

How To Create The Perfect Birthday Party

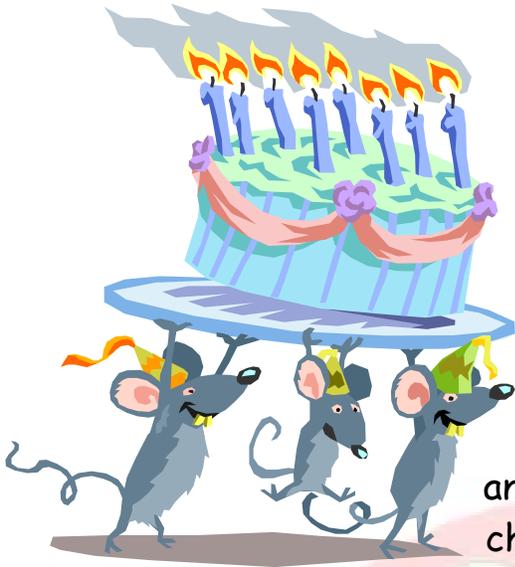
Tips, Hints and Suggestions
To Make the Special Day
Exciting, Fun & Unforgettable!!!

Compliments of:



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What to do, What to do?



First of all, sit down with the birthday child and discuss what type of party they would like. Theme parties are very popular and it gives you a good starting point if your child has a particular interest; like magic, sports, airplanes, Barbie and others. You can buy plates, napkins, games and cakes around a theme. This helps you in planning all the activities.

Where are you going to have the party? Will this be a home party or would you rather go out and let a restaurant or party place handle the day? Many pizza places offer party rooms and there are a lot of children's activity centers designed just for parties. Look in the Yellow Pages under "Parties" or "Entertainment".



If you think you would rather leave the clean-up for someone else, you should book this as far in advance as possible to avoid disappointment. The same goes for professional entertainment, book now and get who you really want!

Safety Tips...

Tie balloons on your mailbox so that it is easy for your guests to find the party. Have the birthday child select the colors.

Involve the entire family in the party! Assign duties for each. Perhaps one parent can be in charge of pictures. One of the siblings could hang up coats, another could introduce the magician. Have the kids make their nametags as they arrive.

Protect your pets! I suggest that they be placed in a safe area away from the party. Some children play rough, and animals may bite if threatened.

Protect your house! Put away those breakable nick nacks and important or sentimental items that can be broken. Replace the decoration towels in the bathroom and put out useable towels. Think kids, lots of them in your house.

Presents—Opening presents at the party is often a personal family tradition, but when asked, I suggest it be done after everyone has left. This allows you to record each gift and share it as a family. Also, this prevents lost or broken pieces. Designate a gift table so that guest know where to put them.



Rain or Shine

Outside parties can be fun. Pool parties are great. Weather can create some exciting possibilities. Use paper plate holders and table cloth clips to deal with the wind. Have extra towels on hand for those guests who drop or misplace their own.

Set boundaries with the kids so they know where it is safe to play. Keep at least one responsible adult at the pool and have pool rules clearly posted. Adult supervision for the outside games will ensure everyone has a good time.

Have an emergency plan for the weather. Will you reschedule or go inside if the weather doesn't cooperate?



You're left with a Lesson!

Party Plan

Arrival Time: _____ (Kids make name tags)

1st Activity _____ Time: _____

2nd Activity _____ Time: _____

Party Show

Cake and Treats (Presents opening optional)

Swim and/or games

Game: _____ Time: _____

Game: _____ Time: _____

Depart: (Give out goodie bags as kids leave) Time: _____

Have a kid tested mother approved video to put on to help wind down the kids while waiting for parents to pick them up.



Five Steps to a Great Party

Children's birthday parties can be as easy or as complicated as you're willing to make it. Just follow these six easy steps in planning of your child's birthday party. You can give your child a birthday party they will remember forever and have as much fun as the kids!

Birthday Party Step One:

Don't confuse the purpose

Remember that the birthday party is for the benefit of the birthday child and his or her friends. Make your primary goal to make the birthday child feel special. A secondary goal is to ensure that everyone has a good time at the birthday party. The children will remember whether they had fun, not whether your house was spotless or whether you carried out your chosen birthday party theme down to the last tiny detail. Don't stress everyone over the party. Stay focused on the purpose. A successful birthday party is one in which no one bursts into tears.

The first step in planning a birthday party is to sit down with your child and find out what type of birthday party he or she wants. Then determine if your budget, your creativity, and your energy can deliver that type of birthday party. If not, scale down. Don't worry that your preschooler is going to want clowns or ponies. For that first "friend" birthday party (i.e. not just the immediate family) go to the play place at a nearby fast food restaurant.



Birthday Party Step Two:

Get Some Extra Help Lined Up.

Don't go it alone at the birthday party. You can't be in two places at once. In birthday party terms, you can't play musical chairs, cut the cake, and direct traffic to the bathroom at the same time. Enlist one or more "big people" (adults or responsible older children) to help you at the birthday party. If your birthday kid is very young, chances are the parents of your guests will ask if they should stay for the duration of the birthday party. The answer is yes! They can help with games, pour the punch, and take care of minor mishaps. Just be sure to reward them for their service when you pass out the birthday cake. If you don't expect any parents to stay, and you can't talk your best friend into helping, hire one of your regular baby-sitters to help you. It is well worth the investment in terms of stress reduction. Remember rule number one.

Birthday Party Step Three:



Teach Good Social Skills

Birthday parties are a wonderful opportunity to reinforce the good manners you know are lurking somewhere deep within your child. Start from the moment you write the invitations. A very important rule might be: unless you are inviting the entire class, you may not pass out invitations at school. Never intentionally violate this rule. Accidents can happen, like not knowing there was a new child in the class. To avoid this ask the teacher for a class list to make sure everyone gets invited to the birthday party.

If you don't want that big a crowd, or if there are one or two children in class that your birthday child simply cannot abide, mail the party invitations or deliver them in person outside of the school setting.

Manners are especially important when it comes to opening presents. Teach your child not to make remarks like, "I've already got one of these! Take it back to the store and get me something else." Now before every birthday party, discuss how to handle situations like duplicate presents ("Look, now I have twins!") and gifts that aren't quite to the birthday child's taste ("What a neat idea! How did you know I didn't have one of these?").

The birthday child should thank everyone while opening the gifts. They should send thank you notes as well. Keep a list of each birthday present and the child who gave the gift (remember rule two). Then a day or so after the party help the birthday child to send a thank-you note. As soon as the kids can write their names, they can sign their thank-you notes themselves.

Birthday Party Step Four: Plan and Schedule the Party

Be sure there's plenty to do. There is no destructive force greater than a crowd of children with nothing to do. You need to keep them occupied from the moment the first guest arrives at the birthday party until the last guest leaves. Fortunately, this is not as hard as it sounds. Put out some toys that your kids are willing to share so the early arrivals can play while waiting for the others. The key to success is having something for everyone at the birthday party to do. That means lots of Legos or a great fun kid's video and popcorn.

When all the guests have arrived for the birthday party, start the birthday games. For kids at a party the best type of games are cooperative, rather than competitive. For instance, instead of playing musical chairs, we play a game in which we take away a chair each round, but all of the kids stay in. The goal is to see how many kids can pile on the chairs when the music stops. Instead of working against each other, the kids help each other.

If the kids are getting a little too wild, it's time for a very short story. Gather everyone in a circle and tell a story, using the party go-ers as characters. Think up the story ahead of time and write it down on index cards, then go around the circle inserting the kids' names when appropriate. Make sure you have a character for each child present

Another way to bring down the frenzy of children at a birthday party is to give them a simple craft project. The guests could string brightly colored beads to make take-home necklaces or make friendship bracelets or have children decorate party hats. These can be cut out of poster board. Another craft would be to have the children color custom placemats that are drawn and then run off on the copy machine as legal-sized copies. This was a great activity to do while they sat at the table waiting for the birthday cake.

Always plan a few more activities than you expect you'll have time for. That way, if one is a dud, you can switch to the next activity on the list of birthday games. Conversely, if one is a big hit, you can continue that birthday game and skip the next one.

Birthday Party Step Five:

Think Through Safety Issues!

You don't usually think of children's birthday parties as especially dangerous, but there are a few safety tips to remember that could make the day trouble-free.

Put a colorful sign or balloons on your mailbox so everyone can find you easily. If you plan to decorate with balloons, remember that balloons



are a major choking hazard for young kids. Keep the balloons out of reach or use Mylar balloons.

If you give out birthday favors, make sure they are age-appropriate for your guests. Many of the favors you find in party stores contain small parts that could choke a young child. These favors also tend to break very easily. A favorite favor for any party is a small jar of Play-Doh. You can get a bag of twelve for under five dollars at Walmart.

If you are holding a birthday party somewhere other than your house, ask each parent to tell you who will be picking their child up at the end of the birthday party. Do not release a child to anyone you don't know. Have someone keep track of this. During the birthday party, make sure you have an adult who can run kids to the bathroom if it's not close to where the main action is. Also, make sure you have enough adults to adequately supervise all the kids, and if necessary, assign each adult a kid or two to supervise.

Birthday Party Step Six:

Prepare For Your Performer

When you have your performer there have a place for the performance prepared. Mark off the "stage" with masking tape. Try not to have the performer with his back to the window. If you have pets put them in a back room or basement and lock the door. Keep a parking space available for your performer. He may have to leave before the other guests to get to his next show so make sure he is not blocked in. Have a bathroom break for the kids before the show. Have the adults sitting close to the kids to keep order and mind manners.

Follow these six steps and you are well on your way to having a party that your child will cherish forever.

Food...

One lesson that parents learn early is that kids eat what they like! Here are some ideas to make what they like even more fun for that special party:

Pizza!!!

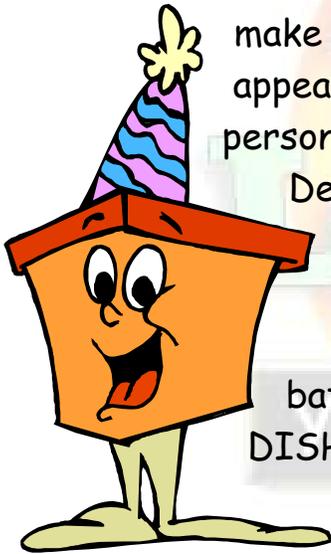
Children love pizza! The easiest way to serve it is to cut it up in bite-size squares. That way the smaller children can handle it and less gets wasted.



Hot Dog People!!!

This is an easy way to make a hot dog even more appealing. Just cut the wiener along the sides and shape into a person and when you cook it, the dogs will grow arms and legs!

Decorate with ketchup or mustard eyes & mouth.



Cupcake Cones!!!

Fill flat-bottomed ice cream cones 3/4 full with cake batter, bake, ice and decorate. Easy to serve, eat and NO DISHES! (The batter rises to fill the cone)

The Birthday Cake...

I suggest that you buy a small cake, just big enough for the family. Use this to light the candles and sing "Happy Birthday", then serve individual cupcakes to the guests.

By saving the real cake for the family dinner hour, the whole family can share the birthday cake, a much appreciated plus!

Games...

Games are an important part of any children's party! Here are a few ideas for your next bash:

Balloon Relay Race!!!

Before the party, inflate about three balloons per child. Divide the guests into two teams. Each kiddo runs to a pre-determined point, sits on a balloon, pops it, and runs back to tag the next runner.

The first team to pop one balloon per child wins the race!

BE SURE to have prizes for both the winners and second place team. The reason for the extra balloons is to allow a re-run if the kids enjoy it a lot!



Pin the Tail on the Dinosaur?

Why not update the old classic game and pin a tail on a dinosaur. Just draw the parts yourself—anyone can draw something close to a brontosaurus!

The Treasure Hunt!!!

Kids really love this game! Hide prizes all around a room or outside and tell the kids to find them. Give them goodie bags to put their loot in and that will save you time with filling them yourself! Make sure everyone gets their fair share by making some things very easy to find, especially for the smaller ones.

Naming of Candy

For this you need: About 6 different candies that have given names like M&M's, Crunch, Wrigley's, etc. 1 Die (or 2 dice if the crowd is very large) Everyone is seated on the floor in a circle. Packaged candy bars or candy are placed in the middle of the circle. Everyone starts by saying their own

names. The leader then makes sure that everyone knows what candy is in the middle. Someone begins by rolling the dice. If they roll a 6, they can take one of the candies in the middle. The die continues to go quickly around the circle while people keep picking up candy. When all of the candies are taken, people then can get other people's candy. In order to get their candy, they must state the person's first name and the name of the candy they hold. The person who rolls a 6 and matches the name of the candy and the person takes the other's candy. If they forget either name, they miss their turn and the dice goes to the next person and they continue to roll. (One person can get more than one candy and people can hide the candy behind their back). This is a great way of getting to know people's name and how to get your favorite candies!

Pass It On

Sit close together in two lines facing the same direction. The person in the front of each line rolls a die. When one of them gets a six, both of them pass a small object (a jack, a ball, a bracelet) to the person behind them who passes it on until it reaches the end. When it gets to the last person, that person must get up and race to the front of the line with the object and sit down. The person who sits down first, gets to sit in the front of the line. The person who was second to sit down, goes back to his or her spot. Whichever line rotates from back to front first, wins.

Winking Murder

All except the detective sit in a circle while the detective waits outside. One person from the circle is elected to be the murderer, and then the Detective is called back to stand in the circle. When he is ready, the Murderer winks at people in the circle. Anyone who sees that they have been winked at lets out a blood-curdling scream and dies. The Detective has three attempts to guess the murderer.

Pass The Box

This is really fun, Take a small gift or toy that all kids would enjoy, then gift wrap it, but keep wrapping it with different layers of gift-wrap. Play some

music while passing the present around, when the music stops, the guest left holding it unwraps the first layer of wrapping paper, then the music starts again and the box is passed, then every time the music stops, another layer is removed until someone finally unwraps the very last layer,,,,, and that is the winner. It is kind of like Hot Potato, but this is an item that everyone.

How Birthday Parties Started

The tradition of birthday parties started in Europe a long time ago. It was feared that evil spirits were particularly attracted to people on their birthdays. To protect them from harm, friends and family would come be with the birthday person and bring good thoughts and wishes. Giving gifts brought even more good cheer to ward off the evil spirits. This is how birthday parties began.

At first it was only kings who were recognized as important enough to have a birthday celebration (maybe this is how the tradition of birthday crowns began?). As time went by, children became included in birthday celebrations. The first children's birthday parties occurred in Germany and were called Kinderfeste.

Birthday Traditions in Different Countries

Africa - Initiation Ceremonies. In various African nations they hold initiation ceremonies for groups of children instead of birthdays. When children reach a certain designated age, they learn the laws, beliefs, customs, songs and dances of their tribes.

Canada - Greasing the nose with butter or margarine. In Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland) the birthday child is ambushed and their nose is greased for good luck. The greased nose makes the child too slippery for bad luck to catch them. This tradition is reputed to be of Scottish decent. Birthday punches. In Quebec the birthday person receives a punch for each year they are alive and then one for good luck.

Germany - Candles left burning for the day. A member of the birthday person's family wakes up at sunrise and lights the candles on the birthday cake. There are as many candles as the years of age of the birthday person plus one for good luck. The candles are left burning all day long. After dinner that night then everyone sings the birthday song and the birthday person blows out the candles. If all of the candles are blown out in one try then the wish of the birthday person will come true. Presents are then opened and the party starts.

Holland - Crown Years. Special year birthdays such as 5, 10, 15, 20, 21 are called "crown" years. The birthday child receives an especially large gift on a crown year birthday. The family also decorates the birthday child's chair at the dining room table with seasonal flowers or paper streamers, paper flowers and balloons. At school the birthday child can give their classmates something to eat and the teacher makes the child a birthday hat, often made of paper streamers or paper flowers.



Make A Birthdays Candle!

In Germany, some children burn a birthday candle on their birthdays. These candles have marks on them (usually 12) to represent each year of life and only the section from one number to the next is burned.

You can make a birthday candle of your own!

1. Get a large, plain candle.
2. Measure and mark the candle with evenly spaced lines using a permanent marker.
3. Number the lines starting with your present age at the top and ending with age 12 or whatever number you choose as a final year (maybe 18 or 21) at the bottom.
4. Decorate the candle with markers or stickers. Or mom or dad could melt some old candles or some canning waxes colored with old crayons and pour this in a thin layer on a baking sheet. When the wax has cooled, but not completely hardened, take small cookie cutters or some other tool and cut out shapes to decorate the candle.

Birthday Word Search!

Find the Birthday Words

Z	P	R	A	D	I	T	H	W	B
S	A	U	N	K	G	U	X	G	A
O	R	C	F	J	Z	R	J	F	L
R	T	R	C	A	K	E	R	R	L
N	Y	N	O	R	G	L	B	O	O
S	Q	G	A	M	E	S	A	G	O
T	A	F	R	U	Q	W	Z	I	N
U	S	X	N	M	W	D	T	F	Q
M	H	R	I	O	Q	S	A	T	M
C	A	N	D	L	E	S	K	O	Z

GIFT

CAKE

BALLOON

CANDLES

PARTY

GAMES

Hiring a Pro...

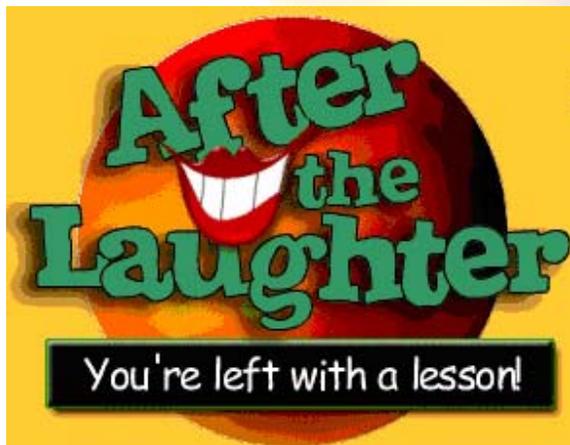
There are lots of wonderful children's entertainers out there and here are a few tips in finding the right one:

Look in Space Coast Moms, Parent Magazine, or the Yellow Pages under "Entertainers" or "Magicians".

Ask a lot of questions! Is the show age appropriate? How Long does it last? What do you offer? Ask for specifics, if they can't tell you about their act, they may just "wing it" each time they have a show. This is not the mark of a true professional.

Ask for references and call them!!! Any performer that actually performs should be able to supply you with numbers of past clients.

This is very important!



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Comedy Magic Shows

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