

REAL SIMPLE family

☆ special issue

Save time, stress less:
46 tips to make the most of every day

unique kid gifts
for \$50 or less

easy, affordable,
fun birthday parties

how to organize
your child's room

plus the best:
parenting websites
sleep solutions
healthy cookies

EXCLUSIVE!
Barack Obama
on raising his
two happy girls
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PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

chapter one

the bedroom was a fright!

before



a paint color for sweet dreams

For a less dreary feel, the organizers painted the walls lavender (Lavender Mist, 4 1/2 gallons, www.bergamotboone.com for stores), "which has a soothing quality that's excellent for sleep," says Leatrice Eiseman, director of the Pantone Color Institute. A soft wool rug (8 by 10 feet, \$599, www.potterybarnkids.com) replaced a rough carpet, so the girls can comfortably play on the floor.

standout accessories

The Rocker Alarm Clock (\$29, www.pdtteen.com) is an iPod dock and a speaker in one. It can wake up the girls or inspire a dance party. Clip-on task lamps (\$39 each, www.pdtteen.com) offer bedtime reading light that won't disturb a sleeping sibling.

storage within arm's reach

All-koic nightstand with two compartments (Compound Round Tower, \$20, www.kartell.com) gives the room a modern touch and makes sharing a breeze. The orange Carolee Teen night light (\$40 for two, www.oxo.com) glows softly while children sleep and can be used as a flashlight for a night-time bathroom trip.





a bright spot overhead

A nonworking ceiling fan was removed to clear the way for the Chaise Chandelier in sunny yellow (\$199, www.potterybarnkids.com), designed to look grown-up but scaled for kids' rooms. It offers functional overhead lighting and makes the room feel more dressed up. Rounded bulbs add some interesting flair.

beds that grow with them

Old bunk beds were replaced with a set that can be converted to stand-alone beds for Molly (bottom) and June (top). Catalina Bunk Bed, \$1,049 as shown, www.potterybarnkids.com. Coordinated bedding blends together but gives each girl her own look. Big Liza and Bulb bedding, assorted prices, www.arslinetop.com.



Save the giraffe! A height chart painted on the wall was preserved by "framing" it with simple molding from a hardware store and the surrounding lavender wall.

chapter two

the play area was quite spooky



before

adornment for walls and windows

The girls produce artwork at a dizzying pace. Now they can change the displays themselves with these front-loading PhotoBox frames (\$76, www.gibben.com). Pop out the front and switch the artwork inside (no rehanging!). The ill-fitting window drapes were replaced with home-sewn, washable-linen ones.

a home for toys

Before, the girls' extensive stuffed-animal collection made the room look as if it had been hit by a tornado. Now their furry friends live in this roomy canvas bin (Kase Checker Storage Bushel, \$275, www.habitainstruction.com).

central command for crafts

The Activity Table (\$449, www.lanethood.com) has a pair of roll-out bins underneath for easy supply storage, plus a built-in paper roll on the side. Starting new projects is a cinch, and the paper doubles as a protective surface. Bonus: The table comes with three sets of legs (16, 25, and 30 inches tall), so it can be made taller as the girls grow.

