

A CORNER TO CALL THEIR OWN

Let kids express their creativity — and yes, messiness — in an out-of-sight spot in their room

My view of kids' bedrooms is pretty straightforward: As long as the rooms look neat when I pass the open doorway, all is fine with me. I don't subscribe to the just-shut-the-door school of thought. Décor should be a blend of what parents and kids find pleasing. Each of my two kids has some designated areas for displaying posters, collections, awards and artwork.

In my daughter's bedroom there is an odd corner that is not visible from the doorway. This corner is her quiet area or reading corner, as she calls it, and it is her domain. She can display as she wishes on the wall-hung shelves. A magnet board holds her photos, artwork and awards. Her beautiful chair is covered with blankets and stuffed animals, but she knows that if she keeps the rest of the room tidy, she can do whatever she wants in her corner and I will not rearrange it.

In my son's room, we vaulted the ceiling to take advantage of daylight from a small dormer and created a loft over the hallway bath. The ladder to the loft also supports one corner of the suspended bunk bed, giving more room on the floor. The loft is always an accumulation of artifacts from various activities.

This is his personal spot for posters and collections, and he can keep it as messy as he wishes. His artwork is also displayed on magnet boards next to his bed, and his headboard holds his bird-feeder/bird condo that he built. Accessorizing with kids' artworks can create a sense of pride, and it makes a great de-



sign statement if displayed simply. Under-bed drawers hold trains and out-of-season clothing.

For bedding, lampshades, rugs and walls, I generally prefer solids with a few bold patterns. This provides a simple, clean backdrop to their colorful toys and collections without seeming overwhelming. If the main decorative items are simple, it is easy to change the accessories as the child's taste changes. I shun themed designs and characters because their longevity is probably limited. But if themed elements are necessary, keep it to a pillow or blanket rather than the main focal point.

A solid comforter can be dressed up with patterned sheets and accent pillows. Patterned rugs can be placed on hardwoods or over carpet for added color. In this room we used Flor carpet tiles, because if they get stained, they can be washed in the sink or replaced.

If you want a simple graphic on the wall (remember, the posters are on the back of the door or in a corner) there are wall stickers available that provide a nice punch without being permanent or overwhelming. Something as simple as layered circles, trees, birds or a graphic in one to three colors can personalize a room. Check them out at www.boodalee.com and www.ferm-living.com.

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► **A loft frees up floor space, and a display wall is positioned out of sight from the hallway in this bedroom.**



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