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INDOOR PLAY ROOMS

There are many cool options for family play spaces indoors. When designing a play area, architect Luke Carter from Sandbox Studio says it pays to get the whole family onboard so everyone gets to have their say. "We encourage kids to be involved in some meetings — we discuss any issues and what they'd like in a games room," he says.

To design a games room that is both functional and comfortable, Luke suggests beginning with addressing issues of natural light and ventilation. "Include louvred windows that encourage natural airflow, or large skylights that allow the space to be flooded with fresh air and natural light," he advises. Add comfort underfoot with plush floor coverings that offer warmth and resilience. Luke suggests 100 per cent wool carpet. "It's sound-absorbing, soft and durable, or throw rugs over natural timber floors," he adds.

Family games rooms can be noisy spaces, so taking measures to reduce the noise impact on other areas of the house is a good idea. A solid-core timber door is advisable, says Luke. "It's noise-insulating and by adding acoustic seals, which are not a high cost, it can also make a huge

difference," he says. "A cavity slider can work well so when it's open it connects to the living spaces in the rest of the house." And when planning a space, it's vital that it's designed taking into account the furniture you plan to use, urges Luke. "We draw the furniture into the plan and play around a bit to make sure it's going to fit," he says.

A media room is a great concept for family movie nights and for the kids to have a space to entertain their friends. But these areas could be designed with a bit more flexibility in mind, says Luke. "By day it could be a games room and with a projector built into joinery or one that drops down from the ceiling, by night it becomes the kids' own little cinema. It then makes it more of a unique space," he suggests.

Storage is important in games rooms for board and lawn games, extra blankets and soft furnishings for when kids have sleepovers, as well as for arts, crafts and other supplies. Storage walls in family play spaces are another great concept. Luke explains that these are full-height walls of joinery. "They look neat and sleek but can contain many different types of storage that the kids can take ownership of and organise," he says.

Image courtesy of Ella James. ellajames.co.uk

