

TODDLER TERRITORY

RULE 1: SPACE TO PLAY

When your little one gets her legs she'll want her own space to roam and play. So make sure her toys are accessible but easy to tidy up. There are plenty of storage solutions available now, from baskets to bins and boxes.

A rug makes the floor an inviting prospect for play, particularly when the days get cooler.

With furniture around the outside of the room you'll create space in the centre for play. If the room is large enough, you could erect a teepee and use cushions or bean bags to make a cosy hideaway for them. If you really want to push the boat out, opt for swinging rings attached to the ceiling, or a climbing wall (obviously you'll need to make sure these activities are appropriate to your child's age and development).

RULE 2: SPACE TO INSPIRE

Wall art is a great way to inspire your little one, and again, the options are endless. You can use your own family photographs as decoration, or opt for wall decals which stick to the wall and can easily be removed when your child outgrows them. Also think of words as art — an inspirational quote in a beautiful framed graphic print will help her dream great dreams. A growth chart is another neat idea to inspire your child as she grows.

Your child's room should also be a place that makes her feel like she belongs. Imagine how frustrating it must be to reach for a light switch that's just beyond your fingertips, or how exhausting to have to clamber onto adult-sized furniture all the time. By mounting hooks on the wall at your child's height, you can hang up her clothes and encourage her to get dressed by herself each morning.

RULE 3: SPACE TO REST

Of course, the focus of the bedroom remains the bed. Many cots now offer the longevity of having removable sides so they turn into a bed for a toddler. We adore the Ubabub Pod Cot — that's a bed that'll inspire a great love of design in its young occupant.

It's important that cots meet safety guidelines. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs says the cot must be more than 600mm deep when you measure from the top of the mattress base to the lowest point on any end or side. The mattress needs to fit in firmly with gaps around all sides less than 20mm. Spaces between the bars of the cot must be between 50mm and 85mm. Also check that the dropside catches lock securely — you don't want any jammed fingers. And until your child is ready to transition to a big kid's bed, make sure she can't climb out of the cot by standing on any bars, ledges or other footholds. Dorothy Waide's cot-buying advice is that as long as your cot meets safety requirements, you're better to spend your money on a quality mattress that lasts at least two years.



An inspirational quote will help them dream great dreams

Go confidently
in the direction
of your dreams
live the life
you've imagined.
Henry David Thoreau