

Modern play spaces can be cool and kid-friendly

BY KIM COOK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Outfitting a play space for children might consist of nothing more than setting up a few old furniture pieces, plastic storage bins and the extra TV.

But some parents want the play space to reflect their design esthetic. Does the rest of the home read more Eero Saarinen than Superman? More Verner Panton than Pokemon? Is the vibe less Nickelodeon, more George Nelson? If so, you'll want to try balancing kid-friendly with cool.

Some options:
MOD MAD

Lots of decor from the '60s and '70s works well in a play space: mod lamps, modular furniture, pop art, and fun, space-age prints for wallpaper and textiles. Hues popular back then — orange, yellow, teal, green, white — add energy to furniture, cushions and rugs.

New York-based designer Amanda Nisbet used a Roy Lichtenstein print and a chrome-

trimmed bubble chair in one of her children's space projects. Victoria Sanchez, a designer in Washington, D.C., used colorful Missoni fabrics to liven up a teen lounge. (amandanisbetdesign.com; www.victoriaathome.com)

Check out Modshop1.com and Designpublic.com for pieces — many of them kid-size — that fit the style.

Hip, retro-style robot, typography and animal patterns designed by New Yorker Nancy Wolff are at AllModern.com.

And chocolate, tangerine or red knitted poufs and flat weave rugs with zingy geometric graphics are part of the signature line at Fab.com.

For a low-key look that still fits the esthetic, think smooth-edged Danish modern wood furniture. Armless upholstered club chairs look smart and are perfect for lounging; find new ones at Overstock.com and vintage ones on Etsy.com. Or take a cue from Australian designer Anna Williams

and use mid-century credenzas for toy storage — check out ThriveFurni-



AP photo

Poufs like these from Fab.com offer low profile seating in a play space.

ture.com and OneKingsLane.com for options at various prices.

Accent with "Mad Men"-era posters or toy ads, and add floor pillows covered in patterns drawn from the era. Soothing hues like umber, avocado, mustard and sky blue keep the energy relaxed.

INDUSTRIAL CHIC

Rooms with an industrial feel — warehouse-grade tables and storage, furniture and decorative elements with a rugged look — appeal to many kids, who sense they can let loose in these spaces. And the style's on trend, so it's easy to do.

Neutral colour palettes mixing whites, greys and browns work for either gender. Look for ceiling lights caged in metal (no worries about errant pillows or Nerf balls), riveted furniture, and repurposed machine-shop elements such as gear pieces, tools and signage. A galvanized-iron, locker-style dresser makes great storage. (www.pbteen.com)

Powder-coated in crisp red or white, Ikea's PS metal cabinet adds a pop of colour. (www.ikea.com)

A magnetized blackboard fits the edgy vibe and lets inspiration fly. Make your own inexpensively with instructions at TheTurquoiseHome.com.

Rugged-looking play tables offer surfaces for messy art and often offer great storage for toys and games. (www.rhbabyandchild.com) Lumber, flooring and stone yards will often give old pallets away: Lots of ideas for making your own play or coffee table can be found at Home-dzone.co.za.

EXPLORATION LOCATION

Animals, trees, and sky or earth elements can inspire children to be creative in play spaces, and many contemporary pieces appeal to both kids and adults.

At Stardust.com, find the Zuo Modern Phante chair, a version of Eames' iconic, polypropylene, elephant-shaped chair.

A realistic, cast-resin bear's head is fun, eclectic wall art. (www.urbanout-

See PLAY Page B2

Is 2014 the year for you to buy a house?



DENISE PANZA
MORTGAGE GAL

I realize you already have a lot on your mind right now. The holidays have just past and maybe you're wondering how you'll afford to pay for all those presents you bought and keep the holiday pounds off, too!

There's so much to think about as we finish this year ... but lurking somewhere in the back of your mind might be the question: "Is 2014 the year I buy a house?"

2014 is a great time to buy. The housing market is recovering, home prices are on the rise

but still quite affordable, which means that a home bought in the next year or two has plenty of room for value appreciation. But you have to act quickly to take advantage of that.

So, if you think you might buy a home in 2014, or if you'd like to buy but aren't sure if you can yet, then read through the simple steps in this article because the decisions you make now — even during the busy post-holiday season — can impact whether or not you buy a house this year.

Step 1: In the new year, pay off your credit cards as quickly as possible. Your ability to get a mortgage will partly be based on how much debt you have. So the less debt you have the better. So pay down that debt as quickly as possible to maximize your ability to get a mortgage.

Step 2: Pull your credit report and check it for errors. Do this in the first quarter of the year and by the second quarter (assuming you have also paid down your credit cards), you

should see your credit score starting to show improvement.

Step 3: Visit a mortgage broker to get prequalified for a mortgage. This will give you a ballpark price range for your house.

Step 4: Find a real estate professional and work with them on finding your perfect home. They'll help you figure out what you want and need in a home and they can show you properties in your price range that match those wants and needs.

The holiday season went by fast and we're already into the new year. So start planning now — think of it as a gift to yourself — and you might make 2014 the year you buy a home!

Denise Panza is a mortgage loan originator with Pryisma Lending Group in Danbury. She may be reached at (203) 743-4739.



BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HomeServices

New England
Properties

Thank you Norwalk &
Our Team for a wonderful 2013!
Wishing you all the best for the New Year!

Brenda Maher, Office Leader · Andrew Stone, Senior Financial Consultant

Emiley Aguilar · Albert Bacher · Ellen Balazs · Catalina L. Bazan · Pauline Bellantoni

Barbara Bogdanyi · Jon Bradbury · Jeffrey Byington · Jim Caviola · Bruce Charamut

Rosanne Conoscenti · Betsy Conti · Sue Cooper · Nancy Costello · Keven Courbois

LeeAnn DeLeo · Jo Deupree · Carol Dombroski · Jen Dominick · Arlene Donahue

Bob Dowling · Shannon Drury · Linda Dunsmore · Debbie Erardi · Sisi Ferine

Krissy Feuerhake · Tom Foster · Jeff Gagliardo · Brad Geremia · Harriet Haffner

Kathy Hurtado · Peekay Kumar · Paul Louie · Lori Lyons · Sue Maher-Drury

Kathryn Martino · Alexis McCarthy · Karen Melchiorre · Cathy Mills · John Moeling

Lucia Molinelli · Liz Moretti · Mark Namm · Edgar Ortiz · Anthony Parenti · Gloria Quiceno

Ray Rumer · Noelle Sparrow · Victoria Tachach · Jessica Teed · Evie Theall · Paul Thury

Venke Vey · Fira Wagman · Jane Walters · Jan Woodward

Melinda Prince, Administrative Coordinator · Karen Winne, Administrative Coordinator

NORWALK 203-846-1611
124 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851

RESIDENTIAL | COMMERCIAL | RELOCATION | NEW HOMES & LAND | INSURANCE | MORTGAGE

© 2013 An independently operated subsidiary of HomeServices of America, Inc., a Berkshire Hathaway affiliate, and a franchisee of BHH Affiliates, LLC. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices and the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices symbol are registered service marks of HomeServices of America, Inc.® Equal Housing Opportunity.

bhhsNEproperties.com