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STOP FOOD STORAGE CONTAINER CHAOS p. 16

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the ultimate living space

A floor plan swap transforms a lackluster ranch into a family-centered home.

With a little ingenuity, any room can be updated to better suit family needs. This 1960s ranch home felt uninspired, with a closed-off kitchen at the home's rear and an outdated flow between the kitchen, the traditional living room, and the formal dining room. Flipping the floor plan and starting fresh opened up the space to possibilities. The result is a series of dedicated zones, nestled in a square.

Repositioning the kitchen near the front door enables family members to quickly bring in groceries or pack up their gear and head out. Custom upper and lower cabinets line three walls of the kitchen and create designated storage for cookware, small appliances, and dry ingredients. A bar-height counter along the fourth wall facilitates casual eating and homework sessions. A desk in the nearby built-ins is a handy station for paying bills or sending e-mail. A centrally located computer is convenient for everyone to use and allows parents to keep an eye on kids' online activities.

Built-ins extend into the casual dining area and provide banquette seating. Storage under the seats and behind the upholstered backs stashes seasonal decor and outdoor cushions for the deck just outside the nearby sliding door. Shiplap board walls, a vaulted ceiling, and exposed beams connect the dining and living areas. Three bookcases opposite a sectional sofa organize media, books, games, and toy bins.

A new wall just inside the front door creates a clutter-stopping entry with two narrow closets. One near the door collects coats and footwear, while a 9-inch-deep closet just outside the kitchen acts as the family's dump zone. Hooks and shelves keep bags and wallets off the counters, while charging stations corral electronic devices.

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THIS PHOTO: A new wall between the front door and kitchen organizes coats and boots, while creating space for the refrigerator. **OPPOSITE:** The drop zone manages everyday essentials such as keys and purses on hooks, powers up electronics at a charging station, and displays important reminders and notes on a magnetic whiteboard.



Custom built-ins, below, wrap the kitchen in drawers, pullouts, and open storage opportunities, rather than voluminous cabinet boxes. Shelves to the left of the sink lift the microwave off the counter and display bowls. A niche below tucks away a stand mixer. Tall cabinets to the right of the sink function as the pantry. Pullout shelves prevent items from getting lost in the back.

Open shelves, opposite top, put favorite snacks at the family's fingertips. Clear jars with rubber-gasket lids show off contents and extend freshness.

A divided pullout in a lower cabinet, opposite middle, separates baking pans by size and type, standing them up to allow for quick retrieval.



A pullout under the peninsula, bottom right, holds two bins for sorting recycling. Its location allows easy access without entering the work zone.





Extensive built-ins, above, run the room's length, combining bench seating, expansive display space, and a desk area. The hutchlike cabinet to the left of the workstation has a counter-height section with a printer and electronic components on pullout shelves; the drawers below are dedicated to the kids' backpacks and school supplies.



Toe-kick drawers, *opposite top*, make clever use of the inches between the floor and lower cabinets. These shallow spots are great for place mats, serving dishes, trays, and other items needed less frequently.

Drawers underneath the banquette, *opposite bottom*, stow stacked table linens, decorations, and china. A basket and woven bin stand in as drawer dividers, stabilizing stacked items.



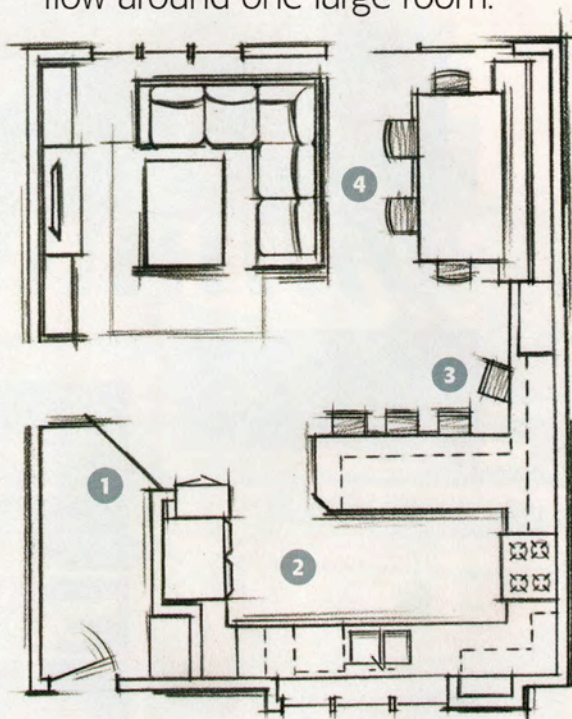
Stair-step bookcases, below, in the living area contain mementos and electronics, encouraging people in other zones to enjoy movies or music. A tray lets the ottoman double as a coffee table.

Labeled binders, right, decorate the TV wall and manage photos and media. Bins hold smaller books and kids' toys.



in the zone

Revamped spaces facilitate flow around one large room.



1 GREET Adding a short wall and closets between the front door and kitchen encourages family members to put away their gear before proceeding into the home.

2 PREP Abundant open storage, clever pullouts, and an appliance niche cater to a cook's needs.

3 WORK This peninsula hosts paperwork or school projects, keeping family members near the hubbub (and help) of others.

4 CONNECT Everyone can easily see each other, even when kicking back on the sectional or lingering on the deck beyond the dining table.