

ATTITUDE KIDS

Managing needs of the nursery

Parents must ensure that the newborn's first home is fully equipped, writes Rachel Read

Preparing for an addition to the family can be frantic – but ensuring your newborn's nursery is ready for its occupant is a task that shouldn't be underestimated.

One major concern when kitting out a nursery is safety, with non-toxic materials high on the agenda. Nick Lambert, an interior painter and decorator with more than 20 years' experience, notes that mould and pollution make this an even greater priority. Non-toxic paint is one solution, although this is costly with limited colour choices. Lambert recommends water-based paint, which is less toxic and water-resistant, as a good compromise. All painting should be completed at least seven days before your baby sleeps overnight in the room.

Most parents opt for a neutral and

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classic look, using white with accent colours, says Holly Raymond of Tiny Footprints. Lilian Tse, senior sales and marketing executive of 0/3 baby Collection, agrees, saying "soft colours such as white and light wood make both babies and adults feel relaxed", while neutral furniture can make small rooms appear larger.

Simple décor can be easily adapted as your child gets older, with Lambert recommending updating the room by adding an eye-catching feature wall of different coloured paint, or patterned wallpaper.

Similarly, Lucy McLennan, marketing manager of Bumps to Babes, suggests changing bedding, pillows and soft furnishings to tweak your room's look without having to do a radical overhaul.

Furniture can also be chosen for its adaptable qualities. Raymond recommends

pieces of furniture that

Handmade in Britain, the Moma Nursing Chair is available in a range of colours and easily cleanable.



Mamas and Papas Fern Cot Bed Ivory available at Bumps to Babes

change and grow with your child over time, allowing parents to make changes without structural modifications – especially valid for rented apartments that only allow limited alterations.

Baby cots that convert to toddler beds are particularly useful. Boori's Sleigh Cot turns into a sofa. Tse talks about the Brevi SLEX EVO highchair, and Raymond mentions the Leander Highchair, with both being able to change design for use from newborn babies up to adults.

All experts stress that selecting furniture for storage is important. Tse recommends foldable furniture, such as the 0/3 baby Sara Cot, as a good option for those needing to save space, while Raymond advises parents to consider cots without pelmets that allow for storage underneath.

It's never too early to start planning for extra storage, McLennan says – look for space on the walls that could house shelves or freestanding storage units, and when children get older, turn bookshelves into toy cubbies with storage boxes.

"Older children love to keep their special treasures on small shelves with hooks to hang their favourite things," explains McLennan, highlighting high sleepers, under-bed storage, wardrobe organisers and hanging wall storage as other possibilities.

Lambert, a father himself, points to another important reason behind having out-of-sight, out-of-mind storage for older children during naptime – "to avoid

temptation and promote sleep". Versatility is also key. McLennan notes that one nursery essential is a stable changing station at a comfortable height; buy one that doubles as a chest of drawers, bath or dresser and although it may be an initially more expensive purchase, the furniture's lifespan is extended as a result.

Similarly, Raymond advocates picking a nursing chair that isn't relegated to disuse once the nursing phase is over. Tiny Footprints' bestseller is the gliding-motion Moma Nursing Chair, which is built to last and designed to be moveable, looking as at home in the living room as it does in the baby's room.

It's easy to get caught up in cute accessories, but don't forget the essentials that experts believe are

worth splashing out on. Attention needs to be paid to baby mattresses – given that your newborn spends about 16 hours of the day sleeping, quality is vital.

Look for firm mattresses with an antibacterial, anti-allergy surface that adequately supports your baby's spine. Many will have official safety accreditation.

One final piece of advice from our experts: "Don't leave it too late," says Lambert, remembering the many last-minute phone calls from parents who realise they haven't started thinking about their newborn's room or that the baby may even arrive early.

McLennan recommends stocking up on extra sheets, blankets and mattress protectors so there are enough spares when things are in the wash. A handy laundry bag is an essential too.



Brevi's SLEX EVO changes design for use from newborns to adults and is available from 0/3 baby.