

SWEET DREAMS, BABY

*A chic, cozy nursery is welcoming
for both mom and daughter*

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Soon-to-be-parents Kathleen and Jared Reitzin envisioned a wonderful room for their first child. Like most young couples today, though, they wanted to create a nursery without depleting their savings. Not a huge fan of fussy pink themes, Kathleen was imagining a sophisticated palette of light pink and chocolate brown to better fit the hip tone of their Encino-area, California, townhouse. The existing room, she recalls, “was all blah and boring. I wanted it to be baby-appropriate but a little more adult. And I love the color chocolate. We also hoped to somehow include our daughter’s name—Kayla Kai.”

To help them create the ideal nursery, the couple enlisted designer Erinn Valencich, owner of Omniarte Design in Los Angeles. Valencich—who’s also an author, stylist and frequent HGTV host—has fashioned kids’ rooms for clients around the country. Coincidentally, when she was asked to do this nursery project, seven of Valencich’s friends were also set to have babies in the next few months! “There was a lot of baby advice flying around,” the popular designer says with a laugh. To ensure the Reitzins got the nursery of their dreams, Valencich devised a savvy, cost-effective plan that kicked off with a burst of color. Here’s her recipe for the perfect baby room.



TOP: Toys in coordinating colors are decorative touches, too. These soft alphabet blocks, turned any which way, are a perfect example.

LEFT: Before the makeover, the room felt dreary and lacked storage.

Kayla Kai’s personalized sleeping area is the focal point. A beguiling 100-percent-wool carpet makes the setting cozy. Stuffed toys climb aboard the outgrown cradle.





Inject freshness with paint and personality. The first move was painting the walls: chocolate next to the dressing table, jaunty stripes flanking the sitting area and light pink beside the crib. Then, to boost the charm factor, Valencich painted eight squares of darker pink on the lightest wall to showcase wooden craft-store letters spelling out the baby's name. Satin ribbons glued and stapled to the back of each letter are nailed to the top of the wall. "Erinn told us getting creative with paint would change everything. The results were phenomenal," says Kathleen.

Add flexible furnishings. An heirloom cradle (made by Jared's grandfather) and a handsome crib were already in place. But Mom still needed a rocker for nursing, a changing table and storage. Rather than spend money on juvenile pieces, Kathleen and Jared looked to ModernNursery.com for affordable items that would grow along with their daughter: a modern-style lacquer cabinet (with removable changing pad) for stashing diapers and onesies, a complementary nightstand with two drawers to handle the overflow and a cool rocker with a high back for support.

Welcome bold colors. For curtains, Erinn found a print with a grownup twist—in the perfect color family—and cleverly combined it with solid-colored linen. "Mixing a little bit of expensive fabric with less costly cloth is a great way to stretch a budget," she says. A vibrant Meridian area rug perks up the vanilla carpet.

Add meaningful—not costly—accessories. Talk about bang for your buck! A parade of favorite photos enlarged on the computer and popped into ready-made frames provides a happy show for baby and all the family to enjoy for a long time to come. ■



OPPOSITE FAR LEFT:

Valencich painted wooden letters a rich brown before affixing them to the wall. A cloth sleeve gives the whimsical crib mobile a custom look.

OPPOSITE LEFT:

For extra punch, hot pink grosgrain ribbon offsets the geometric Osborne & Little fabric. Teamed with light-diffusing sheers, the window treatment is striking and functional.

OPPOSITE BELOW:

Years from now, Kayla Kai will find lots of reasons to love her contemporary nightstand. Kathleen uses the pretty gift boxes—recycled from her baby shower—to hold tiny essentials like swabs and cotton balls.

RIGHT:

Graphic random-width stripes lend visual interest to a quiet corner, as does a bright accent pillow. Water- and stain-resistant, the Ultrasuede rocker with matching stool is durable and chic enough to please a teen someday.



Kid-Friendly Style

Make it safe, long-term and easy-care. Here's how:

FLEXIBLE FURNITURE that grows with your child—like a crib that converts to a toddler's bed—is an investment for the future. **USE LOW- OR ZERO-VOC** paint to eliminate harmful vapors. **HARDWOOD FLOORS**, all-natural fiber rugs and quality bedding also help provide a healthier environment. **OPT FOR COTTON OR LINEN** curtains and shades (secure cords safely out of reach) to regulate sun at nap time. **INTRODUCE A COMBINATION** of open and closed storage (check out Kayla Kai's trio of penny-saving repurposed boxes) to organize supplies, clothes and toys. **ALWAYS SELECT BABY-APPROVED PRODUCTS** for cleaning everything from changing tables to teddy bears.