

Creating a family-friendly home

Functionality, fashion and fun can all live under the one roof in a fabulous family home

WORDS Louise Heather

Great design for the whole family

Kitchens

Michael Kitchener from Kitchener's Kitchens tells us about designing a family-friendly kitchen

When dealing with families, what are a few design elements you recommend in creating a new kitchen?

Depending on space, it's great to create an eat-in area, such as a breakfast bar overhanging an island or peninsula. Traditionally, people want large pantries (even walk-in) to cater for their families' needs. These can come down in size with the use of drawers making the space more useable.

Are there any special considerations for kids in the kitchen?

Depending on their age, there are some recommended dos and don'ts, such as don't design a microwave to be sitting under the bench. If the oven is going under the bench (rather than mounted in a wall unit), select an oven with a child lock. Also choose an oven that is either triple- or quadruple-glazed — which means either three or four layers of glass on the door — to keep the face of the oven door cool to touch.

There is a large selection of child-proof locks for cabinet doors to prevent toddlers from accessing them. Keep in mind that as your children grow up you will want to easily deactivate these locks — some can be built into the cabinetry, while others are later additions.

Does selection of materials come into play when designing the family-friendly kitchen?

Yes, you will want to go with a durable material. I recommend always going with the look you are

after, but that same look can be achieved with a variety of different materials at different budgets. Polyurethane kitchens have a similar paint to what is on your car. It will easily scratch if you have skateboard games being played in your kitchen.

I would also recommend using handles as opposed to a handleless look, as kids with grubby hands will pull on the handles and not grab the doors.

Are there any common mistakes people make when designing their family-friendly kitchen?

Space! Make sure there is enough space for people to work around each other. There should be at least one metre between countertops.

What are some tips for families planning their new kitchen?



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Have a look at different solutions, especially internal storage solutions. Some simple inexpensive options can make a world of difference, such as a divider in a large drawer to separate your plastic lids from your bases.

A kitchen will last for 15 to 20 years, so keep in mind how your family's needs will change over the years to come.