

A HOME FOR YOUR FAMILY 5

How Does the Space In Your House Rate?

Families live, work, and play differently today than 10 years ago, and they have many more possessions. Not only is space expensive, but it also must be insured, heated, cooled, taxed, furnished, and cleaned. You need to take time to analyze carefully the space your family needs as you look at various houses to buy or rent. Use the following checklist as a guide to help you evaluate any house or house plan so that you can select one that includes those features important to you and your family. Included are many desirable features and standards. Score the house(s) based on the following point system: 3=Good; 2=Fair; 1=Poor. Add up your score to see if the house(s) meets your family's needs and wants.

INTERIOR

Traffic

_____ Family members are able to move freely through the house without getting in each other's way or interrupting each person's privacy.

_____ At least one entry is located to allow the greatest convenience when unloading supplies from the car (no more than 30 feet from the car).

_____ Hall space has been kept to a minimum.

_____ Halls are wide enough to allow ease in passage and moving furniture (3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet).

Space Relationships

_____ The size of social, work, and private areas is good for your family activities and needs.

_____ The public, private, and work areas are adequately separated for your family.

_____ Rooms with multiple use (e.g., master bedroom/sitting; living/dining; dining/study; or guest/study/sewing) are adaptable to your family's changing needs.

Should an extended illness of a family member occur, does the house meet these needs:

_____ At least one bedroom on the entry level.

_____ Doors, especially into one bedroom and bathroom, are at least 2 feet 8 inches.

_____ There is at least one walk-in shower.

_____ Windows in the bedroom are low enough to see out when lying down.

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Social Areas

- _____ House suits your family's activities and needs.
- _____ Space is adequate for the family to be together and for all the different activities in which your family participates.
- _____ Eating space is adequate for your family and usual guests.
- _____ There is space to accommodate an occasional larger group to eat.
- _____ Location of the eating space is convenient to the kitchen.
- _____ The outdoors is visible from the table.

Planned outdoor living area is:

- _____ Easily accessible from the kitchen.
- _____ Offers some degree of privacy and protection.
- _____ Has some protection from sun and wind.
- _____ Can be reached from the living area without going through the kitchen (to reduce traffic through the kitchen work area).

Private/Sleeping Areas

- _____ Rooms that are to be shared are large enough for each occupant to have a private area.
- _____ Bed (or beds) can be located in at least two places in each bedroom.
- _____ All bedrooms are large enough to accommodate at least a double-sized bed.
- _____ Space is adequate for other necessary pieces of furniture.
- _____ Each bedroom can be reached without going through another.
- _____ There is at least 4 linear feet of rod space in the closets for each individual.
- _____ Closets are located to provide sound buffers between bedrooms.
- _____ All bedrooms have reasonably private access to a bathroom.

Bathrooms

- _____ Each bathroom is large enough to accommodate the number of people who will use it.
- _____ Adequate storage is provided for towels and grooming aids.
- _____ Plumbing fixtures are located on inside wall to prevent freezing.
- _____ Lighting is acceptable for grooming.

Study

- _____ There is enough space for each person in family to have their own study area/table/desk.
- _____ Space is available for books, references, supplies, and private "treasures" to be stored in the study area.

3=Good; 2=Fair; 1=Poor.

Kitchen

- _____ Adequate space is allowed for the kinds of food preparation you and your family do.
- _____ Work area is out of the family traffic path.
- _____ Total distance formed by a triangle from the refrigerator to the sink to the range is 12 feet to 26 feet.
- _____ Space is adequate for the types of appliances used (microwave oven, food processor, etc.)
- _____ Storage cabinets and drawers are of various sizes and adjustable to adapt to changing uses.
- _____ There is counter surface on both sides of the range and sink and on the latch side of the refrigerator.
- _____ Dishwasher is at least 9 inches (15 inches preferred) from a corner to allow space to open the dishwasher door without hitting cabinet pulls.

Utility

- _____ Laundry equipment or area is convenient to the source of the soiled laundry.
- _____ Floor space in the utility area is adequate for the appliances and room for you to work.
- _____ Food freezer location is convenient to the kitchen.

Storage

- _____ Closets are near both public and service entries for coats and boots.
- _____ Storage space is located where it will be needed.
- _____ Storage space is at least 10 to 25 percent of the total floor area of the house.
- _____ Storage space is flexible enough to meet changing family needs.
- _____ There is suitable and adequate outside storage.

Adequate amount of storage is available for your family's:

- _____ Bed linens.
- _____ Cleaning equipment.
- _____ Out-of-season clothes.
- _____ Seasonal items.
- _____ Hobbies.

Doors and Windows

- _____ All doors are located to avoid diagonal traffic paths across rooms.
- _____ Outside doors are protected from rain and snow.
- _____ Doors are wide enough to allow furniture to be carried through.
- _____ Exterior doors are at least 36 inches wide to allow passage of a person using a wheelchair, walker, or assistance.
- _____ Doors open into rooms they serve.
- _____ Outside doors are solid and hinged rather than hollow core or sliding (to conserve energy and provide more safety).

- _____ Outside doors have sturdy locks and peepholes.
- _____ All windows can be opened for natural ventilation.
- _____ All windows have locks and/or other safety measures.
- _____ Larger windows are located on the south to take advantage of the sun and wind.
- _____ Windows are large enough and low enough to allow easy escape in case of fire.
- _____ All glassed areas are double glazed to save energy.

EXTERIOR

- _____ Front entry is easy to locate and reach from the street.
- _____ Public entrance allows access without overexposure of the family within.
- _____ There is a door to the utility area from outside (helpful when hanging clothes outside to dry).
- _____ House looks beautiful to your family.
- _____ Style of architecture is suitable for the lot and neighborhood.
- _____ Roof style allows for adequate attic ventilation.
- _____ Roof overhang is adequate (30 inches are recommended).
- _____ House is oriented on the lot to take advantage of the sun and wind.
- _____ Exterior siding materials coordinate with the style of the house.
- _____ No more than two types of siding materials have been used on the house (three or more exterior materials creates a busy, cluttered appearance).
- _____ Windows, doors, shutters, and trim are in scale to the overall design of the house.
- _____ Three or fewer colors are used on exterior.
- _____ Total Score

200 and Above = Excellent. Your score indicates that the size, space, and arrangement of this house would be above average for a suitable and comfortable home for your family.

150 to 199 = Good. Your score indicates that there may be some factors about the size, space, or arrangement of this house that require your careful consideration. However, it could be a good housing choice.

149 or Below = Poor. Better look elsewhere, even if the price is “right” for your pocketbook.

Adapted from Walls, Eleanor J. 1990. *Home Buyer's Guide: Rate The Space*. University of Arkansas. Little Rock, AR.

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