

Bravo's Ryan Brown Offers Tips for Kid-Friendly Decorating

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Ryan Brown

It's the classic parent conundrum: How do you make your house kid-friendly *and* stylish? Is it even possible to have both, or are those of us with tots doomed to live in homes furnished in brightly colored plastic?

Interior designer [Ryan Brown](#) says absolutely not. Brown, the co-star of Bravo's hit real estate series "[Flipping Out](#)" and a partner at Brown Design, is also the father of a two-year-old, and he understands the balancing act parents are doing when it comes to home decorating. "I remember my clients saying, 'Oh, I have kids,'" he says, "I used to say, 'Don't worry about it!'" But then Chloe came along and Brown realized what his clients were talking about. Having a child, Brown says, has changed his ideas about design "quite dramatically...Kid stuff has a tendency to grow and multiply."

Brown says that his own house is completely kid-friendly. "All of my rooms are kid-friendly," Brown told ParentDish. "It may not look that way to people when you walk in, but just because there aren't toys everywhere doesn't mean it's not kid friendly." Chloe is allowed to roam through the house; no space is off limits. "I don't want to have to worry about her in any of the rooms," he says. "I can't imagine a house where people have rooms where kids can't go."

But decorating for a child has been a learning experience even for this dad and decorating pro. Brown was designing his current home when Chloe was a baby; the dining room chairs he picked out tipped over very easily when his toddler grabbed on to them. "Whoops!" Brown says laughing.

So what can parents do to create spaces that are kid-friendly and still stylish? Brown has three simple tips.

Storage, storage storage! Brown looks for pieces that can do double duty, like ottomans with removable tops, for stashing toys.

Choose kid-friendly fabrics. Brown suggests that his clients look at outdoor fabrics for indoor pieces. Outdoor fabric, which is often indistinguishable from traditional upholstery fabrics, can be cleaned with soap and water, for those inevitable spills and stains. Treat traditional fabrics with stain repellent to protect them from spills and stains.

Buy furniture that will grow with your child. Brown bought a trundle bed at Pottery Barn Kids for Chloe's room; it's a piece she will be able to use for years. He also chose a good quality rug for her floor, for two reasons: The pattern will hide any stains, and it can be cleaned, unlike a cheaper alternative.



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Chloe has influenced her father's style in other ways, too. "For me, we don't live that formally any more – we live a more casual life." Brown says that he entertains three nights a week, but now he serves snacks that kids and adults can enjoy, like chips and salsa or crackers and cheese. He also invests in beautiful plastic glasses, the kind that look like glass but won't break.

The bottom line for Ryan Brown is this: You absolutely can have children and nice things. "Just because there aren't toys everywhere [in a home] doesn't mean it's not kid friendly," Brown says. But the other important thing is attitude. At Brown's house, Chloe and her friends are welcome to jump on the furniture – after all, it's her home, too.