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REALESTATE | DESIGN

Should Parents Let Kids Design Their Own Bedrooms?

Parents, children, designers and psychologists weigh in on what can become a very contentious family drama.

Yes, having their own space imparts a sense of security in children.

Decking out her new Brooklyn bedroom gave 6-year-old Honor Dimmock a rare opportunity to call the shots, noted her mom Elle Strauss, fashion director of Brides magazine. Ms. Strauss showed opinionated Honor some preselected options, then let her choose. (“I wanted flowers and my bunny family,” said Honor. And apparently a pink castle.)

Psychologist and design consultant Sally Augustin approves. Allowing children buy-in imparts a sense of ownership, she said: “We feel more relaxed and comfortable in our own territory.” And if your kid demands a palette inspired by Spiderman’s spandex? “[Paint] an accent wall or use decals to bring in color without overcommitting,” suggested Danielle Kurtz, creative director at retailer the Land of Nod. If a child wants what’s shiny and new, you can temper it with an heirloom quilt, advised Los Angeles designer Frances Merrill. Embrace a layered (read: cluttered) aesthetic; that way, scattered toys will look purposeful. Finally, approach kids’ wishes with [an open mind](#), suggested Northampton, Mass., designer Sally Staub. When her 14-year-old coveted a string of kitschy star-shaped lanterns for her bedroom, Ms. Staub caved. Hung around the bed, “they actually looked sweet. And at some point you’ve just got to let go a bit.”



TOP-DOWN DESIGN The boy who lives in this San Francisco room, designed by Anne Hepfer, had little to do with creating its nautical theme (note the surfboard-shaped headboards). PHOTO: VIRGINIA MACDONALD