

Decorator's Notebook

How To Create The Family Recreation Room Of Your Dreams

(NAPSA)—Take a deep breath and open the door to that unused bedroom, cluttered playroom or banished basement—but do not enter alone.

If you've decided to create a family bonus room, the first step is simple: Gather up the family and tackle this project together! From there, the American Furniture Manufacturers Association recommends the following:

1. Develop a wish list. First, ask everyone to list all the activities they'd like to do in this room. Then, as a group, work through the lists to identify the priorities. It may be helpful to conduct this activity in the targeted space to help keep some perspective on how much the room can accommodate.

2. Consider a "zone" for each activity. If watching movies and playing video games is high on everyone's list, an entertainment center and appropriate seating will probably anchor the room. Do you need a place for playing and storing board games? A corner for reading? A closet outfitted with shelving and a desk could become a home computing zone or the hobby/craft zone, while a dormer might become a game "storage zone."

3. Identify needed furnishings. What do you need to buy? What can you pull from other rooms? Remember, the fact that this room has been under-furnished is part of the reason it was under-used. You don't have to spend a fortune. Look for multi-function pieces that help you organize the space, store the clutter, relax in comfort and open up room for fun.

4. Consider new lighting requirements. That one overhead light may not do the job for the new reading chair in the corner or the craft/hobby table on the back wall.



This space-efficient corner desk with plenty of storage is ideal for a computing zone. From Eric Morgan for about \$250.

Plan for adequate task and overhead lighting for each "zone" in your new rec room as well as table and floor lamps or wall fixtures.

5. Shop together. Leave the house armed with room dimensions and a list of storage needs. Remember to measure the television and other electronic components before shopping for storage pieces.

6. Don't forget accessories! Collections that don't seem to "fit" elsewhere in the house may find the perfect home in this room, whether baseball hats, model cars or seashells.

Remember, this is the family fun room. If you don't have collections to spotlight, pull the room together with simple accessories that follow a lively color scheme or a novelty theme that's a family favorite—perhaps movie posters, a specific sport or team, or a favorite vacation destination like the beach or the mountains.