

CHAPTER

6 You and Your Child

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR CHILD is to allow him or her to create his or her own environment. There is more psychological back-rubbing, more “making nice,” and more positive stroking involved in letting your child create his own room than in just about anything else that you might do for him. After spending nine months planning the perfect nursery, parents rarely give a growing child’s room much thought. Instead, when a toddler outgrows the crib, his mother and father buy him a bed and bedspread. That bed, plus a few shelves for his books and toys, becomes the child’s personal environment. The room serves him through his preschool and early school years. Then when the child reaches nine or ten, a larger desk and a new bedspread might be purchased for him. The child’s room may not be thought about again until he becomes a teenager. Then another overhaul might be considered.

At both of these times in an older child’s life—age nine to ten and thirteen to sixteen—a child’s room becomes the subject of parental attention. A professional designer might be called in, or Mom may decide to do the room herself. The child is usually asked his opinion after the fact—when the room has been redone. Rarely is a child actually involved in the planning of his own room, and even less often is the child allowed to create his own special, private space.

Discussion about your child’s room can provide enormous opportunities for you to get to know your child better. Yet few parents recognize this. Instead they take for granted that children will live in homes created solely by adults. Consequently, although children know much about what their parents like, parents rarely know what their children

Intellectually we accept that each child is an individual and not an extension of ourselves, yet emotionally we haven’t made this break.

