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Designing a room for your adopted child

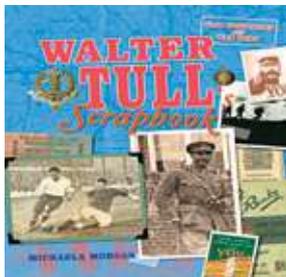


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Lorraine Pascale talks food, fashion and adoption

Model OF SUCCESS



Designing a Bedroom for your Adopted Child

We caught up with sought after interior designer Toks Aruoture, owner of Punkin Patch Interiors, the luxury furnishings boutique for infants and children, who gives five tips on decorating a room with an adopted child in mind.

Designing the bedroom

1) Decide on the theme

Try to work out your child's character. What do you know about their background that could help them settle quickly?

Do they have collected treasures such as jewellery, a photo, teddy bear, doll or blanket?

Any of these could be the starting point for decoration.

Another idea, depending on age is to have any would-be siblings paint one another's hand prints on their walls and have the adopted child return the favour when they arrive. A fun picture of all the children together framed in different colours - one for each room - is another way to create togetherness and harmony.

2) Colour

Colour can be used on the walls, which will make a big difference to the room. Alternatively you can keep the walls neutral and add accessories like beanbags, or fun shaped cushions.

When picking colours, choose harmonious hues - colours that lie next to each other on the colour wheel, for example blue and green or green and yellow. These colours are pleasing to the eye.

3) Get creative

At this point, you can involve the child if this is an option. If not, try to discover their favourite hobbies or activities. I recommend using a hint or suggestion of an activity that they are already involved in. If you're planning a room for a boy who plays football, then a painting of a worn, muddy pair of football boots, would personalise it, especially if they're the type of boots he or his favourite footballer wears. For a girl, the shadow of a ballet dancer taking a bow, a daisy chain or beaded bracelets could suffice. You can even use a 3-D or boxed frame and frame an actual pair of boots, ballet slippers or chain, and, of course, treasured items can be framed too.

4) Furnishings & Decor

Think about the activities that would be taking place in their new room. Boys' furniture should be rustic and reflect nature, as they typically prefer the outdoors, so choose natural finishes of wood. For girls, go for painted surfaces in softer colours like white, cream or pastels. A table or bedside lamp not only adds style to the room but also added comfort in case



Bring colour and texture to a room

they are afraid of the dark.

As for bed linen, find out about allergies and skin conditions like eczema. If in doubt, use hypoallergenic linens and synthetic-fibre filled duvets and pillow cases. Organic mattresses are also available and they are fantastic for children with allergies or sensitive skin. Beanbags and cushions are another winning addition to the room.

They're great for punching around in frustration and for pillow fights!

5) Finishing touch

A welcome home sign painted with the child's name and placed on the bedroom door

Afrocosmopolitan home

Laurence Kanza, founder of La Petite Congolaise, the contemporary interiors company whose products are in the most fashionable homes, invites you to the world of Afrocosmopolitan style.

"Afrocentrifying" ones home is about creating a home that is a reflection of one's personal style and taste with cultural references. This can be done by personalising with colour, texture, accessories and art. For example, take a basic neutral living room then start to layer with colour.

Liven up a sofa with a selection of cushions.

Use a coffee table to display a collection of beautiful books or arrangements of treasured personal possessions.

Create balance and texture with wood: masks and statues come in all shapes and sizes, while wooden stools can act as display surfaces when not being used for extra seating.

VARIATIONS

Use simple everyday objects, displayed in unusual ways - such as collections of shells, beads, or bowls. Have fun experimenting. Eventually, you will develop an eye and an opinion on what works and doesn't work for you.

Cushions are a great way to bring colour, texture and visual interest to a room.

There are so many variations and combinations available depending on your style, mood and personality: from the size of the cushion itself, to the choice of fabric, to the colour, and the number of cushions.

Colour doesn't have to be bold and bright, it can also be beautifully understated with a subtle palette of neutrals and earth tones. Experiment and see what works in the room.

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