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BATHROOMS: FAMILY READY

CREATE THE PERFECT BATHROOM – FOR BOTH KIDS AND PARENTS – WITH OUR EXPERT TIPS AND TRICKS

Words *SUE WHEELER*

If your family bathroom often has puddles on the floor, countless bottles strewn over the vanity and a pile of clothes – and towels – in the corner, you're not alone. From kids' bathtime to teenage primping zone, this is one of the busiest rooms in the home. However, this hotspot doesn't have to spell 'catastrophe'. Make clever choices with tapware, storage and materials to create a functional, family-friendly bathroom that's a dream to clean and use. >

VANITY CASE

"A floating vanity gives the illusion of space and means no crawling on your hands and knees searching inside the cupboard," says interior designer Fiona Austin of Austin Design Associates. "You also have the option of using baskets underneath."



slick operation

Choose easy-to-operate taps. For the latest technology, director Wesley Sinclair of Highgrove Bathrooms, suggests the Spin Progressive mixer. "It allows you to simultaneously control the water flow and the temperature," he advises.



tap trends

Kohler's senior design consultant Rachael Biggs suggests elevating the look of a family bathroom with tapware in luscious metals, as seen in this Alexandra Kidd Design bathroom (left). "Check the finish is easy to keep clean," she says. "Black taps are very popular, but toothpaste and splashes will show up." And it's likely the kids won't be cleaning up!

EASY ACCESS
A true family bathroom is easily accessible from both the parents' and kids' rooms. Companies such as Saniflo allow you to convert any room into a bathroom without any major remodelling.



high risers

"A trick I use to keep a family bathroom presentable is to include a tall cupboard beside the basin so that everyone's 'stuff' is kept in here and not on the bench," says Fiona Austin of Austin Design. "You can also keep medicines high up and out of reach." >

WELL ADJUSTED
"A shower rail or twin shower with a handpiece adjusts to different heights - perfect for growing families," says bathroom buyer Daniel Gibney of Bunnings.

"USING THE SAME TILES ON THE floor AND UP A WALL WILL PROVIDE A STREAMLINED AND clean BASE FOR A BUSY, STORAGE-FILLED FAMILY BATHROOM" ~ Melissa Bonney, The Designory

double trouble

One or two basins? "With more than two children, consider a set of double basins in your vanity to accommodate those busy mornings," says director Melissa Bonney of The Designory. "We often think two basins are a luxury in an ensuite, but they truly are a necessity in family bathrooms."



PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) PABLO VEIGA / ALEXANDRA KIDD DESIGN, SIMON WHITBREAD, ANNA ROBINSON (OPPOSITE); ANGUS MC CRITCHIE / DESIGN JSBEAUCHAMP.COM

note to shelf

Look for ways to add storage without creating clutter. Where there is enough space, include narrow shelves adjacent to the vanity. Give family members their own shelf or use it as an attractive storage zone for room sprays, beauty products and plants.



IN AND OUT

Consider creating bathroom entry points from more than one bedroom. There are a few logistics to work through - for example, if rooms are shared and whether you require more private areas. Make sure this configuration will stand the test of time for a growing family.

damp proof

"When installing a freestanding bath, fit a full-length strip drain, such as a Stormtech drain, behind," advises Melissa Bonney of The Designory. "It catches the overflow and ensures the bathroom doesn't remain damp, which is an issue with a bathroom used by the whole family. It makes for easier cleaning and maintenance."

TILE-TASTIC

The foot traffic in a family bathroom can rival Sydney's Bondi-to-Bronte walk, so choose a durable floor tile. Porcelain with the look of concrete or stone is a perfect solution - it's still stunning, but hard-wearing. Mixed tones of grey are great for hiding dirt, as flat colours show up more readily.



LAUNDRY OVERLOAD

"Space permitting, integrate a waste bin and pull-out laundry hamper into your cabinetry," says interior designer Fiona Austin. "Laundry shoots are great, but are often difficult to line up."



softly does it

Big families mean high demand, so choose a soft-close lid for the loo. "It makes a big difference to wear and tear, and provides a safe option for toilet training toddlers and their little fingers," says chief operating officer Franco Parisi of Parisi.



back up

Limit tricky-to-clean spaces and choose a back-to-wall toilet (above). "Even better," says director Wesley Sinclair of Highgrove Bathrooms, "make it one with rimless flushing technology as it's more hygienic and saves on cleaning inside." Opt for a seat that's simple to remove, with an Easy Clean ceramic glaze.

"WITH YOUNG *children*, IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE HEIGHT AND POSITION OF SHOWER TAPS, SO YOU CAN SET THE TEMPERATURE *easily* BEFORE THEY GET UNDER" ~ Franco Parisi, Parisi

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bold move

Colourful tiles, as in this GIA Bathrooms & Kitchens design (right), distract the eye and can make splashes and stains less visible. Dark grout is ideal for reducing the cleaning required. "Choose grey grout or ask your tiler if it's possible to use an epoxy grout that's stain, mould, bacteria and chemical resistant," says Melissa Bonney. **HB**

