

DESIGN BITES

BY WHITE PEONY DESIGN

ISSUE NO. 1



**INAUGURAL
FAMILY DESIGN
SPECIAL**

**DESIGNING FOR LIFE / DESIGNING
FOR STYLE / DESIGNING FOR YOU**



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A warm welcome from the editor



I am thrilled to welcome you to the very first issue of Design Bites by White Peony Design.

As a designer I fully understand that creating a beautiful living space for your loved ones is a top priority. Your home is more than just a place to live; it's where your story is told, personalities shine, and dreams are built.

However, as a busy working Mom I also understand the challenge of finding time to put together a healthy meal for a picky eater on a weekday, let alone embarking on a major home renovation.

That is why Design Bites was created. It's your go-to resource for a blend of inspiring design ideas, expert advice, real-life design experiences, and practical advice that will empower you to turn your home into a functional sanctuary. All delivered in bite sized pieces for a quick-win.

Whether you're looking to spruce up your child's bedroom, transform your kitchen into the heart of your home, or are simply seeking creative solutions for shared spaces, Design Bites has you covered.

Design Bites is not just about aesthetics; it's about cultivating a feeling of togetherness and comfort within your family's nest. We'll delve into topics like organization, safety, and creating spaces that nurture learning and play.

I would love to hear from you. Share your success stories, dilemmas, and ideas with, and you might see your family's journey featured in these pages. Our goal is to help you turn your living spaces into warm, inviting, and functional environments where you can live your life and love your home.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey. We are dedicated to being your trusted companion on your quest for the perfect family-friendly interior. Design Bites is more than a magazine; it's a community of like-minded individuals who believe that a beautiful home is one that enhances the joys of family life.

Here's to creating spaces filled with love, laughter, and cherished memories!

Warmly
Kimberly





Burl wood warms up any decor
Bonus look - bunching coffee
tables. Style and flexibility
rolled into one.



Swivel club chairs with warm
textural fabric



Channels on all things
small and large



Wrap the walls in texture,
beautiful imagery, and soft
colours. Wallpaper is not
slowing down.

[York Wallcoverings](#)



Global +
handcrafted pieces
[Obakki](#)

WARM UP FOR FALL



Warm veined stone mixed with
contrasting materials



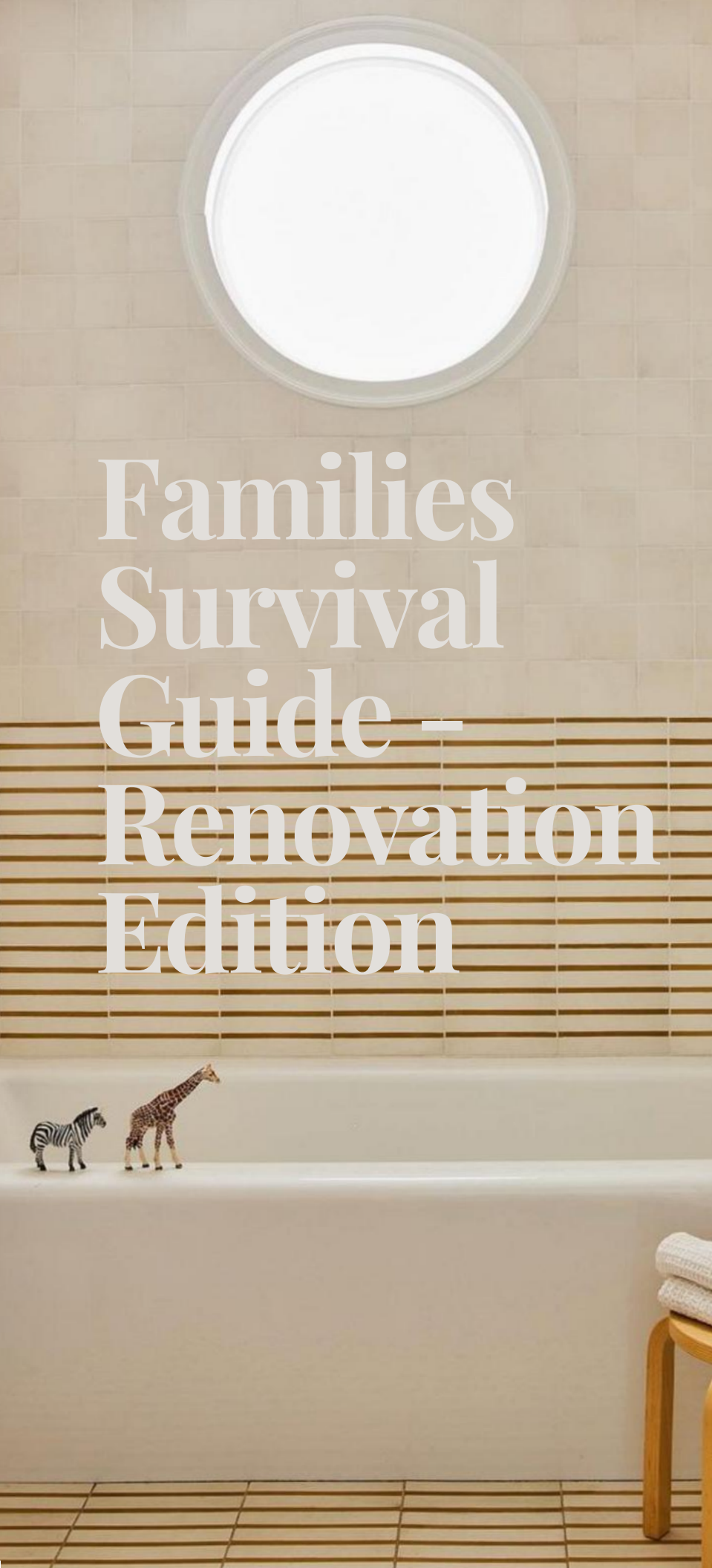
Natural materials like rattan
elevated with rich woods and
warm metals

As we move into our “new normal” a
season of warmth and comfort is what we
are all longing for. This fall look to natural
influences, soft shapes, mixed materials,
and warming palettes.

LIVING LUXE

" ORIGINAL ARTWORK CREATES A SENSE OF DEPTH TO ANY ROOM- IT CANNOT BE REPLICATED WITH PRINTS"

•
- KIMBERLY



Families Survival Guide – Renovation Edition

Thinking of
renovating?



Follow these tips to help ease the inevitable stress and overwhelm that comes with every renovation.

You are about to embark on an exciting journey that will lead you to finally having a space that functions for the way your busy family lives and speaks to your impeccable design style.

I'm sure you are already picturing the adoration and (maybe a little envy) on the faces of your friends and family when you invite them into your beautiful new home. And I know the idea of adding new chapters to your family story within the perfectly lime-washed walls, has you eager to see the dust fly.

However, unlike your favourite TV renovation show where you get to skip to the good part in 30 minutes — even with the inevitable "surprise! termites have eaten your entire subfloor" plot twist—you will have to navigate the real world renovation process.

Every one of my clients enters into their renovations with the same level of gusto and excitement. And although I'm just as excited for them, part of my job is to slow them down to make sure every member of their family, including the four-legged friends, are ready for the disruption to daily routines, the noise, the mess, the potential safety hazards, and even the changes to the look of their rooms, that come with any home renovation.

So here are 5 tips to slow you down and help you prepare for the unavoidable disruptions and minimize the stress of the entire process.

You will survive this!



1. Communication

Know this: Open, frequent, honest and respectful communication with everyone involved in your project will be THE most important tactic for getting your family through a home renovation.

Develop clear expectations on logistics, accountability and boundaries, and have realistic timeline and budget discussions with your contractor.

Make sure you are working with a team of professionals who can offer you a clear communication plan. Having clear agreements with your Designer and Contractor about when and how you will be communicating will go a long way to ensuring your project runs smoothly.

Remember that your job is to be available to communicate your decisions in a timely way.

And with your family, explain the renovation process simply—answer their questions, listen to their concerns, and validate their feelings while reassuring them they are safe.



2. Stay or Go?

For your family's sanity and happiness, move out during any large project.

Please trust me on this one.

It may seem frivolous, but I guarantee that your family and the trades will be happier, your project will run smoother, be completed much sooner and the end result will be better.

Remember, regardless of how you are feeling, the trades will come. Day after day for months on end...I've seen this break too many people to allow that to happen to you.

3. Involve Your Children

Change, even if exciting, can be stressful for kids. Some even experience sadness over the "loss" of their safe and familiar home. Getting children involved in the process helps put them at ease and lets them feel invested in the project.

All of this helps build excitement around the changes.

Let them choose themes and colours when it comes to their bedrooms and help them take the first swing during demo.



I love to have kids draw their own plans and pin them around the construction site. When trades ask the "designer" to clarify their drawings, the kids burst with pride!

4. Befriend the Trades

Introduce your kids to all the trades.

Say hello and have the kids give everyone on the job site a welcome to "my" home card when the project starts and little treat whenever you stop by.

When your children see the people working in their rooms as friends, they will be much less anxious.

And I know from experience it's much easier to ask a favour of someone who is fuelled by cold drinks and donuts!

5. Family Time

Take lots of family breaks from all the chaos. Go for a walk in the forest, escape to the movies, or even take a get-away to your favourite tropical island. Anything to get out of the construction zone and clear your heads.

Don't forget your partnership. Your highs and lows will be different, so give each other grace and support when feeling a bit cuckoo.

And date nights are non-negotiable!



Of course, there is so much more you will need to do to ensure a smooth renovation, but if you have energy only for the essentials, focus on these five tips. Stay grounded in renovation reality and leave the showmanship to HGTV, and I promise everyone will be so happy that you will start your next project tomorrow!

P R O J E C T



S P O T L I G H T

NEW CITY – NEW HOME

THE CLIENTS:

A vibrant and busy family who are new to the North Shore and had to leave their custom built home behind when they moved.

A fresh start in a newly renovated space that felt completely different than their former home, and catered to all of their needs, was exactly what the relocation doctor ordered.

THE DESIGN BRIEF:

Update this 90s home to reflect the modern and fun personalities of the clients and make sure to compliment rather than compete with the beautiful North Shore forrest surrounding the home.

Custom storage was very important to these clients...from her extensive shoe collection, the playrooms overflowing lego bins, all the way down to the exact number of coffee pods needed to get through a hectic week. There is a place for everything.

Just like more and more of my clients, wellness and self care ranked at the top of the needs for this home to support. Steam, chroma, and scent therapy were all brought into the new principal bathroom (not pictured), smart lighting allows everyone to wake up and wind down slowly, and new appliances let the family flex their culinary skills to whip up healthy steamed fish and sous vide eggs without breaking a sweat.

THE CHALLENGES:

The home was fairly well built but there were problems regulating the heat between all three floors, poorly placed electrical outlets, no true front entry, and like many 90s homes its finishes were less than the classic look we were going for.

Even though it's not as fun, the first priority was (and always is) to get the behind the walls updates done. And then, move on to adding style and function inside of each room.

This smart renovation process ensures that their new home will support and nurture the family during their transition and long into the future as they build their new life in the new city they now call home.

THE RESULTS:

Arched cabinet - perfect for bringing in the trending arch design and providing space for charging everyone's electronics and storing delicate glassware



Second wash station away from prep area - perfect for keeping marital harmony when the sous chef punches in

Plumbed water station - perfect height for one over sized horse of a dog.

Expandable circular table - perfect for the family to reconnect during dinner and roomy enough for getting to know the neighbours over "competitive" games nights

Coffee station behind pocket doors - perfect for satisfying the caffeine need day and night...without having to walk across the kitchen thanks to the hidden pot filler!

Repeating patterns- perfect for bringing harmony and flow to the design

Large walk in pantry - perfect for hiding all the mess when the neighbours come calling



Under counter fridge + freezer - perfect for the kids to help with school lunch and after school snack prep



Products that deliver the winning combo of function + style.

EASY CHANGE FRAMES

for prolific artists

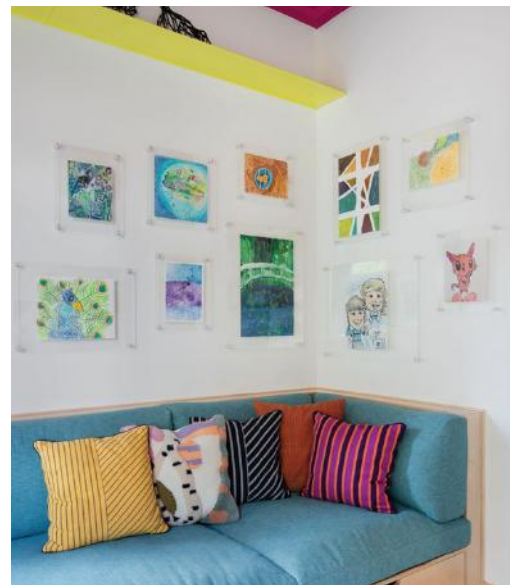
If you have an art making machine in your home, I'm sure you feel you've invested enough in "scotch tape" that you feel you have a stake in the company.

But with these easy to switch out frames, you can elevate the "scotch tape" method of display and make your budding artist beam with pride when their masterpieces take center stage in your main living area. Just make sure to hang a few frames at kid height to give them the freedom to switch things out on a weekly/daily/hourly basis.

Here are two options I really like.



These black or white 9x12" frames have non-breakable plexiglass to protect the most precious artwork. Display their drawings, paintings, mixed media pieces, or even your favorite photos. Various retailers.



For a clean contemporary look that fits into any decor and accommodates multiple sized masterpieces, try these magnetic plexiglass frames from [Wexel Art](#).

FAMILY

FRIENDLY

DESIGN



**STYLISH
INTERIORS
THAT STAND UP
TO FAMILY LIFE**

With planning, patience and plenty of Prosecco it is possible to have a stylish space that the whole family can enjoy.

Family-friendly design.

That may sound as realistic as bumping into a magical-mythical unicorn on your morning coffee run. After all, families can be wild, energetic and messy.

So, it is not surprising that as a busy family you may not choose to invest in a home renovation or put a lot of effort into selecting the perfect custom sofa when your kids are young—at least not until your youngest stops using your current sofa as a napkin and your puppy learns that not every furniture leg is a chew toy!

However, this is exactly the time you should be making improvements to your home. Ultimately, your home is your family's sanctuary, and the look and feel of your living space has a significant impact on your physical, emotional state and mental well-being. And we all know how as parents we can use every gram of well-being that comes our way

It's all about finding that sweet spot where function meets style. Yes, this takes some planning. But the lower stress you will have from living in a family home that supports your life rather than one that works against you is definitely worth the effort.

Let's get started with a few ideas for making your home livable for a family with kids and pets so there will be no reason not to jump into that renovation you've been waiting for.



I. Planning by Zones

Most homes today are open-concept which is great for keeping an eye on everyone because you can see every room from every room. The bad news? You can see every room from every room and one messy area will make the entire space look messy.

To combat the mess creep, designate zones in each room for specific activities.

Family Room



The more activities a room needs to support, the more important it is to dedicate specific zones within that room to give everyone room to do their thing.

And the family room is the queen bee when it comes to multifunctional rooms. To give your kids space for creative play, while you enjoy a glass of wine with your Mom's group, carve out a special area for playing and store an easily accessed selection of toys and games right where they will be used.

I tend to use custom cabinetry designed specifically around everything clients need to store. These can range from floor to ceiling units to simple floating consoles and is the best way to ensure everything has a place and there is a place for everything.

However, stand-alone sideboards, buffets, chests, and bookcases are also fantastic at concealing clutter.

And don't underestimate simple lidded baskets, decorative boxes (lots and lots of boxes), and multi-functional storage furniture.

Of course you'll still step on random lego pieces as you walk down the hall, but for the most part, these ideas will contain the fallout from a serious play session to one area.

Kitchens

The busiest room in the house and the hub of every home. Smart planning for kitchen layouts is essential to maintain your families harmony.

To help ease the morning rush chaos, designate a specific zone outside of the main cooking zone for school lunch prep. Keep lunch boxes, small cutlery sets, and water bottles in easy to access drawers.

Bowls of washed fruit and vegetables as well as small sacks are also easy to store in this area.

And speaking of drawers, I routinely specify under counter refrigerated drawers in this zone.

They hold everything needed to make a gourmet sandwich with enough space to also stock after school snacks so your bottomless kids can help themselves without having to crash your Zoom meeting.

Thermador Panel Ready 24" Freedom®
Drawer Refrigerator - Multiple retailers.



Easing kitchen congestion by including additional beverage areas in upstairs play rooms and snack zones in basement media rooms (popcorn anyone?) are also smart ideas.

We all know that kitchens function as so much more than just feeding stations. So carving out space for kids to play, study, and engage in creative activities while dinner is cooking will keep everyone safe and sane during the evening witching hour.

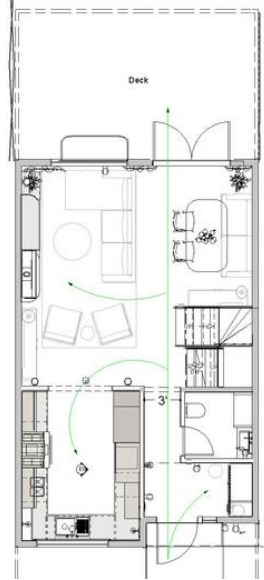
2. Furniture Layout + Style

“A well planned furniture layout makes your home safer, eases areas of congestion, and helps your home feel like the relaxing oasis”

Part of planning by zones involves really thinking about not only what activities each area will support but also how the traffic will flow through your home.

A well planned furniture layout makes your home safer, eases areas of congestion, and helps create the relaxing oasis you desperately need.

Imagine the difference between starting your day by easily navigating from the kitchen to the back deck with your morning coffee vs. one where you have to zig zag around furniture and squeeze through narrow walk ways.



Leave lots of space around furniture (36" is the goal) keep the main areas of travel free of obstructions, and make sure the scale of your furniture is right for your space.

When your main floor routinely doubles as a race track for your two and four legged zoom-masters, furniture layout is an even more important safety consider



Furniture style is never an afterthought I know, just Invest in flexible seating like sectional sofas, swivel chairs, ottomans and benches. These can be rearranged when the races are on and then moved back into cozy conversation zones for family gatherings.

And remember, rounded corners are your friends. From subtly rounded edges to full capsule shapes. The soft (aka safe) furniture look is everywhere. Don't miss the Fall Trends on page 4.



3. Never too much storage

I have too much storage" is not something busy families can generally say.

But it is always the goal.

After all, an organized house helps ease frustration day to day and makes it possible to always be guest ready—even if you have to quickly throw an arm full of random bits into a designated "companies coming" drawer on your way to answer the door.



These drawers can be electrified for even more convenience. Just be mindful of the Canadian Electrical code.

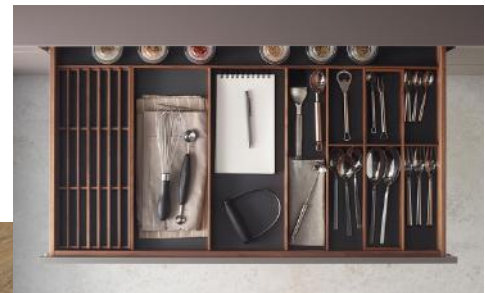
When designing the perfect storage for your unique needs, asking yourself where you expect to use a particular item is just as important as figuring out its dimensions.

This way you can be sure to have designated storage for everything from your industrial mix-master in your baking zone, your most precious heirloom necklace in your dressing room, and your hard working grooming tools at the ready in your vanity. Without having to lug the 500lb mixer across the room or untangle the hair dryer cords every time you need a blow out.

I specify drawers over cupboards for all storage as much as I can. Why? More storage, better organization, easier for kids to help themselves, and no more strange yoga poses needed to reach something from the back of the cabinet. Your back will thank you in a few years!

And even if you aren't ready for a full remodel there are so many modular units available that can be mixed and matched to fit your current drawers and coral all of your specific knick-knacks.

Another secret weapon are boxes. Lots and lots of lidded boxes. They are a decorative way to stash everything from remotes, to entire lego sets, to your puppies most loved toys, and even those random bits and bobs whose origin story remains a mystery.



One of my favorite secret weapons? Double tiered drawer storage. Don't let any inch of space go to waste.

4. The High-Low Balance



Family-friendly homes don't need to look like a high end showroom from top to bottom. But this doesn't mean they have to be filled with a hodge-podge of dilapidated throw away furniture.

For many parents, the underlying reason for not decorating while their kids are young is the fear that money spent on furnishings will be wasted because the pieces will not last or hold up to heavy wear and tear.

But I disagree. Go against "popular" opinion and invest in certain pieces for your home now. And then strike a balance with less expensive peripheral items.

So where do I suggest you invest?



Skip the "kids furniture" and invest in quality bed now that will transition with them as they grow.

Upholstered daily used pieces are where I always assign a good portion of my clients furnishings budget.

A well made sofa will be strong enough to handle your kids using it as a jungle-gym and the pillows as safe zones during hours of "the floor is lava".

Quality construction also means you will be able to reupholster your lovely sofa many times over rather than adding to the problem of overflowing landfills. Absolutely a win win!

Even though you may not feel rested enough to believe this, you spend one-third of your life in bed. To make sleep as comfortable as possible surround yourself with luxury linens, spend time finding the right mattress, and invest in a quality frame that offers style and support.

And where do I feel safe saving?

Non-upholstered dining chairs, occasional chairs, end tables, nightstands...items that are lesser used and where comfort isn't top priority. And except for statement making art and decor, "trendy" accessories that you will switch out routinely can be cheap and cheerful.



Saatchi Art

Crate And Barrel

Ikea

5. Durable finishes

Durable no longer means scratchy, boring and ugly. Thanks to increasing demand, durable finishes, fabrics, and materials are becoming more accessible and beautiful.

Tested performance fabrics (solution-dyed or treated) mean you can finally have your white velvet sofa and eat your chocolate cake (on your sofa) too.

Think relaxed linen drapery, butter soft mohair, deep jewelled velvet, and saturated prints. There is a performance alternative to almost any fabric choice you can make.

I love to use performance fabrics is on window treatments. A little spot cleaning on the edge where sticky hands grab the drapes to open and close them (peak-a-boo) will keep your custom windows looking as amazing as the day they were installed.

If you want to add trim to your performance drapery or toss cushions make sure its also performance grade so the entire item can be treated and easily cleaned.

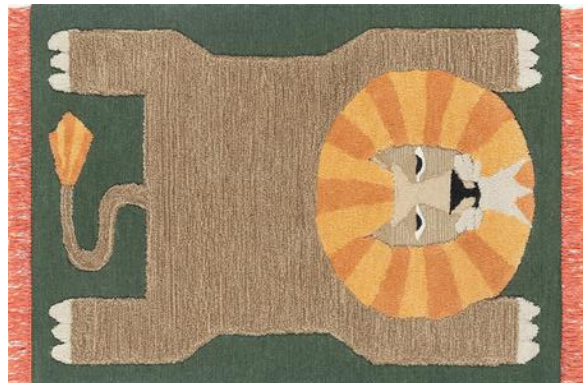
There is one drawback of performance fabric on your sofa or dining chair...the liquid beads.

Why is this a problem? Well, these little beads of red wine or fruit punch can roll. And a rolling bead of coloured liquid inevitably falls on the rug below...and that is why performance rugs came to be!

Another family-friendly rug choice? The OG of rugs. Wool. Naturally dense so it repels liquids (long enough to blot them up), is comfortable on the toes, and can be professionally cleaned many times over.



Jaipur Living



Wool for the win!

“Durable no longer means scratchy, boring and ugly”



So there you have it. Family-friendly design isn't a dazzling mythical unicorn.

You don't have to prioritize durability at the expense of your amazing style or wait until you are an empty nester to actually LOVE your home.

It's all about finding creative solutions that cater to the needs of every family member, while bringing you joy and surrounding you with things you love.



I will also say this from the perspective of a mom—embarking on a family-friendly design project when your kids are young is a great way to teach your children to have an appreciation for beautiful things.

Kids will be kids and pets will be pets. It's a fact of family life that accidents will happen.

However, beyond family-proofing your home as much as you can, instilling some house rules around how to take care of their home and items in it is, in my opinion, good for children to learn early.

Don't be surprised when the next argument you need to diffuse is about whose turn it is to karate chop your down pillows!

The Last Word

*“I’ve seen this lately.
Lamps on the
kitchen counter.
What is your thought
on this?”*

I love both the look and functionality of a table lamp in the kitchen!

Kitchens, just like any other room need layers of lighting.

Unless you are elbow deep in prepping your signature soufflé or hand washing the crystal. You don’t necessarily need, or want, to have the harsh overhead lights on.

Nothing sets a warm and welcoming mood like the warm glow from a lamp in the corner or even out in the open on your island.

Give it a try! And watch as everyone lingers just a little bit longer.





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