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LIGHT FURNITURE AND YOUNG CHILDREN CAN HAPPILY COEXIST. Donna Gorman, shown here with daughter Eve, satisfied her longtime desire for a white sofa by choosing one that was slipcovered rather than upholstered (so it can be dry-cleaned regularly) and restricting meals to the dining room and kitchen.

live, no

Despite the chaos of a home-based business and the business of spare aesthetic. Her secret? A firm belief in editing as she goes—

rk, play

running a home, Donna Gorman, mother of two, maintains a
and a few strategically placed catchalls for life's little miscellany.

BY **JANE MARGOLIES** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DEAN KAUFMAN**

GORMAN'S GUIDELINES

LEAVE YOURSELF EXACTLY ONE JUNK DRAWER.
Gorman's home is tidy and ordered, but she allows a little chaos at her desk, right.

MAKE ORGANIZATION FUN.
Eighteen-month-old Eve, below right, rummages through a round basket for her toys, as if she were playing a game of hide-and-seek.

OPT FOR HARD AND FAST RULES, BUT NOT HARD CORNERS.
Gorman protects her cream-colored shag, opposite, by enforcing a shoes-off-in-the-house policy. The rug also offers plenty of cushion for Eve's forays in walking. An oval table means fewer head boo-boos.

THE BLOWN-UP FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS ARE STUCK TO THE wall beside eighteen-month-old Eve's crib with white photographer's tape. Twelve-year-old Lily's room has just been treated to a fresh coat of aqua paint. The old white lacquer kitchen cupboards were recently replaced with custom-made maple ones; the cabinets in the master bath are due for an overhaul next. Clearly, Donna Gorman's New Canaan, Connecticut, home is never going to be finished. But that's really not the point for this down-to-earth 46-year-old, who is too busy living her life—raising two daughters (not to mention three dogs and two cats), entertaining friends, and running a business—to obsess about whether she's got the best-looking high chair on the planet or whether her rowing machine might go someplace other than next to the dining table. "This house is really lived in," says Gorman, a fabric-and-wall-

COLOR ZOO
Lou Ritter

GORMAN'S GUIDELINES

DEFINE ADULT AND KID SPACES.
A glass corridor, opposite, separates twelve-year-old Lily's bedroom and Eve's nursery from the master bedroom.

MAKE CLEANUP A BREEZE.
Low, open cubbies, left, help Lily keep her room in order. Canvas boxes, labeled for easy identification, keep letters and photos tidy.

TURN STORAGE INTO ART.
By creating vignettes of toys, shoes, and storage baskets on Eve's bedroom shelves, below left, Gorman saves closet space while keeping outfit options close at hand.

"I don't buy a lot of furniture, but I've always picked what I loved. I want the things around me to be beautiful, even if I do have a couple of kids."

coverings designer who is the U.S. representative for Marimekko, the venerable Finnish textile company. Working out of a studio tucked under her children's bedrooms, Gorman often finds herself sorting through samples of a new line of onesies, or planning a trip to Marimekko's headquarters in Helsinki, while the plink, plink, plink of Eve's *Music Together* CD wafts from upstairs.

Gorman's 100-year-old renovated carriage house—originally part of an estate that was subdivided in the Fifties—has evolved, just as her family has. It was a clapboard bungalow on three acres when she bought it in the late Eighties. She hired New York architects Gisue and Mojgan Hariri to update and expand the house—a job that involved gutting the interior, recon figuring the facade by replacing the clapboard with stucco, and constructing an addition. (This was, in fact, the first house built by the then up-and-coming sister team.) The result was a fluid, 3,500-square-foot space that Gorman, a confirmed modernist, feels very much at home in—even though her family has been reconfigured as well.

Gorman was raising Lily on her own when she met Roger Johansson, a Swedish-born trader in Scandinavian equities. He eventually moved in, and when their daughter, Eve, was born, the couple gave her the guest room; a spare room downstairs has gone to an au pair. "We've maxed out, space-wise," says the six-foot two-inch Gorman, who finds time to row with a local crew between playdates, carpooling, and business meetings.

GORMAN'S GUIDELINES

SET LIMITS FOR EVERYONE. Gorman, bottom right with Eve, one of their three dogs and one of their two cats, has a strict no-pets-on-the-furniture policy.

MAKE FURNITURE VERSATILE. Gorman didn't want the kind of formal dining room that gets used only for holiday meals. She pushes two trestle tables together for banquet spreads, right, and separates them for more intimate dinners. Lily does her homework there while Eve ambles in her walker alongside Mom, who prepares three meals a day in the open kitchen.

CELEBRATE THE WHIMSICAL. You can be a minimalist without being a killjoy. The architects created a telescopic viewing box, opposite, that gives you a straight look from the studio to the front door and foyer.

"Part of the fun for her," says Donna of baby Eve, "is to dig everything out of the box and put it all back in again."

Rooms are used communally. At one end of the loftlike living room, a dining table composed of two simple maple trestles made by a woodworker friend serves for dinner parties, family suppers, and homework. Lily and her pals push the Marimekko fabric runner to the side and spread out their books. Furniture is moved from room to room as Gorman rethinks the use of space. Eve's Metroshelf changing table (initially Lily's) has done duty as a bookcase and a kitchen island.

Though Gorman's approach is flexible, it isn't anything goes. Yes, there's a purple plastic baby walker lurking in the living room, and the high chair is a $49 plastic Evenflo model that Gorman chose because it has casters and can roll from kitchen counter to dining table. But this author of a book titled *The Artful Table,* which explains how to pull together sophisticated settings, refuses to let kid stuff take over. She regularly weeds out books and toys her children outgrow, passing them on to charity. She keeps the kids' art supplies in her studio and allows them to work only there, where she can supervise. She confines Eve's rattles, stuffed animals, and teething rings to a low galvanized-steel tub in the living room and a Shakerlike wood box in the master bedroom. "Part of the fun for her is to dig everything out of the box and put it all back in again," Gorman says.

And then there's the white sofa in the living room, a recent addition to an informal mix of furnishings that includes an Eames rocker and a steel and woven rubber Italian chaise. Gorman is hell-bent on keeping the new piece clean. "I yell anytime anyone comes near it with food or drink," she admits cheerfully. "I don't buy a lot of furniture, but I've always picked what I loved. I want the things around me to be beautiful, even if I do have a couple of kids."✱