

## Negotiating a shared bathroom's design

By Irene Woodworth

How do you handle decorating a shared bathroom when your children have different decorating desires? As the school year approaches I wanted to focus our attention on a shared kids' bathroom. Oftentimes this room gets overlooked even though it is used several times per day.

Usually children may not have a very sophisticated design palette. However, it is vital to include the design styles that your children exhibit. When you consider your children, it makes a room feel like it is "their space." Research has shown that in homes that are decorated with color, are coordinated and organized, children do better in school because there is less distraction at home and they can concentrate on their studies more.

**Case study:** We had a client who had a blended family with three elementary school-aged boys. They had a variety of interests. We needed to update their boring, builder beige-colored smaller bathroom. At first we thought it would be a challenge to select something that all three would enjoy until we started interviewing them.

We discovered that the father of two of the boys had a shower curtain and a wallpaper border with the cartoon characters of "Tin Tin" and his dog, "Snowy." Two of the boys liked that. However, all three boys were big Boise State Bronco fans. Instead of doing the typical football theme, we decided to do something a little different.

We wanted to have a simple design for these active young boys. We chose the color scheme of blues and orange (Bronco football team colors) and accented it with white. It matched the cartoon character shower curtain and border perfectly. In order to avoid making this bathroom feel too small or too cluttered, we decided to paint the ceiling a crisp white.

We continued the white color down from the ceiling onto the walls only three feet down. We painted the rest of the walls in the blue color. Even though we had a limited amount of wallpaper border we used it where it would have the most amount of visual impact on the walls, except for the shower area. We applied the matching wallpaper border horizontally where the blue and white colors met on the walls. It also made it easier for the boys to see the wallpaper border at a lower level than the ceiling line.

We found a metal fish sculpture on clearance that was chipped and we were able to take it apart and customize it by spray painting it the blue and orange colors. This added some "punch" on the white area of the wall. It went along great with the underwater sea picture of "Tin Tin" and "Snowy" above the toilet at eye level for the boys.

The bathroom fixtures, lights and drawer pulls got an update in a brushed silver finish that coordinated this look. The boys also received new colorful updated towels and a rug to match the décor. We went from "drab" to "fab" in just a few days, and all the boys enjoyed and felt like this room was truly "theirs!"

### Tips to consider when decorating bathrooms just for kids:

- Choose colors that will be appropriate for your children's tastes. Use colorful accessories that tie in with your theme.
- Use hooks or separate towel bars for each child's towels.
- Hang artwork at kid level so they can see and enjoy it.
- Add some whimsy and fun with colorful drawer pulls or kid-friendly art.
- Choose playful accessories that add to your theme, like toothbrush holders or plastic drinking glasses. Think outside the box. You can accent an item that can highlight the theme. For example, for a western theme you could incorporate some rope around a mirror or accented on some art.
- Step it up with a small step stool for younger ones to be at the right level to use the sink and see in the mirror. ●



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In order to decorate a bathroom shared by more than one child, consider each child's preferences and decorate in a manner allows all the children to say it's "their space." (Submitted photography)