

A KITCHEN FOR KIDS



CHRIS STEWART / The Chronicle

San Francisco couple learns how to remodel with twin toddlers and another baby on the way — without losing their sanity

Designing with kids in mind

Here are some tips for designing a kitchen that is user friendly to kids and adults:

- Cabinet fronts can have easy-to-clean clear coating; make kitchen surfaces sponge-cleanable.
- Keep children's plastic dishes and small toys in lower cabinets and drawers.
- Secure household chemicals; put a lock on the pantry.
- Use glass-front cabinets only in high spots; avoid abrupt counter edges.
- Instead of an island with abrupt edges, get extra counter space for meal preparation.

By Jeannie Matteucci
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

With 2-year-old twins and a brand-new baby boy born last month, husband and wife Jim Woods and Kate Depman of San Francisco are one busy couple. But even with all the diapers, feedings and general chaos that comes with living in a home with two toddlers and a baby on the way, the couple found time a few months ago to give birth to a very important addition to their family: a new kitchen.

"The kitchen we had before was the original kitchen that came with the home when it was built in 1927," explains Depman, 39, an Internet sales representative currently on maternity leave. "It had shiny yellow tile, a linoleum floor with gold sparkles, no place for a refrigerator and no dishwasher because they weren't made yet. The old appliances plus the outdated materials and layout were just not working."

Having lived in this three-bedroom, three-bath Noe Valley home since 1995, the couple knew the kitchen was only part of the problem. Their three-level home needed some major renovations, and with Woods working from a home office and the kids just starting to explore the house, the couple decided it was time to bite the bullet and make some changes — even if it meant living in a home temporarily turned upside down.

"We actually did something unusual with this remodel," points out Woods, 47, a self-em-



▲ After

A slightly raised ceiling, redesigned floor plan and new skylight resulted in a well-lighted, spacious kitchen for Jim Woods and Kate Depman — without the expense of moving walls.

◀ Before

With a choppy layout, cramped doorway and only one light fixture, the original 1920s-era kitchen was dark and awkward.