

Shifting gear

Five real solutions
to your kids'
technology
clutter.

BY CHARLYNE VARKONYI SCHAUB
HOME & GARDEN EDITOR

The trucks, teddy bears, dolls and Barbie Dream House may be history. But their fading from favor doesn't mean you're off the hook.

Next comes the hard-core electronics. Desktop and laptop computers. Video games. CDs. DVDs. Xbox. Nintendo's Wii. Cables and more cables.

Your child's room or playroom can be as much of a mess with electronic gear as it was with toys. So how do you set up a system to get things organized and have them stay that way?

We asked advice from a designer, organizational experts and Christopher Lowell, host of *Work That Room With Christopher Lowell*, which debuts on the Fine Living Network at 6 p.m. July 26.

INSIDE Put the reefer copy here. **4F**

INTERIORS BY DECORATING DEN
IN WESTON

Myriam Payne

The challenge: A playroom created for two boys, ages 8 and 10, in Weston Hills.

Her mission: To organize their toys and electronic gear, which include an arcade ma-

chine, table soccer game, a Wii machine, Xbox and a large flat-screen TV. And to make sure it's tidy enough for overnight guests.

Her plan: She hung the flat screen on the wall above a chest, where all the electronic gear was stored. To prevent glare on the screen, she installed blackout shades.

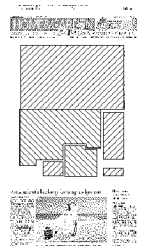
Her advice: Look for cabinets with plugs inside and openings in the back. Install task lighting for the keyboard.

TV PERSONALITY

Christopher Lowell

The problem: He often finds children's workstations are outdated or crammed into a corner. They don't have the dominance they should in our tech-driven world.

The solution: If you get a flat-screen TV, mount it on the wall and build a great desk under-



neath. Take two or three plywood tops to expand the work space and store them in the garage when not in use.

WELLINGTON DESIGNER WHO ALSO OPERATES MYDESIGNSECRETS.COM

Lorrie Browne

The problem: Two boys share a bedroom and love to play video games.

The solution: She split the large closet into two smaller ones with a middle console that stores a TV and all the gaming gear. The cords can be pulled through the cabinet and grouped together with plastic ties.

CONQUER CHAOS,
NOBLE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS,
FORT LAUDERDALE

Mindy Noble

The challenge: Set up an organizational system that works for the child so it's easy

for him or her to put electronic gear away. Determine if the child is more tactile or more verbal.

The solution: Put electronic gear in plastic bins and label them so the child knows where each goes — DVDs, CDs, joysticks, wires. If you have a media center, the software and DVDs can go inside the slots provided. A verbal child can be told what to do. A tactile child has to be taken by the hand so he or she can touch the objects and learn where to place them.

The aftermath: Set up a reward system, such as stars or a treat, to encourage the child to keep the room organized.

FROM CHAOS TO HARMONY,
PLANTATION

Kelly McDaniel

The challenge: Establishing a system that will continue to

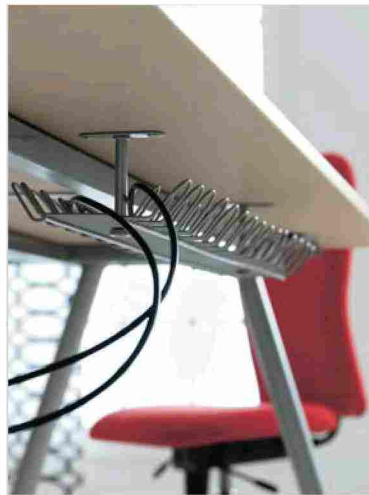
work.

The solution: If the equipment is in a public room, small armoires are a good choice because the doors can be closed to hide the electronics. Put DVDs and CDs in books to take up less space and so jewel cases won't be tossed around the room. Use plastic ties or plastic tubes to wrap around the cords to keep children's feet from getting tangled in the mess.

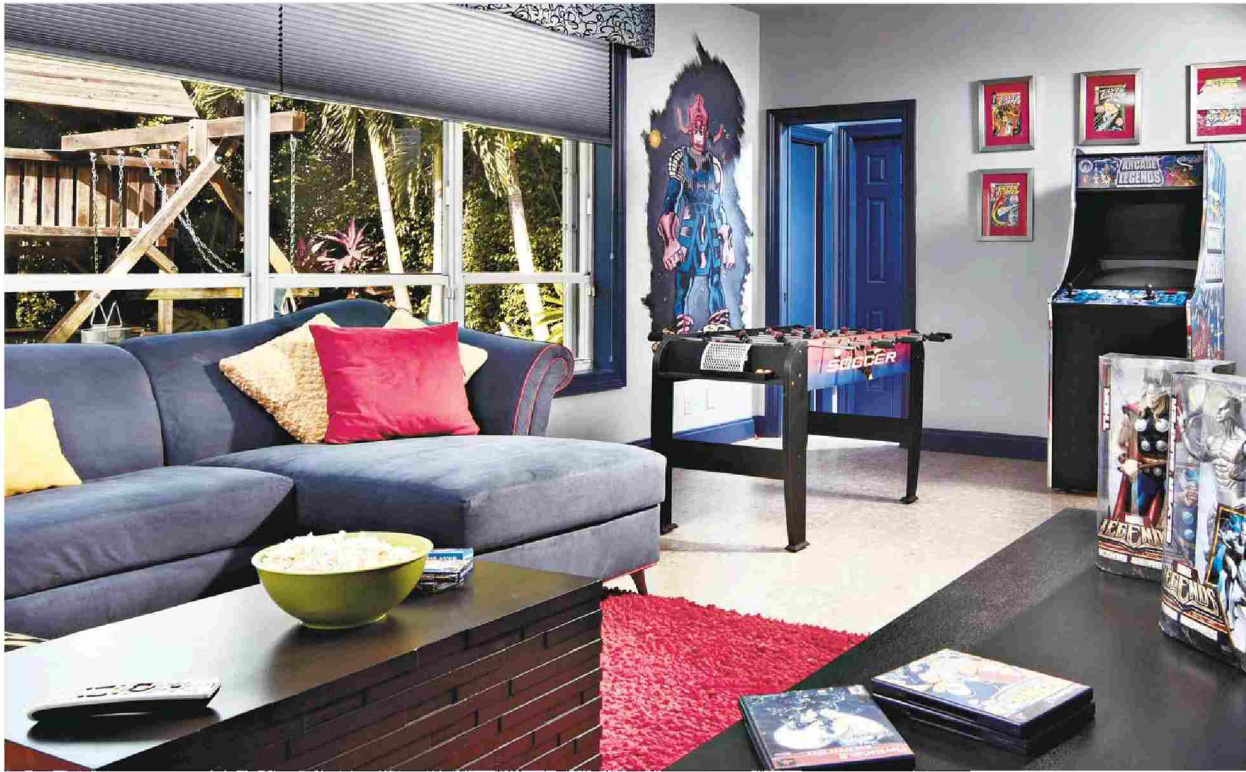
The aftermath: The key is to stick with the system and maintain it. Start a cleanup-before-bed routine and stick with it. The key is to teach your kids organizing skills early so they can use them later in life.

DESIGNER'S TOUCH

Get more ideas on how to turn your home from frumpy to fab. Sun-Sentinel.com/home



EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE: This Weston Hills playroom, at top, serves two active boys, ages 8 and 10, where they and their friends can play computer games, arcade games, watch movies or hang out. Above, Ikea's Signum cable management system (\$12.99) tidies your electric and computer cables. **Photo/Joseph Lapeyra and Ikea photo**



CHECKLIST FOR KEEPING ELECTRONICS ORGANIZED

Cables: Look for a variety of devices, such as the "One Man Tied" wire tidier (\$10) at Fort Lauderdale-based Cable Organizer.com.

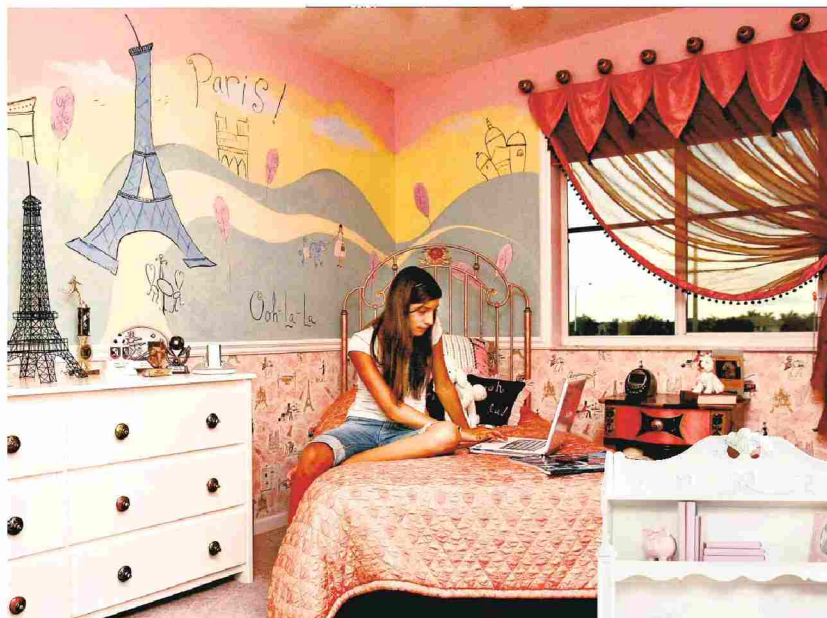
Bins: They are available in a variety of styles and materials and can be labeled to make things easy to find. Sources include ikea.com or Ikea Sunrise, 151 NW 136th Ave., 954-838-9292; containerstore.com or The

Container Store, 7200 N. Kendall Drive, Miami, 305-670-8181; and target.com.

Children's desks/armoires: Rooms to Go Kids, potterybarn.com or landofnod.com.

DVD and CD organizers: Staples, Office Depot, containerstore.com or The Container Store, 7200 N. Kendall Drive, Miami, 305-670-8181.

— CHARLYNE V. SCHAUB



STAY ORGANIZED: Good habits are easy if learned early. Designer Myriam Payne's daughter, Alexandra, has things organized in her Weston bedroom. Staff photo/Andrew Innerarity



WAYS TO GO: Organization comes in many styles, from a feminine Princess computer hutch, left, by the Disney collection or Ikea's streamlined Vika Desk with storage. Rooms to Go and Ikea photos

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