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AN ALFRESCO LIFE

+

A SPLENDID SIX-STORY BROWNSTONE IN THE
SOUTH END, A WESTON RESIDENCE WITH SPRING
FLAIR & A BEACON HILL PAD PRIMED FOR FUN



This formal living room, designed by Gates, is part of the Brookline home featured on the cover of her new book.



MOTHER KNOWS BEST

Local influencer Erin Gates offers gorgeous interiors, timeless tips and emotional reflections in her new family-themed design book.

By Marni Elyse Katz

Designer, blogger and now two-time author Erin Gates (eringatesdesign.com) has a hard-and-fast rule for parents with small kids about decorating their home—don't dumb it down. "A lot of books geared toward family living have a DIY approach," she says. "Most of our clients have families, but they still want beautiful homes with formal aspects."

Amid much anticipation from her loyal following, in April, Gates' second book, *Elements of Family Style: Elegant Spaces for Everyday Life* (\$35, Atria Books, simonandschusterpublishing.com/atria), hits shelves. As on her blog (elementsofstyleblog.com) and social media feeds, Gates shares not just her work but her life, from struggles with infertility to the pangs she feels as a working mother. She's also generous with decorating advice, offering graphic displays to help readers mix furniture styles and find the best shades of white paint.

Then there are the photos. So many family-friendly rooms, designed by Gates herself, as well as by local and national designers who have similar transitional approaches and complementary aesthetics. "I'm so

inspired and influenced by my peers," Gates tells us. "Instagram has made that a bigger part of every designer's life and work."

In addition to featuring kid- and familycentric spaces and must-have ancillary areas such as mudrooms and laundry rooms, Gates also stresses the importance of what the book labels "parent retreats." She feels that a well-designed master bedroom is particularly important and laments that for clients, it falls last on the list. "Having a nice master is the best thing I've done for myself mentally, and for me and Andrew [her husband] as a couple," she says.

Although she's more than happy to take on projects that cater to kids in over-the-top ways—she's currently working on a bedroom designed specifically for sleepovers—Gates puts forth the idea that proper living rooms and even formal dining rooms have a place in modern-day family homes. "I grew up with a nice living room that we were basically only allowed to walk through," she says. "Some things are just for mom and dad; I think there's a lesson there."