



## CASE STUDY

# Fun for all the family

This contemporary family garden ticks all the wish-list boxes – and more. Stuart Craine created it for a family with young children, and cleverly divided the space into three different rooms, each subtly screened from the other.

Together, the giant glass doors and decked terrace help blur the boundary between inside and out – a key part of the brief requested by Stuart's South African clients. Here, the raised beds usefully double up as seats (or places to jump from) and a shimmering water wall is cleverly positioned (see image, opposite top) to draw the eye out from inside the house.

Eating outside as a family was important to the client, so the garden features a generous seating and barbecue area. This is sunken into the ground, revealing more vertical planes and in turn making the whole garden feel bigger. The chunky, oak-and-steel-braid pergola, dripping with fragrant chocolate vine (*Akebia*) and star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*), adds height

**Above:** 'The client wanted a stylish, visually exciting space, but one that would allow the children to play safely, unsupervised,' says Stuart Craine, the designer.

**Right:** This structure blends in and doesn't visually dominate the garden, unlike bright kit-form apparatus and play equipment.

and offers privacy from neighbouring gardens, but it's also there to offer shade from the hot sun – essential for the young children in the family.

Next door is the children's zone; this features a wooden climbing frame, swing and monkey bars built into a den-cum-playhouse-cum-storage shed, partially disguised with a green roof. Designated play areas

should have a soft surface; here, Stuart uses artificial turf that never gets muddy. Play bark or shredded rubber (avoid bright colours) would also work well.

Key to the planting brief was year-round interest, so lush but robust plantings of bamboo iris (*Iris confusa*), *Agapanthus 'Albus'*, loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*) and bamboo envelop each space.

**Right:** A clever layout means you can't see the whole design all at once, making the journey through the garden much more exciting.

### WHY THIS GARDEN WORKS

- Flexible multipurpose design, with interconnecting 'rooms' for different family activities
- Robust, child-friendly planting with year-round interest
- Stylish yet safe design details, such as a toughened glass balustrade surrounding the basement steps
- Functional play area made of visually sympathetic materials

