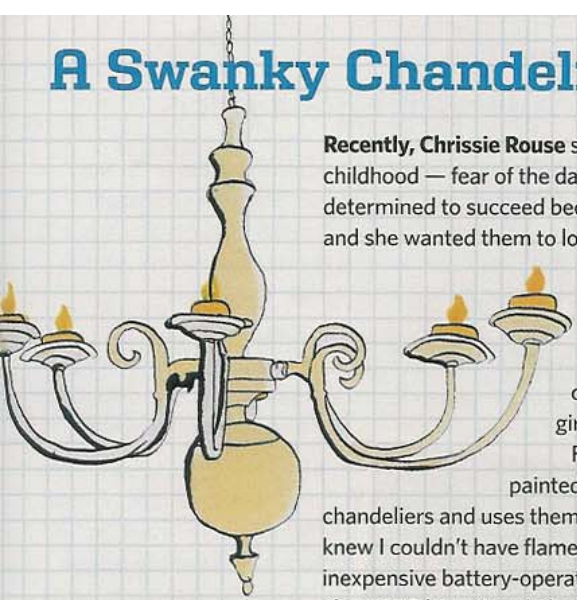


A Swanky Chandelier Night-light

Recently, **Chrissie Rouse** set out to combat an age-old bugaboo of childhood — fear of the dark — in a fun new way. She was especially determined to succeed because she was adopting 5-year-old twin girls, and she wanted them to love their new bedroom.

The lightbulb blinked on for Chrissie when she spotted an old chandelier at a garage sale. It was olive green and pretty beaten up, but she had a vision: the fixture could have a new life as a wonderfully girly night-light.

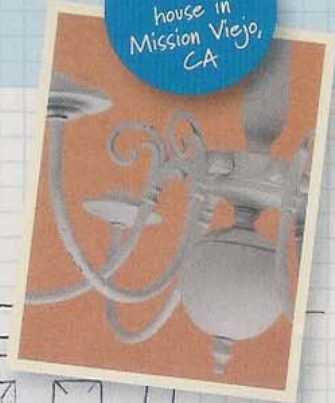
First, she removed the wiring, then she painted the unit white. "My twin sister collects old chandeliers and uses them as candleholders," Chrissie says, "but I knew I couldn't have flames in a kids' room." Instead, she bought inexpensive battery-operated tea lights (each has a battery life of about 100 hours) and placed them at the ends of the fixture's arms. Combined with the classical music she plays for her girls at bedtime, the chandelier's fanciful glow makes the room feel cozy and safe.



Chrissie's Project Pointers:

- Use yellow tea lights instead of white to create a more candlelike effect.
- Use picture-mounting putty to secure the tea lights. Then it's easy to remove them when the batteries die.
- Secure the chandelier to a ceiling joist and make sure your little monkeys understand there's no swinging from it!

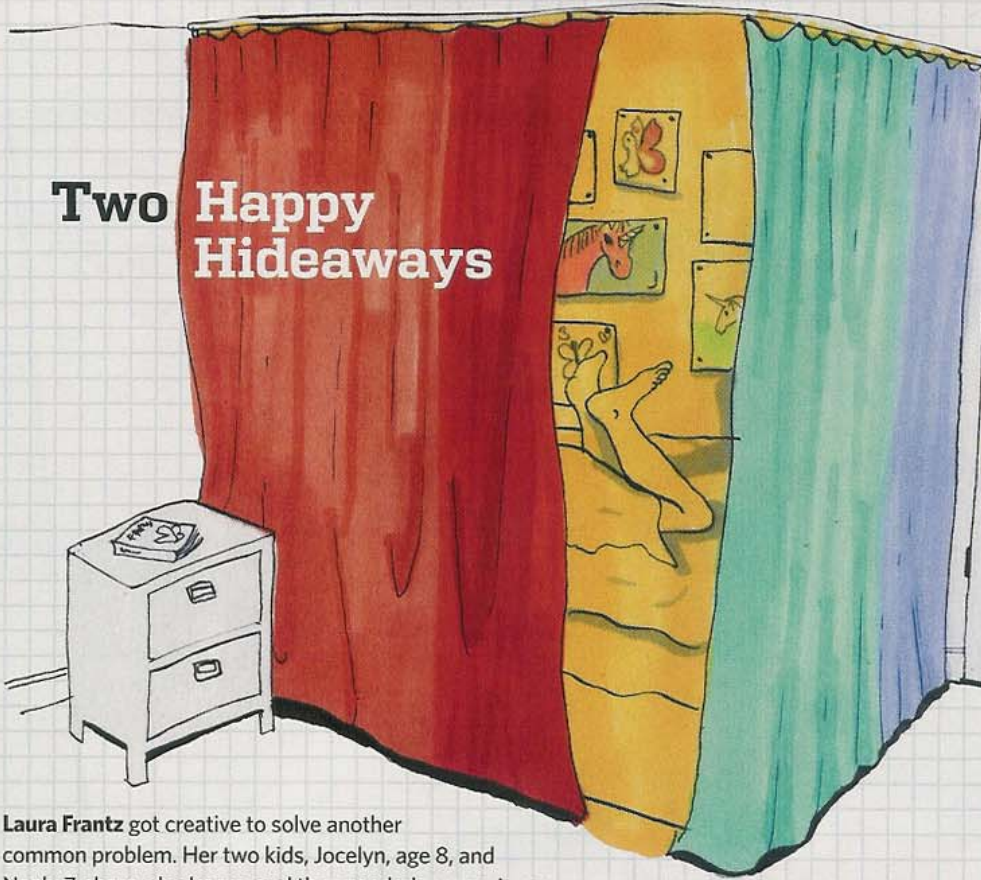
At the Rouses' house in Mission Viejo, CA



At the Frantzes' house in Fayetteville, NY



Two Happy Hideaways



Laura Frantz got creative to solve another common problem. Her two kids, Jocelyn, age 8, and Noah, 7, share a bedroom, and they needed more privacy.

Jocelyn loved reading in bed, but the light made it hard for her brother to fall asleep. Laura's brilliant — and incredibly fun — idea: bed caves! She installed ceiling curtain tracks (found at Ikea) and hung curtains sewn from old sheets, along with a black-fabric liner to block the light. Each kid's personal cave comes with a wall-mounted reading lamp and a corkboard wall for customizing the space. "Having their own special beds made it easy to transition them from sleeping with Mommy and Daddy," says Laura. "Bedtime goes more smoothly too."

Laura also gave the room's walls a coat of Benjamin Moore's blackboard paint. The expanse of blackboard not only encourages Jocelyn and Noah's creativity, but it also provides a place for Mom to make a monthly calendar highlighting important dates, such as birthdays and holidays.

Laura's Project Pointers:

- Use the right hardware for your ceiling. Laura secured the track's mounting fixtures with plaster anchors.
- Leave about 6 inches between each bed and its curtain so that your kids can easily open their caves to the room or close them up for privacy.
- Be sure to have a helper on hand to hold the curtain rails in place while you screw them in.