

# DO YOUR HOMEWORK

*Interior designer, and parent, Clair Strong rewrites the textbook on children's rooms and shows how to create a stylish, productive and motivational space to study*

**S**chool is nearly back in session and homework is an inevitable staple of school life with most children required to complete at least an hour's work each evening. By creating a special study space just for them, you can help make the chore of homework much more enjoyable. Create an inspiring, procrastination-free zone for children of all ages (whether they're learning their ABCs or completing their GCSEs) with these quick tips.

## WHERE?

You don't need a spare room to create a dedicated study space. A desk and chair can fit in the most surprising of nooks (like under the stairs).

The most important thing here is to choose an area where your little learners won't get easily distracted by the TV, toys or their siblings. For teenagers, a quiet corner in their bedroom might work, whereas younger children will probably benefit from a space under your watchful eye (the kitchen or hallway is great for this).

## COLOUR THEORY

Extensive research suggests that certain colours have a direct impact on mood and productivity.

This means you could in theory choose colours that will help your child perform better. For example, blue is said to be a positive, calming colour that inspires confidence while green promotes relaxation and evokes nature.

Use colour sparingly, and choose softer shades of the colours you do pick. Intense colour can be too stimulating and distracting in a workspace. I'd opt for neutrals and relaxing blues and greens over vibrant reds, pinks and purples, especially for children.

As an added bonus, if you set up the study area in the corner of another room you can use colour to create clear division between the spaces. Paint the walls or simply use colour-coordinated accessories to define the different areas.

## FANTASTIC FURNITURE

Comfort is key for long study sessions so don't plump for any old set up. Consider how your child likes to work and what makes them most productive.

Some children need the structure of their own individual desk and chair, while others prefer to share a big table with their siblings. You might even want to think outside the box with something like a standing desk. Recent research has indicated that children participate more actively in the classroom when working



at a 'stand-biased' desk. This may work equally well at home.

Modern children's furniture is fun, stylish and often ergonomically designed. You can find a great selection at stores like IKEA, John Lewis, Flexa, Go Modern and Aspace or have a local craftsman build something bespoke.

## ONLY THE ESSENTIALS

Kids have a lot of stuff – a seemingly never-ending supply of toys, books and clothes. This stuff only serves as a distraction in a study area, so keep it really simple and pared back here. The lack of clutter will help keep mum and dad's sanity in check too.

Have only a few bits on the desktop; a lamp, a clock and a pencil pot filled with only necessary stationery supplies (no, gel pens aren't a necessity). Paper and books can be stored in the desk drawers when not in use.

Any other non-essential items can be hung on a pegboard on the wall above the desk. Pegboards are an extremely practical alternative to corkboards because you can keep notes and important paperwork on them alongside heavier items like notebooks and craft supplies. I recommend the colourful yet sophisticated boards from The Kid Who.



**KEEP CALM AND COLOUR IN:** main picture, Roofus desk and chair by Loaf

Above, choose colours which encourage peace and concentration, oak trestle desk by Aspace

## EDUCATIONAL DECORATION

Wall art and accessories add a little personality to any study space and make it an inviting place for the kids to hang out. Cool natural history prints, star map wall charts and posters of their favourite books will inspire and educate children of all ages. A collection of globes and natural treasures collected from hikes and beach trips will also add charm to the space.



**A LOVE OF WORDS:** inspirational prints by Cheltenham based artist Betsy Benn. This is Treasure Island, but she also has prints with key words and phrases from Alice in Wonderland, Little Red Riding Hood and the Wizard of Oz. £29 from: [betsybenn.co.uk](http://betsybenn.co.uk)

Below, Pootle storage trolley £225 by [Loaf.com](http://Loaf.com)



I suggest getting the kids actively involved in picking out – or even making – art and objects to decorate the space. You could even frame the best of their school work to encourage and motivate them to reach for those perfect grades! ■

Clair Strong Interior Design is a small, friendly, creative business based in Bath and London, providing services for residential and commercial clients. Visit: [clairstrong.co.uk](http://clairstrong.co.uk) or contact: [clair@clairstrong.co.uk](mailto:clair@clairstrong.co.uk).



**K IS FOR KNOW-HOW:** main picture, Nidi Graphic child's desk by Go Modern. Above, Pop storage from £95, from [Loaf.com](http://Loaf.com). Above right, Oud table lamp by Lime Lace



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