 78734 | 512.266.1715

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDIT SARAH NATSUMI MOORE