

## Fantasies take shape in the rooms of children

*Couple turn fun into a business*

**BY GRETA GUEST**

FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

Brad and Melanie Weber were your typical office workers two years ago.

He was in real estate and she was a graphic designer. Both 27 years old now, they weren't facing layoffs or buyouts.

Instead, they were looking at how designing baby's and children's rooms could go from fun to income-producing. So early last year, Mother nursery was born.

The Oak Park-based couple decorate children's rooms, offer child-proofing services, sell goods on their Web site at [www.mothernursery.com](http://www.mothernursery.com), plan events and create birth announcements. They also offer assistance with finding pediatricians and day care providers.

They just had their first child, Sadie, in August and create a fairy garden motif for her room.

They never create the same design twice. They offer bedding and furniture if clients request them. They use the client's lifestyle and home décor themes as a starting point.

"Every room we do is completely different," Melanie Weber said. "A lot of the clients give us complete freedom. That's when we think our work is the best. We review the plans with our clients and they let us go with it."

So far, they have done about 18 nurseries. Each one can take from two weeks to four months of lead time, depending on the level of customization. If clients want murals painted and custom bedding, the process can take four months, she said.



"When we create a room, we like to create a room the child can grow in," she said. "We try to stay away from the very nursery designs. We do more of a jungle look than cute animals because once they become a toddler you will want to change out their rooms."

The decorating service runs about \$95 an hour, or a 10-hour work package for \$800.00.

And for clients who do not want to know the gender of their children until they are born, the Webers will contact the doctor for the information and decorate the child's room while mom is in the hospital.

While they feel comfortable with the business now, it was scary at first to leave their jobs.

As Brad Weber put it, "There's always a sense of insecurity and a lack of income. We felt it was right and we had a good business plan with different angles for marketing and obtaining income, so we decided to take the chance."

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