

As seen in the pages of



One frazzled new mom gets her sanity back after some...

early intervention

The nursery is a huge mess. We don't have room for all this baby stuff!

In New York, no matter how big your place is, you never feel like you have enough space. While my family is lucky to have a second bedroom to use as a nursery, it's tiny and it lacks closets. So I called Klara Carames of Klarify, an organizing service, to assess our space and suggest how we could use it more intelligently. To be honest, I was skeptical. "She's just going to tell us to go out and buy fancy storage bins from the Container Store," I griped to Jose. I was wrong.

As she entered the nursery, Carames noticed that though the room itself isn't big, it has a high ceiling—and we weren't using any of the vertical space. All the diapers and accessories were spilling out of a basket on the changing table or kicked to the floor by Nina.

Carames's first idea was to get a transparent shoe organizer to hang over the door. We happened to have one stashed in a closet: Diapers went into one pouch, grooming supplies into another and so on. Suddenly, the changing surface was clutter-free. She even freed up precious space in the changing table's three drawers by relegating burp cloths, bibs, socks and hats to their own pouches.

Next, she delved deeper into those drawers. They'd started out vaguely organized, but as gifts poured in, they became a dumping ground for every size and season of clothing. We went through it all to figure out what no longer fit Nina or wouldn't fit by the time the right season came around. Those things went into clear zippered bags that would be designated either "Next Baby" or "Pregnant Friend's Giveaway." I couldn't believe how many outfits went into those bags and, sadly, how many she never got a chance to wear.

Next, we assessed what was currently too big but would fit her soon—

clothes that were lingering in the gift bags they'd come in, crammed behind furniture. These items we tucked into the bottom, "Future" drawer. Bodysuits and sleepwear went into the top one. Pants, sweaters and shirts took over the middle; Carames suggested dividers to keep them neatly separated, and I actually intend to buy them.

The following step was evaluating the furniture arrangement. Carames observed that when she entered the room, she was pulled into a narrow, tunnellike path. To open up the space, she moved the crib from the side wall to the back. Suddenly, the floor space had doubled (great for when Nina starts crawling). She moved larger toys that the baby uses a lot—like her ExerSaucer, which Jose and I used to trip over constantly—from the center of the room to the wall. Carames cleared more floor space by ditching the laundry bag stand and instead buttoning the bag over one side of the changing table. Brilliant!

Then she turned to our antique cradle, a beautiful family heirloom that had become a catch-all for dolls, books and CDs—all things that Nina is still too young to use. Carames decided it would be a great place to show off our many knitted and crocheted blankets, which had been stuffed into one of the drawers. She folded them along the back of the cradle and then neatly arranged the books and stuffed animals in front. (Another idea I picked up from her: Mount towel rods on the back of the door to drape blankets over.)

Last but definitely key, I caved in and bought some pretty cloth bins—so much for my griping!—that fit perfectly under the crib. I designated one "Bath" for holding washcloths and towels, and the other "Bed" for storing extra receiving blankets, swaddlers and sheets. Jose and I are no feng shui experts, but we can't believe how much more pleasant and serene the room feels. (*Klara Carames, \$85–\$120 an hour; 917-364-1578, klarify.net.*)