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POOL PLAY

With a swimming pool and spa in your backyard, summer family fun is well and truly taken care of. James Lascelles from Out from the Blue says the ideal size for a family pool is upwards of 3mx8m — big enough to accommodate a family of four and some friends as well.

When designing a pool with families in mind, there are some fundamental considerations. First is being able to see the pool from the house and also having ample space inside the fenced pool area. James says this allows adults to easily keep an eye on the kids while they splash about. “Within the fenced pool area, make sure there is one section that’s wide enough for pool furniture for adults to use,” he recommends.

On scorching summer days, pool pavers can become hot underfoot, potentially burning tiny toes. James suggests a textured limestone paver is a good choice. “Stone pavers have plenty of grip and kids will be running around, jumping, pushing, bombing, with bare wet feet, and limestone won’t heat up as much as some other stones,” he says.

Creating fun elements in the pool is also great

for families. These can include water features, which are evolving and becoming more of a design feature. “Often, it’s a simple elegant spout into a pool instead of a sheet of water,” says James. Another popular idea is widening the first step into the pool, although a fairly large pool is needed to do this. “You create a ledge that’s ankle-deep so you can put sun lounges on it. It’s also good for small kids to get them used to swimming,” he says.

Having plenty of pool toys on hand sets the scene for fun, but as we all know, they aren’t all that attractive to look at when not in use. The solution, says James, is to discreetly tuck them away. “We often design a small shed that’s screened off,” he says. “It looks beautiful from the front and behind it is room to store pool equipment and toys.”

Spas are another great inclusion. Make sure there’s ample seating to accommodate everyone. James says kids love jumping from one to the other, so having the pool and spa integrated works well. “If you have a curved ledge, kids can roll over it from the hot spa water into the cool pool water — they think that’s super fun,” laughs James.