

The Use of Appropriate Colors in the Design of Children's Room: A Short Review

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Abstracts:

Color has the ability to inspire, excite, soothe, heal and even agitate. This is particularly true for children, who can be extra sensitive to color's impact. So the importance of picking out just the right color for a young child's room shouldn't be underestimated. When choosing colors to use for your rooms home it's important to think about the mood you want to create and whether you want it to feel light and airy or cozy and intimate. Knowing the difference between warm and cool colors is the first step.

Key words: Baby room, Cool colors, Effect ,Warm colors.

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Introduction

Color psychology is the study of color as a determinant of human behavior. Examples include quantification of individual color preferences and investigating the relationship between shirt color and match outcome in English football. However, the interface between color and environmental stimuli is a highly complex interface and one which is open to the influence of a large number of factors. In addition, there are a number of key reasons why the principle of caveat emptor should prevail in regard to color psychology, especially in regard to information about color psychology found in mainstream media and popular culture (1-3).

Influence of color on perception

Perceptions not obviously related to color, such as the palatability of food, may in fact be partially determined by color. Not only the color of the food itself but also that of everything in the eater's field of vision can affect this. Josef Albers' role in the understanding of color perception was through his research of how colors interact with each other. He also studied the optical illusions of color and how different hues looked the same. This was during his tenure at Yale University (4).

Color preference and associations between color and mood

Color has long been used to create feelings good on people. However, how people are affected by different color stimuli varies from person to person. Blue is the top choice for 35% of Americans, followed by green (16%), purple (10%) and red (9%)(5).

A preference for blue and green may be due to a preference for certain habitats that were beneficial in the ancestral environment as explained in the evolutionary aesthetics article(6).

There is evidence that color preference may depend on ambient temperature. People who are cold prefer warm colors like red and yellow while people who are hot prefer cool colors like blue and green. Some research has concluded that women and men respectively prefer "warm" and "cool" colors. A few studies have shown that cultural background has a strong influence on color preference. These studies have shown that people from the same region regardless of race will have the same color preferences. Also, one region may have different preferences than another region (i.e., a different country or a different area of the same country), regardless of race. Children's preferences for colors they find to be pleasant and comforting can be changed and can vary, while adult color preference is usually non-malleable. Some studies find that color can affect mood. However, these studies do not agree on precisely which moods are brought out by which colors (1).

General model

The general model of color psychology relies on six basic principles:

1. Color can carry specific meaning.
2. Color meaning is either based in learned meaning or biologically innate meaning.
3. The perception of a color causes evaluation automatically by the person perceiving.
4. The evaluation process forces color motivated behavior.
5. Color usually exerts its influence automatically.

6. Color meaning and effect has to do with context as well (1).

Specific color meaning

Different colors are perceived to mean different things. For example, tones of red lead to feelings of excitement while blue tones are often associated with feelings of relaxation. Both of these emotions are pleasant, so therefore, the colors themselves procure positive feelings in advertisements (7).

How color affects us

Psychologically, colors can have an amazing effect on each and every one of us. For example, the reddish glow from a roaring fire helps us feel warm and cosy, while a deep blue sea is calming and relaxing. Think of a refreshing scene and you may picture a walk in the English countryside - all green and spring-like. And there's nothing like a bright sunny day, bathed in a yellow glow, to cheer us up.

We don't just develop an appreciation for color as an adult. Babies and children are also affected by it – both positively and negatively. Color therapist June McLeod, who worked with a nursery childcare organisation on a study about color, has seen at first hand how the proper use of color can have an extremely positive effect on the children involved, including the following advantages:

- Improved emotional development in children;
- Increase in children sharing and co-operating;
- Noise levels were decreased;
- Children found it easier to organise their own thoughts. This could lead to better intellectual development in the long term;

- Tension and aggression were reduced;
- Babies slept more easily and peacefully;
- A calmer, happier and more relaxed environment was created.

Create a calmer environment

You may think pastel colors for babies are a bit boring and old fashioned but there's some sense in choosing pale pinks and blues for babies' bedrooms. "Babies are far happier surrounded by calming soothing pastel shades," says June McLeod. "These new little people have a lot of adjusting to do and thrive in a calming environment. Avoid busy patterns and strong colors in their rooms as this will encourage hyperactivity, lack of sleep and restlessness. In terms of toddlers, color can be used effectively to help stimulate intellectual development. "However," warns June, "toddlers can only take short bursts of time in 'loud' colorful environments. Bright, primary-colored environments can be beneficial for short periods of time, but not for full days, as strong colors will bombard their senses." In order to avoid overstimulation (essential in most active and excitable toddlers!) June recommends sticking to calm pastels on walls and introducing the brighter primary colors with toys, equipment and soft furnishings. "Brightly colored toys can then easily be moved or stored away to create a more restful atmosphere for quiet times." To encourage peace and tranquillity in the bedroom, June advises using a coral/peach/soft pink shade on the ceiling space. "Your child will spend time each day and night looking at the ceiling and these colors not only encourage intellectual.

Know your colors

If you're now worried that an incorrect color choice will result in endless tantrums and sleepless nights, fear not. The general color rules are relatively easy to follow. "Red, orange and yellow are considered 'magnetic' colors," explains June. "They make a strong impact, are warm, energising and uplifting. On the other hand, blue, indigo and violet are 'electrical' and, therefore, are cool, soothing and calming. Green lies in the middle of the spectrum; being neither warm nor cold; it creates balance. We often retreat to the green of nature when we need space, calm and a sense of peace. Using green within décor will help to create a feeling of harmony and balance."

Warm colors

In general, warm colors elicit happiness and comfort, creating intimacy by making large, open spaces feel a little cozier. Bold shades of red, orange and yellow can stimulate the mind and have an energizing effect on the body- beneficial for growth and development, but less than advantageous during the nightly bedtime showdown with your average, overly energetic toddler.

Thus, warm colors are best used in moderation. Instead of painting an entire room a bold red or bright yellow, paint a single accent wall and tie in a few matching accessories. You might also consider pairing warm colors with cooler shades to create a sense of balance and temper any negative effects (Picture.1).

Picture.1:Combination of warm colors in baby room



Warm colors typically stimulate the mind and energize the physique. They make big spaces truly feel cozy and welcoming. Nevertheless, they are not notably soothing so they are not that excellent during the bedtime, specifically for quite energetic youngsters.

Orange

Largely underused, orange is perhaps one of the most misunderstood colors in the paint deck. This warm, friendly and youthful color is actually great for children since it's said to encourage confidence, extroversion and independence. The social nature of this color also puts children and their friends at ease, inspiring communication and cooperation (picture.2).

Picture.2: Use of orange color in baby room



Yellow: Most of us associate yellow with feelings of happiness and cheerfulness. Studies also pair this bright and cheery color with motivation; softer yellows can aid concentration, while brighter ones can increase memory. Beware of using too much bright yellow, though. In large doses it may create feelings of agitation and even anger (picture.3).

Picture.3: Use of yellow color in baby room



Red: Red has the ability to energize the body and excite the mind, increasing heart and breathing rates. However, some research suggests that too much exposure to red encourages aggressive behavior and an inability to focus. The bottom line: Red is great as an accent but might not be the best room color for an already restless child (picture.4).

Picture.4: Use of red color in baby room



Pink: Although it's usually associated with typical girly spaces, pink has a calming feel that can translate to both sexes. Any child can grow out of too much pink quickly, though, so try pairing pink artwork, accessories and textiles with a neutral background (picture.5).

Picture.5: Use of pink color in baby room



Cold Colors

Cool colors have a calming effect on the body and can make your child's room feel spacious and relaxing. Think open skies and rolling waves. However, dark, cool colors can evoke all the doom and gloom of an impending storm and should be used in moderation. Despite their soothing nature, cool colors are not particularly inviting and can leave people feeling cold and reserved if the atmosphere is too stark. Too soften the effect, pair with creamy neutrals and dress with soft fabrics and comfortable accessories. Compared to warm colors, cold tones typically have a calming impact on the body and mind. They make rooms really feel spacious and relaxing. Dark shades, however, must be employed in moderation to avoid generating a gloomy atmosphere (picture.6).

Picture.6:Combination of cool colors in baby room



Compared to warm colours, cold tones typically have a calming impact on the body and mind. They make rooms really feel spacious and relaxing. Dark shades, however, must be employed in moderation to avoid generating a gloomy atmosphere.

Blue

The exact opposite of red on the color wheel, blue calms the mind and body, lowering blood pressure, heart rate and respiration and decreasing feelings of anxiety and aggression. Children who have trouble sleeping or are prone to tantrums and other behavioral problems may benefit from spending time in a blue environment. The physical effects of blue also cool the body, creating a refreshing oasis in hot, humid locations(picture.7).

Picture.7: Use of blue color in baby room



Purple

Associated with wisdom and spirituality, purple combines the stability of blue and the energy of red, taking on the characteristics of either, depending on the shade. Purple can also have a luxurious feel and is associated with wealth and royalty (picture.8)

Picture.8: Use of purple color in baby room



Green

Green symbolizes nature and thus promotes a serene and calming environment. Associated with health, healing and well being, green has a soothing effect on the body and mind, reducing anxiety and promoting concentration. Exposure to the color green may even increase reading ability. One study found that by laying a transparent green sheet on top of text, students improved their reading speed and comprehension. While science can make useful generalizations, remember that psychological responses are deeply personal. You may feel differently about a color based on your own cultural and personal preferences, and that's fine. If your little boy loves the color red, don't worry about the negatives. The brain is designed to identify what it needs and likes and will reward us for following direction. In other words, if

your baby is happy, his brain is happy too (picture.9) (7-14).

Picture.9: Use of green color in baby room



Conclusion

Warm colors are made with orange, red, yellow and combinations of them are Warm colors inspire happiness and comfort in most people. They can also make large, open spaces feel more intimate for young ones.

Of course, this doesn't mean you're limited to brown and tan - use these easy colors as a platform for brighter and more daring shades. Cool colors such as blue, green and light purple have the ability to calm and soothe. Some of us associate cool colors with sterile, hospital-like environments, but lighter cool colors can have a calming effect on children. Plus, many of these colors help small spaces seem a little bit more open. Try layering in shades of cream for some softness and contrast, and consider comfortable and cuddly textiles for warmth. An important thing to remember when dealing with warm and cool colors is that no room should have just one.

If you want your room to be cozy have warm colors as the dominant colors and then add a few elements that incorporate cool colors (and vice versa). Like with all

elements of decorating it's important to have some balance and contrast. When choosing colors to use for your home décor projects it's important to think about the mood you want to create and whether you want it to feel light and airy or cozy and intimate. Knowing the difference between warm and cool colors is the first step.

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