



Brooke and Kevin with Finn, 1; Lola, 6; and Ella, 9

5 people

1,000
SQUARE FEET

no problem!

Small-space tricks help a family fit into a tiny Cape Cod, with style to spare.



Upgrading the railings from skinny metal to white wood-like vinyl gives the porch presence.

Moving your family cross-country is challenging enough. Brooke Christen also had to figure out how to squeeze everyone and everything into a 1950s cottage in Fairfield, CT, that barely topped 1,000 square feet—less than half the size of their South Jordan, UT, house. “Money doesn’t go as far in Connecticut as it does in Utah, and we wanted to be able to live in a walkable town close to the beach,” says Brooke. “It was hard to part with some pieces. Then it got exciting because I could get new things!” Happily, the house needed only a few choice updates, like wood flooring upstairs and a kitchen refresher. Brooke, who managed an interior design store in Utah, put her experience to good use, figuring out what to ditch (so long, sectional sofa that never felt comfortable anyway) and coming up with furniture arrangements and stylish accessories that are both functional and cozy, as befits a cottage. “Downsizing was totally worth it,” says Brooke. “Our home is little, but we love it—we wouldn’t trade it for a mansion!”



living room 150 SQ. FT.

A big selling point for the house: the charming built-ins, which offer storage for vases and knickknacks, along with a window seat. “I found out after we moved in that the panel beneath is a drawer!” says Brooke. It’s where the Christens keep their games. An oak sideboard by Hooker Furniture, imported from their Utah home and painted white (Pure White by Annie Sloan), almost fades into the background. At 7 feet wide, a blue tufted Chesterfield sofa by Sam Moore seats two adults and two kids. “We just move the ottoman out of the way when the girls have dance parties,” says Brooke.

SMALL-SPACE TRICK
Go for a tall—but not deep—sideboard for extra storage space. This one holds crafts and coloring supplies.

kitchen and breakfast nook 130 SQ. FT.

The former kitchen had dark wood cabinets and a beige vinyl floor, which made the space seem cave-like and dated. Brooke replaced the raised-panel doors on the cabinets with simple Shaker-style ones for a clean look. Extra-long brass pulls (they're 7 inches) by Amerock look sleek, while an apron-front farmhouse sink from IKEA offers lots of elbow room. For the floor, Brooke installed black-and-white cement tile by StonePeak Ceramics. "Since the kitchen is separated from the other rooms, I wanted to have fun in here," she says. "Even a small area can have impact."



SMALL-SPACE TRICK
Go white-on-white-on-white. Together, the cabinets, subway tile, range, and walls really brighten things up.



SMALL-SPACE TRICK
Pair a round table and chairs with a bench to squeeze in lots of people. Brooke has fit 10 kids here for birthday parties!

SMALL-SPACE TRICK

Add a pouf. It serves as a seat or a footrest, and it can be easily moved around.



nursery 110 SQ. FT.

The couple had their third child after they moved in. By then, says Brooke, "I was a bona fide small-space pro." With the crib tucked into a corner, there's room for a rocking chair from wayfair.com for bedtime reading, and a trundle daybed on the opposite wall; the girls sleep here when there's company, plus it'll eventually be Finn's big-boy bed. Layering contrasting rugs—a textured white wool one from wayfair.com and a darker patterned wool one from West Elm—works even in a tiny space. There's wallpaper on the ceiling here, too (by Aimée Wilder), with stars and spaceships on it.

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SMALL-SPACE TRICK

Have storage double as decor. Brooke hung a few favorite hats on the wall like they're art.

wall color
Gray by Benjamin Moore



bedroom 110 SQ. FT.

Making the ultimate parent sacrifice, Brooke and Kevin turned the original master bedroom—one of the home's largest spaces at 170 square feet—into a playroom/family room and settled into this small first-floor room instead. "I'd rather have more space to hang out and spend time together," says Brooke. She went all-in cozy, replacing the couple's old king-size upholstered bed with a queen-size model by Hooker Furniture, and painting the walls matte charcoal for a cocoon-like feel. That "wood plank" ceiling is wallpaper from Milton & King; it perks up the low ceiling, which is only 8 feet high.

house tours



SMALL-SPACE TRICK
Beds with pullout storage are perfect for stashing off-season clothes.

girls' bedroom 170 SQ. FT.

Ella and Lola share a room, which has come in handy in more ways than one, says Brooke: "At night you can hear creaky old-house noises. It's nice to have your sister around." Matching cottagey pickled-wood twin beds from Hooker Furniture look cohesive, which is key for a small room. They sit in front of a wall of removable patterned wallpaper from Chasing Paper. The faux deer-antler light fixture is by The Shabby Antler, and the string-art heart Brooke made is mounted inside an old mirror frame.

deck 120 SQ. FT.

When there's not a lot of room inside, outside hangout space really counts. "We use our back deck like it's a dining room," says Brooke. "We eat out here almost every night once it gets warm, all the way through fall." She and Kevin painted it gray (Cape Cod Gray by Behr), then added nautical stripes on the floor (Hale Navy and Mountain Peak White, both by Benjamin Moore). "The stripes make it appear larger and fancier—they look like a rug," says Brooke. Two compact cushioned benches from Raymour & Flanigan create a comfy sectional.

