



by Catherine Fantauzzi  
First Impressions Decor

# Decorating teenage bedrooms



The teenage years are the most intense time of self-expression and their bedrooms are the only room in the home to feel independent and do as they wish (within limits, of course). Teens want their space to reflect their own set of needs and personality. Friends, fashion, 21<sup>st</sup> century games and technology, telephones and music are at the height of their priority lists.

What's a parent to do to the transform a child's bedroom into one that their teen can be happy to live in? It is still a bedroom however and must be used as a sleep, study and entertaining area. Teenagers usually know what they want in a bedroom and are quick to tell you that they need storage for books and music and space for everything else they own. They also have ideas about style and colours. They

want to accommodate more and more activities in one room.

In recent years the market for home furnishings for teenagers and young adults has increased tremendously with new ideas and products on what their rooms could look like and include. The emerging trend indicates that teen bedrooms work best for their users when decorated like a mini-apartment (minus the kitchen



of course) and sometimes include an ensuite bathroom.

The first thing parents need to do when planning to redecorate a bedroom for their teen children, is to sit with them and start to list all the activities that will be happening in that room. Then create a plan of action as to how to properly space plan and decorate a space for multi-functions. You must be realistic in determining how much you can actually accommodate in the size of the room.

First in the plan of action is to edit out everything that they have outgrown, that includes furniture, paint colours, or wallpaper, window treatments, toys, collectibles and yes, clothes. Concentrate on the essentials – the bed, work area and storage.

Pick a theme or decorative concept your teen likes and use it throughout the space to define the look and feel they want. For instance, young women may want their personal space to look fresh, cheerful, informal, or elegant yet up-to-date. Young men want theirs to reflect their interests whether it's cars, music, or sports through bold colours and shiny surfaces. Try to incorporate the three main elements, a bed, storage and study area then plan the space around it.

Today, teen bedrooms not only have a full size bed, but also include seating such as a small loveseat or comfortable upholstered chairs for reading and entertaining their friends. Including a sofa-bed for friends sleeping over is a favourite among teens. Don't skimp on the mattress, good quality mattresses offer more support for those growing bones. Headboards and footboards can give a more grown-up feeling to the room

and set the tone for the decorative style you have chosen.

Desks should be large enough to hold a computer and Internet connection and still have ample space to spread out papers and books. Ergonomic chairs and proper lighting are essential for hours spent doing homework, studying or surfing the net.

Storage is even more important at this stage of a teenager's life than when they were younger. Teens define themselves by their possessions – CD's, DVD's, clothes, computer/tech equipment, books, magazines, stereo, TV, and let's not forget phones, mobiles, cordless, pagers, etc. Dressers, shelving units, armoires, bookcases should not only provide this storage but should lend themselves to the decorative style of the space. Also to consider are areas for placing large items such as musical instruments and storage for sports equipment.

Furnishings do not have to match perfectly, however, combine pieces that relate and harmonize with one another because of shared colours, shape, or scale.

Arbitrary colour choices for bedrooms can be difficult for teens to spend time in. Select one to three colours that reflect your teen's preference and personality to use on the walls, floors including area rugs, furnishings, fabrics and art or memorabilia. Those colours should also highlight the decorative style.

Don't rely on just one source of lighting to effectively illuminate the different areas of your teen's bedroom. In addition to the ceiling fixture, supply extra ambient light by installing wall scones, floor lamps, table and desk lamps. Mirrors are a must for any teen since they are always exam-

ining themselves, but they also help reflect the light back into the space.

Window treatments should be simple and practical. Window blinds and shades are good choices to provide privacy coupled with lining on drapery treatments for light control. Fabric should be versatile and patterns should be repeated in other items in the room such as bed linens and decorative pillows.

Display your teen's belongings that have personal meaning to them and also enhance the look, feel and theme of the room. Keep their memorabilia or art in proper scale and group like objects together. Too much clutter, can spoil the effect of a well-decorated room.

The main thing to remember when decorating for a teen is to do it with their input. After all it's all about creating an environment that expresses who they are. All the marketing the design industry is aiming at them is making its mark on their taste and many teens now really care about what constitutes good design and want to surround themselves with it.

If you and your teen cannot agree on what goes into their bedroom or if you're have difficulty planning the space, then hire a decorating professional who is trained and qualified to analyze the space and formulate design concepts that are appropriate, aesthetic and functional for your needs.

*Catherine Fantauzzi is a Certified Interior Decorator and Design Consultant, and can be reached by telephone at (416) 937-4152*