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MAKE ROOM FOR BABY

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A photograph of a child's bedroom. In the foreground, a young child with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and white shorts, is crouching on a dark rug, playing with a small orange and black toy dog. To the left, a wooden dollhouse with a green roof is open, revealing its interior. Behind the child, a white crib with a white sheet and two large red patterned pillows is visible. The wall is decorated with several framed pictures, including one of a child and another with the word 'Marius'. A string of colorful hats hangs vertically on the wall. A white shelf holds books and other items. The overall atmosphere is cozy and lived-in.

MAKE ROOM FOR BABY

Yes, living in a spacious three-bedroom home, where you wouldn't have to share sleeping quarters with your two-year-old, or where your baby wouldn't bunk in a pantry-size nursery, may sound nice. But for many NYC parents, that's a far cry from reality. So we're here to remind you that, no matter how untenable your situation may seem, you can make the space work. We spoke to four children's furniture designers—all reside in the city with their kids—about the challenges they face every day when it comes to apartment living, and what they've done to solve them. Plus, we've rounded up expert-recommended products to get your redecoration project off the ground. That privacy you're craving is just around the corner.

By **Marissa Patlingrao Cooley** Photographs by **Mark Lund**



LOFT LIVING

SIZING IT UP

WHERE: PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN

WHAT: 2 BEDROOMS, 4th-FLOOR WALK-UP

SIZE: 1,800 SQ FT

TYPE: HOME/COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

VISIT: OEUFNYC.COM

When their daughter was born in 2002, **Sophie Demenge** and **Michael Ryan** launched Oeuf (it means “egg” in French), for which they design stylish nursery furniture and clothing for kids from their home. Their children are **Mae, 5**, and **Marius, 2**.

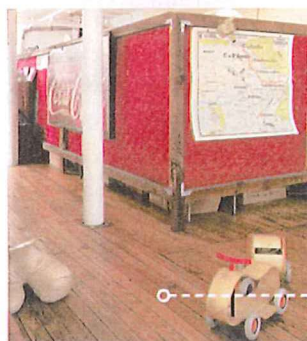
What was your apartment like when you first moved in?

Demenge The building was an old sewing factory, so our floor was just one big open space. Michael installed all the walls, created bedrooms, and put in a bathroom and a kitchen. **Ryan** We also knew we’d need a chunk of space for the office since we, along with four of our employees, work from the apartment.

Demenge It’s great because the space is so raw and rough—the kids can run around, paint on the floor, and it doesn’t matter. We just wipe up the spills.

How did you figure out what layout would be best for the space?

Demenge Our room is small because for us, it’s just a place to sleep. We wanted a bigger living space. The kids have a larger room; we thought it would be nice for them to be together and share since they’re only three years apart. We just got rid of Mae’s toddler bed and got her a twin size. **Mae** It’s a lot bigger. It was a major birthday gift.



Let’s talk about storage. How do you deal with toys, books and everything else that comes with having kids?

Ryan Stop buying, is what I say. But still, we go to birthday parties, and there are always the little toys in goody bags—which should actually be called choking-hazard bags.

Where do you put it all?

Demenge Michael designed and made these different-size toy drums; we use two for all their dress-up stuff and another to store their puppets. The drums are great—the kids can open them up themselves, and they can also use them as seats or tables. **Ryan** But we never have enough of those things, because there’s still a bunch of stuff lying around. You have to do inventory from time to time.



Do you ever have space envy?

Demenge I wish we had a garden—who doesn’t? And a playroom. I like the idea of the kids having their own space to play in. But we’re thankful for what we have. Most people don’t have a trapeze in their living room.

Yes, how did that happen?

Demenge Before I came to live in New York, I was in circus school in San Francisco, and flying trapeze was my thing. The kids love it.

The couple’s design picks “I buy things when I travel abroad. I recently brought back beautiful masks from overseas. And Calypso Enfant (426 Broome St between Crosby and Lafayette Sts, 212-966-3234) has some great whimsical finds,” says Demenge.

A photograph of a child's bedroom. Two large, bright red doors are open, framing the view into the room. A young girl in a red dress is standing on a bed with white linens and red pillows. A young boy in a striped shirt is sitting on a dark, irregular rug on the floor, surrounded by toys. The room has a rustic feel with exposed pipes and a simple light fixture. Various children's drawings and a small shelf are visible on the walls.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Take a seat No couch here—the family hangs out at the kitchen table.

Attention to detail

The doors opening onto Marius and Mae's shared room are refurbished castoffs from a hotel.

Retro finds

Demenge incorporates pieces from her childhood in Paris into the apartment's contemporary design.

Great wall

Oeuf operates directly out of the couple's home—a six-foot-high red partition separates the two spaces.

For slide shows of the designers' furniture lines, check out timeoutkids.com.

MAXIMIZING SPACE

SIZING IT UP

WHERE: LOWER EAST SIDE

WHAT: 2 BEDROOMS, 4th FLOOR/ELEVATOR BUILDING

SIZE: 900 SQ. FT.

VISIT: THE-TRUCK.COM



Jennifer Carpenter, a partner at TRUCK Product Architecture, has designed numerous pieces for Nurseryworks and Offi, both children's furniture companies. The designer lives with her husband, **David Arnold**, and their sons **Booker, 5**, and **Dax, 2**.

Living in Manhattan, do you ever feel square-footage-starved?

Carpenter Well, we gutted our apartment before we moved in and designed the whole place around storage. Because we took the time to think it through up front, it seems to work—even with the four of us living in a tight space. For example, we made the front closet exactly the size it needs to be to roll in a stroller without folding it, and we created storage for old paperwork and books underneath the banquette we built in the living room. **Arnold** It was a question of our priorities. For us, having huge bedrooms wasn't a big deal. Instead, we wanted a good-size living room. And because I cook a lot, our kitchen is much larger than most of the ones you'd find in the suburbs. **Carpenter** But even when you do have a lot of room, you never really feel you have enough with kids—they just devour space.



In what way?

Carpenter Well, there's the toy issue. I never buy them—I just get them somehow.

How do you organize all their playthings?

Arnold When Dax was born, we moved all the furniture out of what was then just Booker's room and built floor-to-ceiling storage, including a built-in desk by the window—we used it as a changing table when Dax was little. This way, we had twice as much storage and more floor space for the boys to play on.

Carpenter Within those floor-to-ceiling cabinets, we have two levels of storage. Down low, I keep open bins filled with toys they can access, and then up high, there are closed cabinets for items that need a bit more supervision—like art supplies.

How do you see the space evolving?

Carpenter The boys are using a trundle bed right now, but I'm eager for them to get a little older so we can put in bunk beds—I just designed a new set for Nurseryworks. In a few years I imagine they might feel a space crunch, but they're not complaining now. Right, Booker? **Booker** I'd rather share my room with Dax.

Carpenter's design picks "Modernnursery.com has cool products, and the site is very easy to use. And I often buy the kids unusual gifts, like the History of the World ruler at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum shop (90 Orchard St at Broome St; 212-431-0233, tenement.org) in my neighborhood."





CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT

Bright lights

The common space's open design makes it easy for Carpenter and the kids to chat with Arnold, a professional chef, while he cooks dinner.

Good read

Translucent spice racks— at kid level— serve as book shelves in the boys' room.

White space

Carpenter designed these built-in shelves and drawers to provide extra storage for toy trucks and other playthings.

Behind closed doors

Custom-made cabinets throughout the apartment allow the family to safely stow dishes, books and housewares.



PLAYFUL DESIGN

SIZING IT UP

WHERE: PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN

WHAT: 2 BEDROOMS, GROUND FLOOR

SIZE: 1,200 SQ FT

TYPE: HOME/COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

VISIT: IGLOOPLAY.COM

Architect **Lisa Albin**, the designer behind multifunctional kids' furniture line Iglooplay, lives with her husband, **Stuart Kauffman**, and their daughters **Anya, 7**, and **Ellie, 4**.

Where does your family spend most of their time?

Albin Our living room. It has big French doors that open up to the common space, which doubles as my office and a playroom for the kids. The office could have been a third bedroom, but we chose to put the girls together in one room and use it as public space instead.

Wow—a lot goes on in there. Was it hard to choose furnishings that worked for you and your kids?

Albin We use a lot of the pieces I've created—the good thing is they're multigenerational. Our tea pods [organically inspired foam furniture components in assorted sizes; shown above] are durable enough for the kids to climb all over, but also work well on an aesthetic level. Or you can

add a tray topper and use it to serve drinks and snacks after the kids go to bed.

City living means space challenges. What problems do you face?

Albin It's hard to organize everything that comes into the house. Anya and Ellie generate so much paper with all their artwork. **Kauffman** I think they've made cards for every birthday and holiday from now until 2019.

How do you organize it all?

Albin The girls have their own mesh stacking letter trays on their desk, like the ones we have in our office. Who would've thought they'd need in-boxes? But there's school stuff, after-school stuff, drawings. This is where I do my mini-commercial for the Container Store. I use its clear plastic boxes and store the kids' things on open shelves. That way, they can see what's inside them.

How does living in Park Slope compare with where you grew up?

Kauffman I grew up in the Village. When I was around six, I lived on Bank and Bleeker Streets in a studio apartment with six other people. So I'm used to small spaces. **Albin** I grew up in suburban Baltimore. The fact that we're on the first floor and



can look out and see trees is familiar, but in every other way, it's very different. I never walked anywhere when I was a kid.

Have you ever thought about packing it up and leaving the city?

Albin I don't foresee that happening. Yes, as the children get older, it would be really appealing to have more space. I used to worry about the fact that Anya and Ellie's bedroom is small, but they love it. They're good friends—and I can hear them talking at night before they go to sleep.

Albin's design pick "Ebaying vintage chairs for kids is my favorite. I bought a bent plywood children's Thonet chair for only \$20."



CLOCKWISE
FROM FAR LEFT

Dream home
Architect-in-training Ellie "customized" her dollhouse with markers and crayons.

We go together
The girls in the room they share; the family uses what might have been the third bedroom as common space.

Good looking
Iglooplay's Mod Rocker for kids seamlessly fits in with the apartment's design.

Two-in-one
French doors open up to the combined office and playroom.

Rest time Anya relaxes between two colorful tea pods.



CLUTTER-FREE ZONE

SIZING IT UP

WHERE: WILLIAMSBURG, BROOKLYN

WHAT: 3 BEDROOMS, 3rd-FLOOR WALK-UP

SIZE: 900 SQ FT

TYPE: HOME/COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

VISIT: ARGINGTON.COM



Husband-and-wife team **Jennie Argie** and **Andrew Thornton**, the designers of Argington, an eco-friendly furniture line for children, share space with their sons **Davy, 4**, and **Elis, 2**.

How do you address your storage problems?

Argie Since we're on the top floor, we've commandeered the hallway outside our apartment. First we hung one coat out there, and now it looks like a mudroom. Also, we design for our family: The toy box and play table in our line hold tons of stuff—like all those little toy parts that seem to multiply like rabbits—and the bed and crib have trundle drawers for extra diapers and bedding. **You furnish your place with your own pieces?**

Thornton We have a lot of our pieces in the house. In fact, when Davy was younger, if he saw our furniture outside our home, he'd think it was his. **Argie** One great thing about being designers is that we swap merchandise with our friends, so everything in the house is made by someone we know. I don't think Davy realizes the whole world doesn't work like that.

Does space ever feel tight?

Argie We work at home, so I think we feel the tightest squeeze in the office. **Thornton** The kids come in a lot and want to mess around with our work, so we tell them to "leave the office," but the "office" is just an imaginary line.

Do situations like that ever make you miss the sprawl of the suburbs, where you both grew up?

Thornton They used to, but really, you get everything you need from small spaces. And both of our kids have their own rooms, which seems like a luxury in the city. **Argie** Our experience is really no different from what it would be if we lived in the suburbs. It just takes place in a fraction of the space. Especially during toothbrushing time—our bathroom is really small.

What tip would you offer new parents who are living in a tiny area?

Argie During the early years, kids are doing a lot of floor play, so it may be worth holding off on a regular-size twin bed and splurging on a toddler bed. That way, you can fit in one more activity area—an art table—with the space you're saving.

The couple's design picks "Boon's products (booninc.com) make bathroom time fun. They have a great-looking potty bench," says Argie.



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT

Roll on

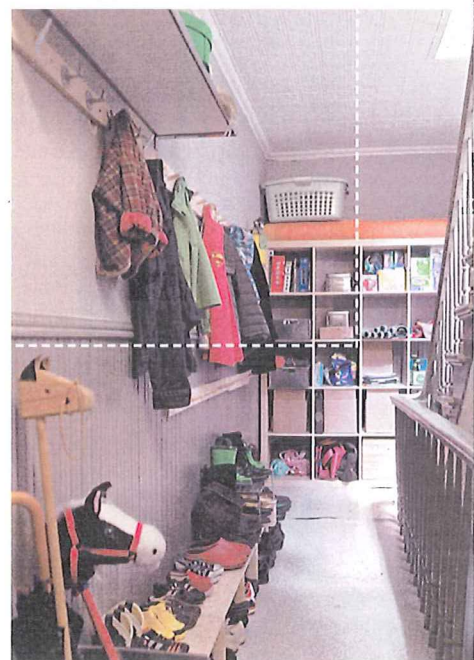
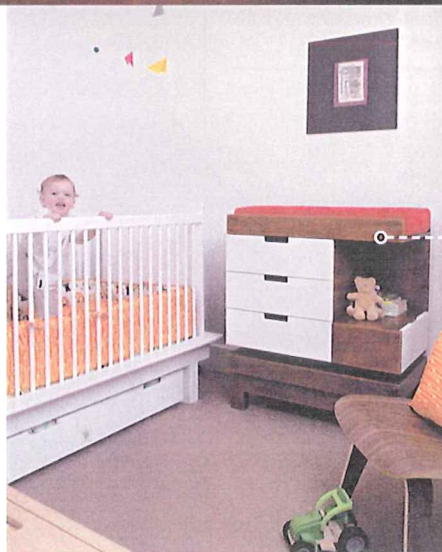
Argington's Fundy play table has wheels so you can easily move it from room to room.

Spin city Dad gives Davy and Elis a turn around the apartment.

Stock up Davy stores his favorite bedtime books on the shelves above his bed.

Hall monitor A shelving system in the stairwell holds umbrellas, beach gear and laundry soap.

Double trouble Once Elis gets older, the changing table in his nursery transforms into a dresser.



SPACE EXPLORATION

We've got solutions—at all different price ranges—for your family's tight-squeeze challenges.

As the editor and cofounder of ApartmentTherapy.com, Maxwell Gillingham-Ryan blogs daily about the best ways to design and organize living areas, including tiny ones. So when he and his wife brought home their daughter, Ursula, now eight months old, moving out of their one-bedroom, 265-square-foot West Village abode didn't even cross their minds. Gillingham-Ryan gave us three fixes—cheap, moderately priced and go-for-broke—for five of the most common decorating problems city parents face.

Our baby's nursery is a walk-in closet. Literally.

Cheap “Give the space a fresh surface by repainting and putting down inexpensive carpeting.” His pick: Flor's Jigs Up colorful tiles (\$16 per 19.7" x 19.7" tile, available at florcatalog.com).

Moderate Light is important. “If the room doesn't have a socket, install one. Then, drop a bulb down from the ceiling and buy a playful chandelier.” Try Tord Boontje's 15" Garland Shade Light (\$80, available at the MoMA Design Store, 81 Spring St at Crosby St; 646-613-1367, moma.org).

Money is no object Skip the crib completely. Hire a builder (Gillingham-Ryan suggests Anthony Dalo Woodworking; 718-418-9001) to create a custom wall unit with a built-in crib and drawers for storage. It'll be pricey (as much as \$2,000), but you'll have plenty of room to store onesies and bibs.

Flor's Jigs Up carpeting

Our one-bedroom apartment now houses four of us.

Cheap Opt for portable furniture, like a folding bassinet or travel crib, when your kids are little—it will help save on square footage. Gillingham-Ryan's daughter sleeps in Cosco Juvenile's portable crib (\$80, available at Babies “R” Us, 24-30 Union Square East at 16th St; 212-798-9905, babiesrus.com).

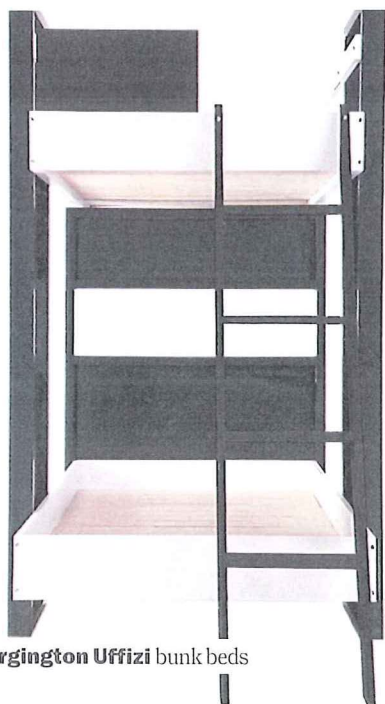
Moderate Open shelving is a good way to carve out space (and more storage, to boot) without putting up solid walls. Try Design Within Reach's semitransparent Cubits (\$198 per set of three, at dwr.com).

Money is no object Turn an alcove into a small bedroom for the kids by installing a pressurized room divider. The Living Space Company is a great source; a wall costs about \$1,200 (800-761-9947, livingspaceinc.com).

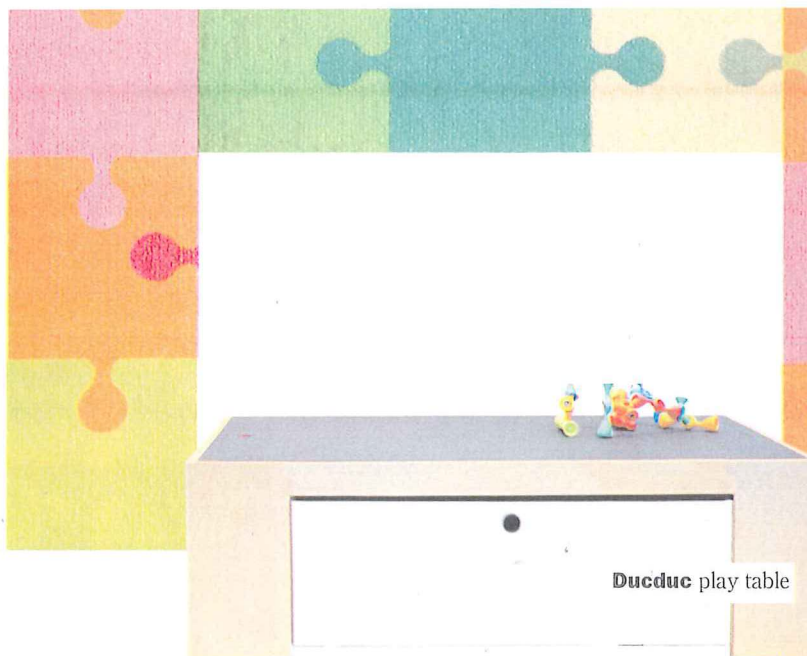
Tord Boontje Garland Shade Light

PETER LINDBERGH

Cubits shelving



Argington Uffizi bunk beds



Ducduc play table

We wish it weren't the case, but our kids have to share a room.

Cheap Give each child a sense of ownership. Let them spruce up the space above their beds with fun wall decals. Gillingham-Ryan favors Stickers by dVider's colorful collection (\$20–\$30, available at store.dvider.com). Or, he says, create privacy by hanging tall curtains from high-tension aircraft wire. Ikea has some great inexpensive curtains, like the colorful Barnslig line (\$20 for two panels, available at Ikea, 100 Ikea Dr, Paramus, NJ; 201-843-1881, ikea-usa.com).

Moderate If you prefer screens to curtains, you might want to go with the steel-framed, custom-designed "sails" from dVider. These are not the usual Japanese-style rice paper screens; instead, kids can upload a drawing to the site and the company will print it directly onto a canvas divider (starting at \$600, available at store.dvider.com).

Money is no object If your kids are old enough (experts advise around age six), try Argington's stylish new Uffizi bunk beds—stacking the beds maximizes floor space (\$1,850, available at Modern Tots, 53 Pearl St between Plymouth and Water Sts, Dumbo, Brooklyn; 718-488-8293, moderntots.com).

Help! There's no space to store Matchbox cars and Polly Pockets.

Cheap "I like Tubtrugs bins—they're made for gardening, but they're perfect for organizing toys" (available at tubtrugs.com, \$8–\$22 each).

Moderate P'kolino's two-in-one ottomans (choose from red, yellow, green, orange and blue) combine seats and storage units (\$169, available at Modern Tots, 53 Pearl St between Plymouth and Water Sts, Dumbo, Brooklyn; 718-488-8293, moderntots.com).

Money is no object Create storage along the walls. "Atlas East Shelving, a small company based in Brooklyn, makes beautiful walnut shelving with a frame that you install along the wall." The computerized design tool at the firm's website (atlaseast.com) allows you to build your own modular system (the one Time Out Kids created on the site came to about \$6,000).



Tubtrugs bins

Our home is a true work-life situation: The office doubles as the kids' playroom.

Cheap Make sure the kids know which side of the room is theirs and which is yours. "To divvy up the space, use chalkboard paint for the wall opposite the office area." (\$35 per gallon of paint, available at YoyaMart, 15 Gansevoort St between Hudson and W 13th Sts; 212-242-5511, yoyashop.com).

Moderate "Invest in a Wi-Fi setup for your laptop. It'll free you up to move into another room if your child is playing in there or napping." Or purchase a movable desk. The Scooter Desk (\$398, available at levenger.com) is one of Gillingham-Ryan's favorites.

Money is no object "For the adult work area, get a really nice office armoire," says Gillingham-Ryan. "Then, get the kids something cool to match. Ducduc makes a beautiful children's table with a chalkboard top and storage underneath" (\$595, available at Mini Jake, 178 North 9th St between Bedford and Driggs Aves, Williamsburg, Brooklyn; 718-782-2005, minijake.com).

For space-solution picks from designer David Netto and Tiny Living owner Roeë Dori, go to timeoutkids.com. ●