Feng Shui Tips for Children—

BACK TO SCHOOL!

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It's back to school…whether online or on campus, (or both!) and a great time to take advantage of your kids' excitement and anticipation about starting the year in a new grade. With all of the upheaval from the virus, it will be even more important to provide a comfortable and safe space for them.

I've always found it interesting that the area of the *bagua* that is associated with children and creativity is also the area associated with autumn, traditionally the time most kids are already settled back in school and preparing for the year ahead. The west area of the *bagua* is ruled by the *I Ching* trigram *tui*. Its attributes are joyfulness and pleasure (as in enjoyment in one's activities), and support that nurtures and inspires. What a fantastic description of what a parent would want to do for their child! All children—including our own "inner child"—shine with plentiful doses of encouragement and loving direction. To enhance the west area, you can use the color white, the element metal, and any artwork depicting children at their best. Artwork created by a child (or your inner child) is perfect here, as it has the *qi* of a child within it and honors their creativity.

Even more important is a child's personal space—their bedroom. Encourage your kids to try to keep their rooms tidy. Having their possessions scattered all over the place can be confusing and frustrating and certainly doesn't lend itself to focused thinking. There is some leeway here—they ARE kids! With all their toys and things, if they can at least have *some* clear space, it will help them avoid mental confusion. It is helpful to avoid bulky and heavy furniture, as it makes the room feel smaller and confining. Furniture with rounded edges helps alleviate "cutting *qi*."

Proper sleep is essential for clear thinking and a productive school day. Although it is recommended that children's doors be closed at night to slow the *qi* down, some children prefer their doors open, especially if they're afraid of the dark. The goal is to make your child feel comfortable so that they can fall asleep easily. Closing the blinds or curtains at night guards against excessive yin *qi* and creates a cozy protection in the room.

One sure-fire way to interfere with sleep is the presence of electronic equipment. TVs, video-game equipment, computers—basically all plug-in electronic devices—are never recommended in the bedroom. If space is limited and the bedroom is the only place to put any or all of this, there are alternatives. You can get a power strip with a switch so that the devices can be completely off. When any electronic devices are plugged into a standard outlet, they're "on" and act as transmitters and receivers even if you turned them "off." It is helpful energetically to cover TV and monitor screens, especially if it faces the bed (which I don't recommend). Avoid using clock-radios, as they're one of the worst offenders and typically are placed right next to the bed.

You know your children best and whatever you can do to provide a fun, comfortable, quiet place of rest and study will benefit them enormously in this year of uncertainty. ■

Trained in China and the US, Michele Lewis is a Certified Feng Shui Consultant and has been a Feng Shui professional since 1998. She is available for consultations on-site or via phone. By using the timeless principles of the art and science of Feng Shui, Michele can help you bring balance and beauty to every aspect of your life. She is also a Certified Qigong Instructor of Ling Gui Healing Qigong School, Liu Dong's Method. Michele can be reached at (406) 582-5724 or by email at taodesigns@ymail.com.