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Growing pains

Having a family is one of life's biggest adventures. However, making sure the place they call home keeps up with their lifestyles is the second

Words Tessa HOLT

Watching over as the excited young couple walk through the doors on moving day, to the arrival of the first, second and possibly third born, the home is like an extended part of the family. Now, Australian families are living in their homes for longer periods as the cost of renovating is a more viable option than upping sticks and moving. But with the extension of your family, how do you ensure your home will be able to cater to your family's lifestyle as the years pass?

Zoned out

The typical house has five main areas; the bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen, living areas and the outdoor space. Commonly known as zones, these areas need to be separate but also need to link with one another.

Architect Justin Quinlan from The Quinlan Group believes the design of the home has

evolved from its European origins. "Over the past 50 years, Australians have moved on from the English model of compartmentalised living in the front of the house to our own model of open-plan living connected to the outdoors," says Justin. "We try to design our new dwellings such that you can see into every living area when standing in the kitchen and to design the kitchen island as more of a table than a servery."

Designing a home for a young family can be a challenge. Interior designer Amgad Kamel from AK Interiors believes function and practicality are the most important elements to a successful home design. "Designing for a young family has to accommodate the day-to-day function of the house," says Amgad. "Suitable proportions of rooms are key to making the young feel comfortable and cosy in the spaces they are using."

BELOW

The easy and natural feel of open-plan living has been adopted by many Australian households



ABOVE

Designing living spaces that can be used for a range of activities will allow the home to grow with the family

Home of the future

As the family starts to get older and the children enter those wonderful teenage years, the layout of the home will need a rethink. "Future proofing a house for its inhabitants really comes down to two things — space and privacy," says Justin. "As the children grow, they get noisier and more



active; therefore they will need more space and the parents a retreat."

Through the years, children will go from needing space for recreation, to needing space to retreat to. "The key, therefore, is to design some spaces that can accommodate a variety of uses, such as a games room that can become a TV room or office," says Justin. "Extra space is never a hindrance; however, overdevelopment can result in the house feeling empty once people start moving out."

If you're afraid your interior design may go stale after a few years, Amgad Kamel from AK Interiors gives his top tips to avoid disaster.

- 1 Avoid fashionable trends and focus on quality.
- 2 Avoid bright colours and think neutral palette.

- 3 Finishes should be of high quality. By looking at finishes from 10 years ago, compare them to what's happening now and you'll get an idea of where the trends are heading.
- 4 Be careful not to overcapitalise if you are not planning to stay for more than five years.
- 5 Bring your own style to furnishings and fabrics, but keep the house design appealing to others as well.