



Nurseries take page from Feng Shui ideals

## **Soothing scenery**

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Creating a peaceful nursery takes more than cute wallpaper, hanging mobiles and teddy bears.

To create the ideal nursery— peaceful, comfortable and functional — takes carefully thought-out preparation and proper placement of furniture, according to two Feng Shui experts.

Sisters Alison Forbes and Laura Forbes Carlin, home and lifestyle experts co-wrote together their first book *The Peaceful Nursery: Preparing a Home for your Baby with Feng Shui* (Delta Parenting).

“You should prepare the entire home beyond the nursery for the arrival of a baby. But the nursery is a place to enjoy your child and time together,” Allison says.

Laura adds, “Simplify it. If your house was cluttered before it will only get worse after the baby. Declutter, simplify, organize.”

Laura says not only should you do a house cleansing, she also says you should do a mental cleansing as well.

“If the house is cluttered and you can’t find your keys in the morning, you are in a bad mood. It’s like a ripple effect. By cleaning the house you also in turn, clean your mind. You should get all of those little tasks out of your mind,” says Laura.

Once that is done, the sisters say it is important to plan ahead before the baby arrives and make good choices about things they may not even realize.

“Every parent wants their baby to be healthy and happy. They put so much money into the nursery it ends up backfiring,” Allison explains.

“Parents have the best intentions but sometimes they may be putting their child at harm and not even realizing it.”

What she is referring to is the type of paint parents may put on their children’s walls or the furniture they may buy.

The sisters recommend buying furniture a few months in advance and painting well beforehand so the toxins can release before the baby lives in the room.

The Los Angeles sisters also suggest limiting the toys in the room, as small objects can present a choking hazard.

“Parents want their children’s rooms to look great and have colourful paint and toys but parents should remember the children’s room priority is to sleep,” Allison says. “It should always be a peaceful sleeping place first, before a play area.”

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**BABY ESSENTIALS ... While getting the nursery ready for baby is an exciting time for new parents, the room’s function as safe, peaceful and functional is most important, say two Fung Shui experts.**

And when they grow out of it ...

When it comes to decor, a child's bedroom goes through more transformation than any other room in the house.

So how do you incorporate the change from infant, to preschooler to teen, without getting overwhelmed by the work or costs involved?

“Once you invest in basic furniture that can grow with your child, the use of different paint colours and techniques can transform a living space more simply and economically than any other decorating tool,” says Melanie Rice of Para Paints.

Pastels or wall stencils for a baby nursery, for example, can easily be converted to brighter colours or themes for school-aged children, and finally changed to more subtle colours that suit a teenager, says Rice.

Here are some tips from Para Paint:

- Do your homework on colours. Studies show wall colour of children's rooms affect their mood and behaviour. Blues are a popular choice because they tend to soothe, relax and improve productivity. Pinks and purples have a sweet, childlike appeal favoured by young girls, as do greens, which are also considered calming.

Colours to avoid include bright yellows, known to upset babies and raise tempers, and reds, which, while stimulating creativity, can also increase sleeplessness, blood pressure and respiration rate. For teens asking for black, before balking at the suggestion, consider the fact the colour denotes submissiveness and is considered to be timeless, classy and sophisticated.

- Involve your child in choosing a theme. From racing cars, sports, animals and bugs, to beaches, stars, castles and flowers, themes help give decorating direction and can be achieved simply by using painting techniques.

- Have fun with faux finishes. From simple methods such as sponging, colour washing or glazing, to more complicated ragging, combing or crackling, faux finishes will create interest in your child's room.