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Baby Nursery Quick Guide

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When Designing a Nursery, Keep Mom's Comfort in Mind

Most new parents focus on the needs of the new little one while designing the nursery. But, mom (and dad) will be spending a lot of time in the nursery, as well. Making wise purchases and decorating decisions will pay off in the long run, not only for baby, but for mom, too.

Here are some main areas of the room that should be considered during decorating, for Mom's comfort later.

Rocking chair: Beyond the crib, one of the biggest purchases for a nursery is the rocking chair. While shopping, take the time to try several chairs. Sit in each chair for a while and see how comfortable it is. If the back is too straight, it won't be comfortable for those long nights. Check the rocking mechanism. Is it enclosed to avoid little fingers getting pinched?

Dressers/changing tables: There are many dressers that have a detachable changing table that sits on top. Check that the changing table is at a comfortable height by standing in front of it, bending your arms at a ninety-degree angle. The top of the changing area should be just below your arms. This will help reduce back strain.

Lighting: An overhead light is good to have for general daily use, but it is also wise to invest in a small lamp or night light near the changing table for late night care. This keeps the late-night disturbances at a minimum for the baby, helping everyone to get back to sleep quicker.

Blankets: In addition to baby blankets, it's wise to have a larger afghan or blanket on hand for mom to use while snuggling with the baby.

Pillows: Once the baby starts crawling and playing on the floor, having some pillows for mom to sit on can make a world of difference for her. One of the leaning pillows with arms can also make a nice backrest for mom, too, while playing on the floor with the little one.

Small fridge: One of the handiest items you can put into a newborn baby's nursery is a dorm-size fridge. You can keep drinks and snacks in it handy for mom. Of course, once baby reaches the crawling stage, the fridge will have to go. But, in the meantime, mom can rock baby, and grab a nice cold water at the same time –and that, is designing with comfort in mind.

Music: Having a CD player or radio in the nursery can be beneficial to both the baby and mom.

Creating a comfortable environment for both the mom and baby will make the nursery an enjoyable place to spend time while they are getting to know each other



Decorating When You Don't Know the Baby's Gender

It can be a challenge to decorate your new baby's nursery when you have decided not to find out the gender of your baby during pregnancy. Thankfully we have a lot more choices available to us today than our parents and grandparents had when they were having babies. They worked with the two basic baby colors; blue and pink. We have the entire rainbow and our imagination is the only limit.

Before you put anything into your nursery, it's a great idea to tackle the walls. You're going to want something gentle and soothing that will work with all kinds of ideas you come up with later. Without being girlish or boyish, you could go for a simple blue sky scene using a few shades of light blue. Add in some fluffy clouds and you have a great backdrop for anything. Carry this same theme over into curtains with some fabric paints. Just about any fabric color you choose for the windows will look complimentary.

Most nurseries have four basic elements of furniture. The baby's crib and changing table usually match. Then you have a dresser and a rocking chair for Mom. You may also have a cradle, but that's more likely to be in your own bedroom. Since you won't know the gender of the baby until you bring him home, and you certainly won't feel like shopping for furniture then – you will probably want to go with natural wood tones. If you pick up some unfinished pieces, you can add color and design elements later when you have more time.

The next step in decorating your baby's nursery might be all about the functions of the nursery. If you'll be spending time in the nursery late at night, a little side nightstand with a lamp next to the rocker will be nice. Find a plain white lamp and lamp shade and you'll be able to modify it later to match the theme you choose.

Look for two or three large shelves, two or three feet wide, at least eight inches deep and hang these up strategically around the room. Choose a natural wood tone to match the furniture or stick with white until later. These shelves will be a blessing to you for things like a small stereo, some books to read your baby, or a few favorite décor items. These basic elements are so versatile and can flow with any ideas you come up with later when the baby is settled in. Whether you end up adding butterflies or frogs to the room later, the blue sky and neutral additions will fit perfectly.

This is a room with a really nice canvas of sky and all of the basics in place. You can wait for baby to reveal his or her gender to really dig into a decorating theme, or just choose to go with something that isn't girl or boy specific to get everything done in advance. Whichever you choose, don't be afraid to be daring – remember, the nursery gets redecorated in just a few short years and you get to have the fun all over again.



Baby Furniture for the Penny Pincher

When new parents think of purchasing items for the nursery, the thought of buying baby furniture typically causes a new parent to panic. Visions of future credit card debt can make any new mom or dad break into a sweat.

However, there are ways to cut corners, and make furnishing the baby's room less expensive. Here are a few ideas to get you thinking frugally before rushing out to purchase furniture for your baby's room.

The crib

New parents may think they need both a bassinet and a crib. The frugal shopper will choose to skip the bassinet, which is typically viewed as a luxury. The crib is a necessity, but the bassinet is only used for a few months, and is then stored in the garage.

When shopping for a crib, keep your eyes open for a bargain on a convertible style crib, which can transform from a crib, to a toddler bed, and then a full size bed. If you can invest in a convertible crib, it would alleviate the cost of a bed in the future.

Of course, co-sleeping is even more affordable than buying a crib or a bassinet. The decision to co-sleep can eliminate the expense of a crib all-together or delay the expense until you have time to shop around and find a bargain.

The Dresser

Baby's dresser is an item that can oftentimes be picked up at a yard sale. Thrifty shoppers know that purchasing a full-sized dresser is more economical than buying a small dresser. Remember that you will eventually have to turn the baby room into a child's bedroom, and a smart investment now can grow with your child through the years. Don't be afraid to buy an older dresser. An older dresser can be as good as new with just a coat of paint, assuming all hardware is working well.

Changing Table

The changing table is a luxury for the frugal shopper. Check places like the Salvation Army and Goodwill as well as yard sales. These tables are often discarded when the baby outgrows them. Another option for a frugal changing table is to convert a full-size dresser into a changing table. If you search online, you can find instructions to easily turn your dresser into a safe place to change your baby. The changing table is an item some moms choose to do without, and, instead, set a blanket on the floor to change their babies on.

I am sure in a perfect world, we would all appreciate the luxury of going out and buying everything we need at a baby boutique. However, the reality is that baby does not need the most expensive furniture. Your baby needs only one thing, and that is you.



Basic Nursery Safety Tips

When baby is on the way, new moms have much on their minds – decorating the nursery, arranging finances, whether to stay at home or go back to work, and the many changes in their bodies from pregnancy. However, one of the most important aspects of being a new mom is creating a safe nursery for your new baby.

Many moms will find a quality used crib or hand-me-down, opposed to purchasing a new one. Of course, when shopping for used cribs, keep safety in mind.

- Ensure the crib is in good shape, and is fairly new (to avoid potential for lead paint). Antique cribs should be avoided.
- Measure the space between the slats. The gap should be no more than 2-3/8 inches. Also, make sure there are no slats missing.
- Also, check the rail height. To do this, lower the mattress to its lowest position and raise the sides of the crib. Then, measure from the top of the side rails down to the mattress support, to ensure there is at least 26 inches between the two.
- Although cut-outs in the head or foot of the crib are decorative and very beautiful, avoid cribs that have them. A baby's head can get trapped in the open spaces.
- Check the four corner posts to make sure they are even with the end panels. They can be as much as 1/16th of an inch above the end panels, but no more. This lessens the risk of baby's clothing catching which could be a strangulation hazard.
- Is all the hardware included? If there is any hardware missing, pass on this crib and move on to the next.

Once you choose a crib, make sure you check this safety list so your baby can sleep safely.

- Place the crib in the room away from all windows. Window blinds and curtain cords can get tangled around baby's neck.
- Check the mattress itself. It should fit snugly into the crib. If there is a gap between the crib and the mattress large enough for you to fit two fingers, it is not safe. Do not stuff the gap with a blanket. You need a new crib or mattress.
- Avoid using quilts, blankets or pillows in baby's crib.
- Do not create your own waterproofing by using garbage bags or dry-cleaning bags. They can stick to baby's face, cutting off breathing.
- Install a smoke detector in baby's room or in the hallway outside the room. Replace the batteries every 6 months.
- Of course, always put baby to sleep on his back.



Decorating the Baby Nursery of your Dreams on a Frugal Budget

Becoming a new parent is both a life altering experience, and a financial investment. There are many expenses involved in having a new baby. One of the most costly is decorating the baby's room. Stocking the nursery, although fun, can be quite frustrating. The mom on a budget not only has to make every penny count, but she also has to determine when to invest more, and when to invest less.

Accessories such as blankets, sheets, lamps, and figurines, can be purchased either new, or used, and still be in your budget. If buying used items is a better option for you, then check out your local yard sales, and thrift stores. Check eBay first before spending any money. Oftentimes, people buy items and then do not use them and sell them on eBay cheap. If you can't find what you need on eBay, then places like the Dollar Tree oftentimes have great finds for the basics that you'll need.

There are so many options for decorating the walls of the nursery, and the possibilities are endless. Wall papering the entire wall is much more expensive than painting. It's an option but consider the expense. A less expensive alternative would be to choose a room border instead. The border comes already decorated, and is self adhesive. Your local discount stores, like Target and Walmart, carry a large selection of borders.

Painting the wall is a more budget-friendly option than wallpapering. Before you purchase any paint, it is a good idea to seek the advice a professional in that area. Your cheaper paint may not necessarily be your best investment if it shows fingerprints too quickly. A cheap paint will become more expensive in the long-run if you have to repaint frequently to cover wear and tear.

The floors in your nursery have the potential of being a large expense. Laying carpet is great, but may not fit in the frugal budget. Area rugs offer a great alternative to carpeting for the tight budget. Target and other discount stores carry area rugs for children's rooms.

Every new parent desires the perfect nursery for their new baby. The frugal shopper generally can't afford to purchase everything new, but that does not have to limit their ability to create an adorable room. Investing a little time and patience while shopping for your items will pay off in the end. The budget shopper chooses their products carefully, making sure that their investment is wise. The nursery you create on a budget can become the nursery of your dreams.



Involving Big Brother or Sister in Decorating the Nursery

Having a new baby is a wonderful experience. If this is not your first child, you'll be excited to include your other children in all aspects of bringing the baby into your family. Decorating the nursery is a fun family project that helps your children to adjust to the idea of a new baby. It also allows them the freedom of adding their personal touch to the baby's nursery and the chance to feel "big" and important.

Your children can be involved in each aspect of decorating the baby's nursery.

Paint Color: Narrow down your paint choices to two or three colors that you love. Then, allow your children to select the color of paint for the nursery walls from those options. They'll tell everyone they meet "I picked out the paint color" long after the baby is born.

Bedding: Include your children when picking out the bedding and accessories for the room. If you can narrow down the choices, and are fairly flexible, then allow the children to make some of the final decisions.

Hands on Work: When the actual decorating of the nursery begins, allow the family to help with all the hard work, too. Everyone can work together to clear the room before painting. Children also love to help put anything together that requires assembly. (Just be cautious with children still in the choking hazard stage.)

Little Artists: Want to make your kids' day? Let them contribute all the artwork for the nursery. This is where your children can really shine. Purchase paints and a blank canvas for each of your children. Encourage your kids to paint art to display on the nursery wall. If your children are a bit too young for paint and canvas, sit down with them and color pictures to frame and place on the walls of the nursery. If you have already chosen a name for your new arrival, draw and decorate the letters of the baby's name, and hang each letter in its own frame.

Welcoming a new baby is an adjustment for everyone involved. Make it a fun and memorable time leading up to welcoming the newest member of your family. You'll look around the nursery that was created with love, and tell your new baby how lucky he is to be part of such a special family.



Creative Art for Baby's Nursery

When decorating a new arrival's nursery, you don't have to stick to the usual teddy bears and pastels. There are so many more options available today. Research has shown that bright colors, especially black, red and white, are better for eye development in the early months. Big bold shapes are also good, as they help with focusing.

Here are a few creative art project ideas you can easily make for the baby's nursery.

Fabric Letters: Get some red, black and white fabric and cut out shapes, numbers and letters – or the child's name -- and arrange them on the walls. Try to use fabric that doesn't fray (ask the clerk at the fabric store for assistance in the choice). By soaking the pieces in liquid fabric starch (a spray starch works well), the pieces will stick to the wall after it dries, without damaging the surface. This is great to use in an apartment where you may not be able to use nails.

Handprints and Footprints: Decorate the room with the baby's handprints and footprints. Make a stencil of the print, or if the baby cooperates, actually put the paint on baby's hands and feet and press on the walls. Each month, you could make a new set of prints to add to the design, to watch your child's growth. Write your baby's age on each footprint, so you can see the change.

Family Photo Tree: Paint a simple tree on one wall. Collect nice pictures of the family: parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. Hang them on the tree. There are a lot of attractive and inexpensive picture frames that would work nicely. If you don't want to purchase frames, you could even use different color photo mats, and use those to attach the pictures to the wall.

Wall Quilt Collage: Collect baby wallpaper samples to create a "wall quilt" collage. Lay the wallpaper pieces out, and try to use as much of a variety as possible to create a nice pattern. Options: If you're in an apartment, the samples can be attached to poster board and then hung on the wall. Or, instead of using wallpaper samples, gather the cards from your baby shower and use those instead. "Frame" the art with ribbon to make it look like quilt binding.

With a little time and creativity, it doesn't have to cost a small fortune to have a unique nursery.



Popular Nursery Theme Ideas for Baby Girls

You've found out that your precious bundle of joy will be a girl. Pictures of pink and frills suddenly fill your head. But, decorating for a little girl doesn't have to be limited to pink. The possibilities are almost endless. In addition to all the licensed character nursery themes out there, there are many other choices available.

Flower garden: Create a flower garden in the nursery. Find bright colorful silk flowers to decorate the room. There are cute flower-shaped rugs, lights, wall decorations and other accessories. You can also find floral borders to accent the walls.

Butterflies: Butterflies are always popular and will be something any girl will still love as she gets older. There are a wide variety of bedding sets with butterflies in various color combinations. You can easily combine this theme with a garden theme, as well.

Baby animals: Who wouldn't love cute, fuzzy baby animals? They make perfect nursery decorations. As the child gets a little older, it'll be great for games of I Spy and learning the animals and their sounds.

Rainbows: Paint the room a pale sky blue, with a few clouds and paint a simple rainbow on one of the walls. If you have used furniture, paint it brightly, as well. Mix and match items in the room, using the different colors, and you have a bright, imaginative room. Place a yellow toy box at the bottom of the rainbow for the "pot o' gold".

Dance: Maybe you'll inspire a future world-class ballerina with a dance-themed room. It's easy to collect decorations, like posters, dance shoes or other dance-related memorabilia for a delightful little girl's room. Attach a "barre" and large mirror to one wall when your child gets older and you'll have a dance studio in your daughter's room.

Pooh Bear: Winnie the Pooh is also a very popular yet classic idea for a baby girl's room. You can choose from either the classic or newer versions with a variety of characters. Either one would be wonderful and usually will be a favorite until she is older. Adding Pooh, Piglet, Tigger and Eeyore will be colorful and cute as well. Bedding, decorations and stuffed characters add to a delightful setting.

In addition to Winnie the Pooh, there are many other character options for a girl's room, such as the baby version of many popular cartoon characters, like Snoopy, Bugs Bunny and Muppets. Some newer favorites are Blues Clues, Dora the Explorer, Disney Princesses and many more.



Popular Nursery Theme Ideas for Baby Boys

The ultrasound showed that a bouncing baby boy is on the way. Now you need to prepare a room in which he can grow and have adventures. You may want to stimulate his very active imagination along with his very active play. However, sometimes it's wise to create a cozier, less stimulating room, so your baby boy is easier to put to sleep at night. You can adapt any of the themes below to be perfect for your baby boy.

Cars: Cars are a tried and true theme for a boy's room. You can find pages of wallpaper borders with cars in every color scheme. There are car shaped beds and other accessories that will fit into the theme as they grow older. An area rug with streets printed on it is a perfect addition. It is sure to become a favorite as your son gets older.

Trains: Little boys seem to love trains. Decorating the room with toy trains is a perfect fit. Some people have even built a suspended track around the room for a decorative and fun accent. Thomas the Tank is a very popular and natural way to add to your train themed room.

Boats: Boats are another good theme for a boy's room. You can find inspiration you're your room by examining the simple designs of signal flags to life preservers. Pirates would also be a great addition to a boat themed room as pirates are very popular with little boys.

Sports: A sports-themed room is very easy to set up for a baby's nursery. Combine items from football, baseball, basketball, soccer and hockey – which are all easy to find. From preprinted wallpaper and borders to stencils and even actual balls and other equipment, decorating the room is a snap. If mom or dad has some trophies from their glory days, these would make wonderful accents. Of course, you can always find banners and posters from your favorite teams to add even more visual appeal to your baby's room.

Characters: Popular shows such as Bob the Builder, Blue's Clues and Sesame Street offer bedding sets and accessories that will make decorating very easy for the baby's room.



Designing a Nursery that will Grow with your Baby

While waiting for your baby's due date to arrive, use that time wisely to design a nursery that will grow with your child. A little planning now can save you time and money down the road as your baby becomes older.

Painting: When painting the walls of the room, most people tend to go with an off-white. But if you want to be more creative, a popular idea is to paint below the chair rail green for grass and above it blue for the sky. From there, you can simply change the decorations to fit the interests of the child.

Decorations: Posters and other artwork are an easy and inexpensive way of decorating a room quickly. This allows you to keep up with the child's interests and letting them select the posters gives them input for their room.

Fabric Designs: There are many wonderful novelty prints available in the fabric store. They are a great way to decorate and make a coordinated room. Purchase a yard or two of the print, cut out the designs, and use a fabric starch to stick the designs to the wall (use a liquid spray starch, soaking the pieces, apply them to the walls, they will stick after they dry). This works wonderfully, especially in apartment where you may not be able to use nails. If you sew, you can also create matching curtains and possibly bedding as well.

Magnetic paint: A recent addition to the decorating tools available is magnetic paint. While a bit more expensive than regular paint, it's great to use in a child's room. Paint a coat, or two (following the directions) over the primer, then paint over the magnetic paint with the main color used in the room. Alphabet and number magnets then become not only a decoration, but educational.

Chalkboard paint: Another fun paint to use in a child's room is chalkboard paint. Using it either below the chair rail, or just in one area, makes a great place for a child to be creative, without damaging the rest of the walls.

Probably the most important aspect to keep in mind while decorating a room to grow with your child is the furniture. There are many "convertible" beds that can be used as a crib, then a day bed, and eventually a twin bed, with the simple addition of support braces and a mattress.