

Toddler Bed Needs Good Home

By Nancy Fawson

One of the most highly anticipated events in the Fawson household took place last month. Finally, our two children, ages five and seven, moved from their shared bedroom into their own rooms with real, big-kid furniture. To say that the kids were as excited about this as they were for Christmas would only be a slight exaggeration. They compared bedding options (unicorns or horses?), agonized over color choices (dark blue or light blue?) and helped make important decisions (no more night lights!).

Truth be told, my five-year-old should have graduated from her toddler bed two years ago when we moved here, but in an effort to minimize the disruption that comes with big change and to save money, we decided to put the kids together in a cozy little room with the tiny furniture that they had had in our tiny apartment in New York City. The kids have acclimated well to their new home and have lately seemed to have outgrown their shared space. Our daughter is ready to decorate her space to reflect the things that are important to her, like horses, butterflies and tea parties, while our son wants a space free of his sister's "girlish" influence and a space where he can set up an homage to books, motor vehicles and Legos. It was time, my husband and I agreed, to turn over the playroom/office/guest room to the kids.

Those who know me know that I hate clutter. Okay, I am a complete neat freak. I do a thorough sweep of the house a few times a month and mercilessly toss anything that I deem unnecessary. I have a personal vendetta against the stacks of paper, random bits of plastic and heaps of toys that is the detritus of the young. Unfortunately my minimalist aesthetic has not rubbed off on my children and so the junk inevitably reappears almost as quickly as I can clear it away. Notwithstanding this, for the past three weeks we have lived with the toddler bed awkwardly placed in a corner of our living room. Normally this set-up would drive me crazy but the bed has a special place in my heart. Each time I look at it I see moments from my children's young lives and feel incapable of letting it go.

I see my seven-year-old Leo at eighteen months, his sweet chubby face exploding with joy and pride as he realizes that he will be

sleeping in a "big boy bed" now that his newborn sister, just home from the hospital, will be in the crib. Leo, flush with newfound freedom, loved being able to get out of his bed anytime he wanted (a privilege he took full advantage of at all hours of the night). Free from the confines of the crib, he could pick up his sisters dropped pacifiers and lovies and hand them back to her through the bars. She would smile and laugh with delight at him; her first hero. We would often hear him talking to Sidney over the monitor, telling her jokes and stories. Not only did he make space for his sister by giving her his crib, he also made space for her in his heart.

When Sidney turned two, it was her turn to graduate from the crib to the toddler bed. She squealed with happiness when she first saw her new pink polka-dot bedding and big-girl pillow and was filled with pride the first night she spent in her "new" bed. Each day she arranged her stuffed animals and dolls on her bed and told them stories. Our sweet baby girl was getting bigger and her growing confidence and independence was beautiful to witness.

The bed came with us when we moved to California from New York and was one of the first things we set up when we moved into our new house. I have spent countless hours reading books, telling stories and cuddling with my children on that bed. I've listened to their fears, soothed them out of bad dreams and nursed them back to health in that bed. I realize that at five and seven they are far from grown up but the quickness in which the time has passed has made me realize that that time is not as far off as I may think. Each passing year brings them closer to independence and to the time when I will eventually have to let them go. So I will start with the toddler bed for now.



Nancy Fawson is a former attorney turned writer and blogger. She recently moved to Belvedere with her family after living in NYC for over two decades. You can read more of her writing on her blog, www.nycgirlbythebay.com