

# When Buying A Home, Anticipate Your Family's Need.

Whether you currently have a family or might have one in the future; consider your family's current and future needs when buying a home.

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For the author of a recent Realty Times article, the first house she and her husband bought seemed ideal. "The house had three bedrooms, a big flat level yard for playing and was in a top rated school district." However, the author failed to consider several big problems with the house when they decided to have a family. The house had a large spiral floating staircase that posed all sorts of baby proofing issues. It also had a steep driveway. Although your current needs may seem important, it is equally important to consider your future needs and those of your family.

**The National Association of Home Builders suggests asking yourself these questions:**

Do I entertain frequently?

Do I have plans to expand my family?

Do I need rooms to retreat for privacy?

Will the square footage in the home equal useable space?

Will I need a home that limits noise? (If so, an open floor plan may not be best.)

Do I wish to create a private room such as a den or library? (Again, if so, an open floor plan may not work well.)

If you already have children, or are planning to have children, remember that you do not always have to allot one bedroom per child. Some children prefer sharing a room, especially if they are already used to that arrangement. If you are planning on starting a family during the time you are in your new house, make sure to consider an adequate play area. Although you may want more space for entertaining or personal leisure now, you will be driven crazy by toys in your dining room and library if you fail to purchase a home with an appropriate play area.

Another important issue to consider when buying a home that will house current or future children is safety. According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, hazards in the home account for 2.5 million child injuries or deaths each year. Many such incidents can be prevented with the proper precautions. In buying a new home, consider what risks a potential home might pose to a baby or small child. Are there a lot of stairs? Is lighting poor around stairs or other dangerous areas? Does the garage door have an auto-reverse feature or motion detectors? Do the stairs have adequate handrails? Is the driveway relatively flat (this is more important in areas with severe weather)? Is the yard large, fenced and free from hazards?

In considering issues such as the above, you will make you and your family safe and happy in the long run. For additional help in making an already purchased home safe for children, visit a local baby store and talk to them about safety. Consultants at the store may bring up issues you haven't considered about your home.

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