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Décor & Gardening



Designing the perfect family room

31 July 2017

The family room offers the perfect place for families to chill out and spend time together. Claire Gibson from leading furniture manufacturer, La-Z-Boy, offers some ideas on how to achieve the best social family room design.

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A major trend in home interior design for the past few years has been the conscious effort to use design as a means of bringing family together. Says Claire Gibson from leading furniture manufacturer, La-Z-Boy: "With our busy modern lifestyles and the ever present temptation of technology always on hand, modern families are spending less and less quality time together. However, with the help of clever design, you can encourage family members to spend more time together, and the family room offers the perfect place for this to happen!" Here are Claire's top tips for creating the perfect family room space:

- **Know the family:** The first step to a successful family room design is figuring out all the needs of the family that this room will be serving, and then work from there to ensure that as many of these are met. Says Claire: "Any family room will need to serve a number of different functions – it can be a place where homework gets done, a family entertainment hub, or somewhere to relax, read or converse with one another. By including as many requirements of every member of the family into this space, you will be ensuring that everybody feels comfortable and uses this space."

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- **Kitchen connection:** Everybody knows that the kitchen is the heart of the home, and so connecting the family room to the kitchen is a natural progression for creating a unified space that the whole family can enjoy together. Claire explains: "By joining the family room and the kitchen, you can create a truly multi-functional room that can be enjoyed by the entire family – for example, you can keep an eye out on the kids while they are doing homework or watching TV, while you are preparing meals."

- **Choosing colour:** When choosing a colour scheme, you want to select something that creates a relaxing ambience, and that is warm and inviting. Claire advises that if you want something bold and dramatic, you should select contrasting colours in bold hues for a bright and modern feel. If you would prefer a softer ambience, then she says you should rather select neutral shades for a more low-key aesthetic.

- **Let the light in:** There is nothing worse than a dark family room that is depressing and uninviting, notes Claire: "The more natural light that you can let into this space, the better. A family room that is bright and full of sunlight is warm and appealing."

- **Informal and versatile:** One of the most important aspects of a successful family room design is the placement of seating in a way that encourages eye contact and interaction. Claire says that those using this room need to be the focal point of the placement of seating – not things like the TV for example. She also notes that you need to consider all members of the family when selecting the seating for this room: "It is best to offer a variety of seating choices in a family room so that everybody will be comfortable. I would suggest a couple of occasional chairs or single-seaters, an ottoman or two, and of course a 2- or 3-seater couch, depending on the size of the room and the family in question. Motion furniture is an especially great option for this room, as it can cater for a number of different functions – from watching TV to reading, gaming, relaxing, or just sitting together and enjoying each other's company."

- **Be practical:** As its name implies, a family room is going to be used by the entire family – young and old. As such, it is important that you take this into consideration when choosing items to house in this space – from flooring, to window dressings, wall paint and of course upholstery options. Notes Claire: "Leather is probably the best bet when it comes to durability and withstanding lots of use by all members of the family, however it is also quite an expensive option. If you are opting for fabric upholstery, be sure to select fabric that has been treated. iClean form La-Z-Boy® for example, is a high-performance fabric that incorporates safe, sophisticated chemistry to protect and surround each fibre, repelling spills before they turn into stains. Everyday spills are now protected with iClean, including coffee, wine, salsa, dirt, chocolate and more."

- **Create different spaces:** Most family rooms have several things going on at once, and so Claire says that it is a good idea to divide the room into smaller spaces: "Instead of having one big space that tries to cater for everything, it is much easier to make smaller spaces based on a particular functionality. For example, create seating around the television or fireplace, and keep the play area in a section of its own. You don't need to put up walls to divide the space – instead, create invisible walls by producing lines with furniture, area rugs, paint and so on."



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