

# ROOM TO GROW



Lori O'Driscoll and her husband have big families and big plans for gathering dozens of relatives many times throughout the year. The only thing they needed was a very big place to do it.

So the saws came out, some walls came down, and two smaller rooms in their Sharon, Mass., home became the kitchen of Lori's dreams. Fortunately they had help from Kitchen Views designer Amy Mood.

"I'm one of seven. My husband's one of four. We have big parties," Lori said recently, exuding a mix of deep satisfaction and barely restrained enthusiasm.

One key consideration in building the large, open kitchen and dining space was that the whole family could be at home in it, Lori said. "I wanted a place where we could all be together."

The focal point is a huge island with ample seating for children or adults who want to grab quick breakfasts or chat with the kids while meals are prepared. A visitor will see quickly that the island is anything but a glorified slab in the middle of the cooking area.

In addition to the usual storage space for pots and pans beneath the counter, an area designated especially for the kids was thoughtfully designed with a window seat, a microwave and refrigerated drawers at the island's end.

"Perfect," says O'Driscoll, "for grabbing a drink or making a smoothie."

"They have everything from a cutting board to a bread drawer to their own silver drawer," she says. "I think the island will always be my favorite part of the kitchen. It's where the kids gather."

If you're driving through Sharon on a weekend afternoon and the smell of freshly cooked corned beef is wafting from a house whose driveway is full of cars, chances are you've stumbled across the O'Driscoll's. Just don't expect to find a formal dining room if you're invited in.



Amy Mood,  
Kitchen Views designer, Mansfield.



The O'Driscolls selected Schrock cabinetry for their kitchen, using two different finishes – Heirloom Black for the island and Maple Whiskey Black for the rest. The center island features a custom-made cherry countertop.

## 5 tips for a

# kid-friendly kitchen

Kitchen Views designer Amy Mood says there are a few things that can make a kitchen child-friendly:

- 1** For little kids the height of the seating area is key. Don't leave them out of the action with tall stools they can't easily climb up.
- 2** Countertop corners should be rounded to prevent injuries during collisions. At particular ages, a sharp corner on a counter is right at eye level.
- 3** Built-in step stools can be concealed under cabinets, but they'll be put to such good use (as playsink or stove, drawing surface, etc.) that you'll rarely find them concealed.

**4** Safety latches are getting more attractive all the time, Mood says. The latest use magnets with special keys that need only be waved in front of hidden locks to release them.

**5** The new induction cooktops that heat only magnetic pots and pans but otherwise do not produce heat are probably the best solution to the age-old challenge of keeping children from attempting to imitate Julia Child without supervision. They've been popular in Europe for years but are only just catching on in the United States.

**While tailoring a kitchen to children can make sense at times, Mood says, there's something important to remember: Kids are going to get bigger really fast.**