

“We figured we might have boys and might have girls — and we have a tree swing in it, so it’s a great place for them to play,” she says of the boys, who call them NayNay and DiDi.

The boys spent every waking moment in the playroom. The room has two sets of bunk beds and two of what Mrs. Sorey calls “potty rooms” with the potty and the sink on either side, with frosted glass for privacy.

“It looks just the way it did when they were babies and they’ve never said anything about changing it. Actually, I like it just the way it is,” she says. “I wonder how long it will be before they want something more teen-related.”

The Soreys’ playroom has lots of closet space and each bunk bed has a little cubbyhole. There is storage under the seats.

A room of his own

Across town, another family is making good use of their space. They’ve converted their dining room into a play space for little Drake Biggs.

Brandi Biggs, wife of Dr. H. Kurtis Biggs, founder of The Joint Replacement Institute, loves that having a separate play area creates a safe place for Drake to play.

“In his own space, he is free to imagine and create without the limitation that can sometimes be present in a living room or shared family space,” says Mrs. Biggs. “His play does not need to be interrupted and he can enjoy his area both with independent play and with his buddies.”

Mrs. Biggs says her family does most of their dining and entertaining in a casual manner. Not having the formal dining room is a small sacrifice to have a playroom dedicated to the child.

“The playroom sees far more activity than a dining room would in our home, and our next child is coming in January, so Drake looks forward to another playmate,” she says. “We did not have this option at our last home, but would put it on a list of musts if we were ever to move again.”

If she could have anything on her wish list, Mrs. Biggs says they would install a lazy river-type wading area.

A few miles away in Lely Resort, designer Laura Parsons of Pure Design created a built-in children’s room in which the bunk beds were made on-site. She selected a wood floor of European oak with a driftwood finish. The room, while functional, has an almost ethereal quality. It’s a soothing, yet fun space for kids to grow.

Ms. Parsons cautions that the first thing any parent should consider when crafting a kids’ room is the age of the child and how the space will be used.

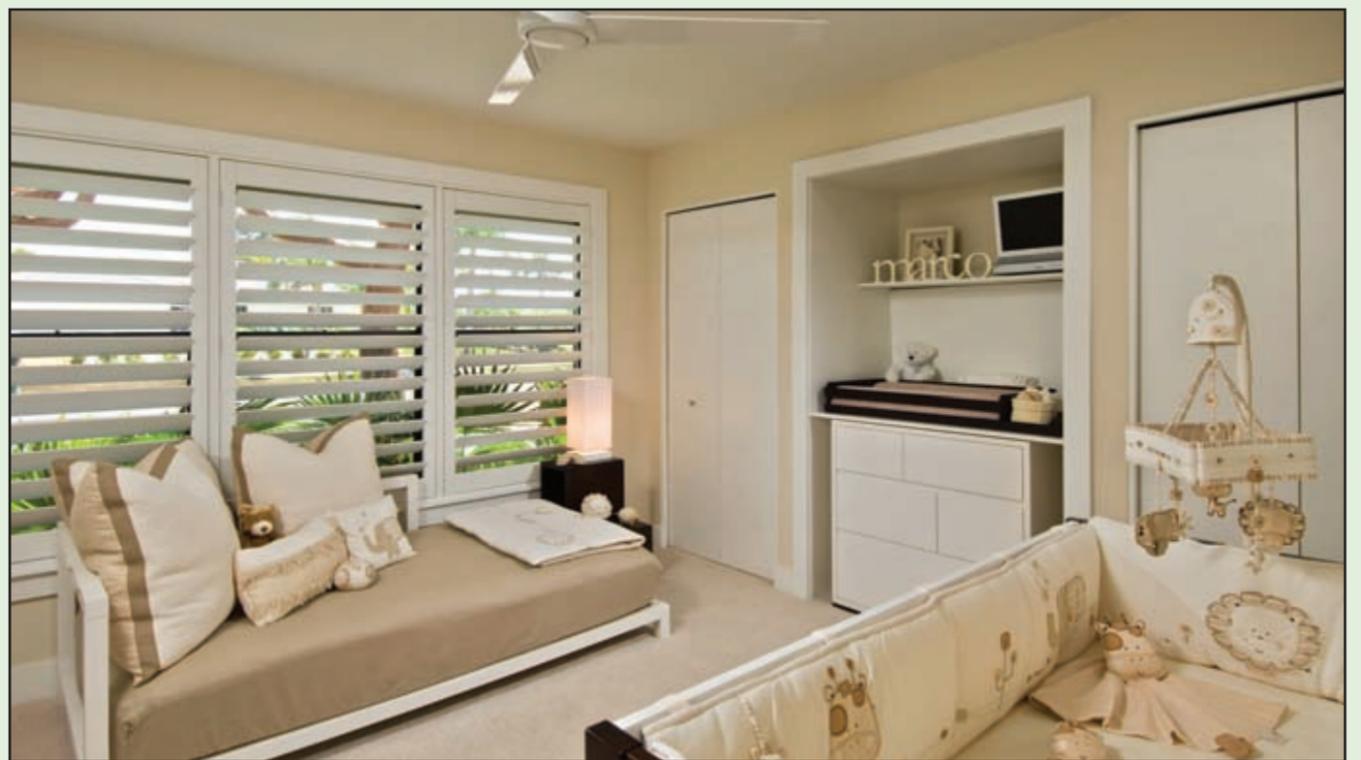
“It is most important to have ample floor space for designated activities — and that can include a cozy reading nook, a craft area and possibly a place for watching TV or playing Wii,” Ms. Parsons says. “The space should be inspirational and fun — kid-friendly furniture and durable indoor/outdoor fabrics are a must.”

Ms. Parsons also suggests that play spaces should employ storage solutions that complement the design of the room. And she says it’s smart to create the space so it can be used as something else later when the kids go off to college.

“Parents want the space to be large enough for several activities, have ample natural light and, of course, easy to reconfigure as the child grows,” says Ms. Parsons.

She also cautions not to overlook flooring options. “Quality flooring is important, something that is durable, easy to clean and soft to the touch. I prefer the use of hardwood floors with a comfy area rug.”

The biggest mistake homeowners make in space planning, Ms. Parsons



When Kira Krümm designed an eco-chic “baby’s habitat” for son Marco, she kept the space serene and soothing by intentionally not introducing color. COURTESY PHOTOS

Going green in the nursery

Kira Krümm’s new baby is all about going green — little Marco’s nursery is an eco-chic space she calls “baby’s habitat.”

Mrs. Krümm is a designer with clients throughout Southwest Florida. When it came time for her to create her own room for baby, she had a clear concept: create a space that’s good for baby and good for the environment.

“Many people think a nursery must be brightly colored with contrast in order to stimulate the baby, but my approach was the opposite — I did not introduce color,” Mrs. Krümm says. “There will be many opportunities to stimulate him when he is involved in activities, but as he adapts to his new life, the room can change with him and colors can be introduced gradually.”

Mrs. Krümm felt the nursery should be Marco’s retreat — a restful place where he would feel calm and comforted. Her approach was also influenced by the Chinese art of feng shui, which is deeply rooted in nature and focuses



on balance and simplicity, she explains.

“I visualized the room in light neutrals contrasted by a touch of dark wood, imagining straight clean lines softened by tackle fabrics and textures to soothe his sensitive senses,” Mrs. Krümm says. “The balance of masculine and feminine elements creates

harmony.”

Mrs. Krümm chose a contemporary-style crib made of New Zealand pinewood from sustainable forests in a combination of white and espresso finishes. The crib converts into a toddler bed.

“My husband and I are both tall, and we had a challenging time finding a changing table at a comfortable height, so we opted to convert a dresser into a changing table so that after the diaper years we could still use it in the room,” Mrs. Krümm said. “A ceiling fan was a must, as it clears stagnant energy and releases a soothing sound, and fans are also known to help reduce SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).”

Lastly, Mrs. Krümm added integrated speakers for soft music and soft lighting for late-night changes and feeding, as well as shutters instead of curtains to allow partial or no light, which is good for day napping. ■



Brandi Biggs and her husband, Dr. H. Kurtis Biggs, converted their formal dining room into a vibrant playroom for son Drake. TIM GIBBONS / FLORIDA WEEKLY