

the NEW market

Produced by The Special Projects Unit, Marketing Division, SPH.

Monday, December 2, 2013 • B8

Designed for kids

Furniture retailers ensure that products for children are not just safe and durable but also allow the young ones to be creative and expressive

By Lai Yi Ming

MORE parents here are willing to spend on furniture that is specially designed for children.

These include height-adjustable workstations for children to do their homework and personalised bedrooms to call their own.

Ms Lindt Koh, marketing director, Kinder Fun, says: "As children are spending longer and longer hours at the desk, it pays to have an ergonomically design desk and chair to ensure the child can achieve the correct and comfortable sitting posture as they grow."

"In the long term, the health benefits outweigh the initial cost of investment. So parents nowadays are more willing to invest in such ergonomically designed workstations."

Kinder Fun has a range of height-adjustable writing desks and chairs priced between \$399 and \$1,500. These are designed with ergonomic features to support the spinal column and muscular system to promote a healthy sitting posture.

The Kinder Fun Ergonomics workstation is height-adjustable and "grows" with the kid. Its air-pressure system allows users to adjust the desk to the child's height in two seconds.

Also, having a "tiltable" desk top provides a better angle for reading and writing.

For the tweenage market

Ikea has a new range that sees to children's mental development as well.

Aside from catering to babies (up to two years old) and small children (three to seven years old), Ikea expanded its children's range to include the eight- to 12-year-old



PHOTO: LEGARÉ

age group. Retailing from \$1.90 onwards, the range also allows kids to express their personalities freely — be it as a rock star, gamer, creative artist or avid collector.

This, including the other Children's Ikea products, is created from a child's perspective and can be used to develop imagination, creativity and understanding.

Ikea has also revamped its Children's department at Ikea Tampines and Ikea Alexandra so tweens can get ideas on how to design their bedrooms.

On why it decided to cater to the particular age segment, Ms Nur Diana, sales leader of Children's Ikea for Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, says: "We realised that our customers are growing too, and we wanted to also serve the needs of older kids at a different developmental stage."

She adds that Ikea's new collection gives eight- to 12-year-olds — a time where they begin to establish their personalities and start to explore their identities —



PHOTO: KINDER FUN

a chance to reflect their individualities and personalise their bedrooms and a space they can call their own.

In 2010, Ikea conducted the Play Report, the largest survey of children ever done of 11,000 households in 25 countries worldwide, which helped to identify common activities that children aged eight to 12 liked to do at home.

Some findings include: 71 per cent of parents want to encourage more creativity at home and 85 per cent of parents believe children can learn more if it's done in a playful way; and only 9 per cent of children think that playing always has to involve toys.

With this in mind, Ms Diana says: "We then selected existing furniture ranges that would be suitable and further developed home furnishing products to support four common personalities and their activities — Rock Stars, Gamers, Creativity (for example, budding artists), and Collectors."

"Our products are developed based on expert knowledge from both child psychologists and kids, tested by the kids and modified based on their feedback too."

Tool-free assembly

Another retailer, Furniture & Furnishings, recently

launched a new collection of bedroom sets (\$299 to \$1,299) from Legaré, a supplier of tool-free assembly furniture, which is available at Novena Showrooms.

On how Legaré stands out, Furniture & Furnishings' spokesman says: "The main difference would be its safety features. Being tool-free, the brand uses a patented locking design for all its furniture panels — making it fuss-free, fun and secure."

"It can be said to be the 'Lego' of furniture. The 'mix-and-match' model of the panels make the furniture versatile as well in areas such as adjustable shelf heights."

Safety is of prime importance when buying furniture for children.

When selecting furniture for children, Ms Koh recommends the following considerations: whether the furniture is ergonomically designed, height-adjustable and tiltable; and whether it is durable; easy

to adjust; has safety features; and practical and functional, yet value-for-money.

Furniture & Furnishings' spokesman says: "The main thing to take into consideration would be the safety features, as children tend to be playful, so always keep an eye on them."



PHOTO: IKEA