

# Brighten Up Underutilized Space In Your Home

*While Improving Energy Efficiency With Natural Light And Passive Ventilation*

Poorly lit attics and bonus rooms tend to be underutilized in many homes. But with additional natural light and fresh air from venting skylights or roof windows, gloomy spaces can easily become more inviting and productive.

“Whether as a playroom, home office, or extra bedroom, finishing or remodeling your bonus room with venting skylights, or with roof windows which open wider to provide egress, could be the highest value, yet lowest cost per square foot option you can choose,” says Steve Alfaro, trade business development manager for VELUX America.

Alfaro says that converting upstairs areas and adding more natural light with energy-efficient skylights makes expensive dormers unnecessary. “Labor and material costs can be reduced,” he says, “and finished attics and bonus rooms typically appraise at 100 percent of the value of other living space while basements typically do not.”

Denver-based Architect Doug Walter, AIA, observes that many property owners dismiss the idea of a conversion on the grounds that the space available seems too small. “In their search for suitable areas, particularly for children,” Walter says, “they should reconsider. Children don’t require large areas with soaring ceilings. On the contrary, the sloping ceilings of small attics and the little hideaways they make are particularly appealing to youngsters.” Walter says that a light, bright area is a must for a child’s room. “Skylights bring the sun into an attic space under the sloping roof without it losing its appealing tent-like shape,” he says, “and many a childish dream can come true under the sloping roof without the need for large amounts of space and without too great an outlay.”

Alfaro says that skylights admit 30 percent more light than vertical windows in dormers, and provide the drama of a sky view that can’t be achieved with vertical windows. “And ENERGY STAR® qualified skylights, whether fixed or venting, can be fitted with interior blinds and shades or exterior awnings, and are highly energy efficient in addition to offering much more privacy than vertical windows,” he says. There are also skylights available with electrochromic glass that can be tinted electronically by remote control to control light and heat gain while still providing a view to the sky, Alfaro points out.

For free information on the benefits of natural light and skylight selection, or for free house plans incorporating skylights, call 1-800-283-2831 or visit [veluxusa.com](http://veluxusa.com). For government information on window and skylight energy efficiency visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov), and for independent agency information visit [nrc.org](http://nrc.org) or [efficientwindows.org](http://efficientwindows.org).

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