



How to Plan a Kid's

Magic Birthday Party!

**Everything you need to know
to plan a successful magic birthday party!**

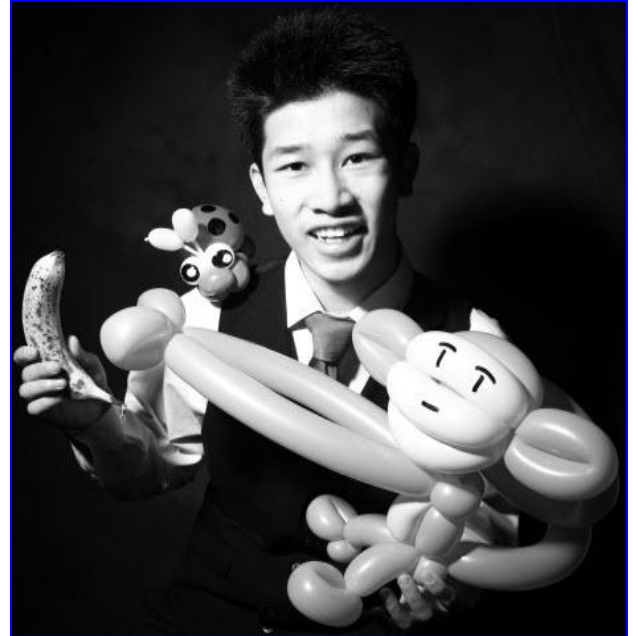
About the Author

Perry Yan aka "Perry the Magician" is a full time professional child/family entertainer based out of the San Francisco Bay Area. Since busting into the magic scene in 2006, Perry has quickly built a name for himself as being one of the top family entertainers in the Bay Area. When companies like Google, Firefox, McDonalds, SF Giants, Oracle, Jawbone needed a trusted children's entertainer to WOW their family events. They choose none other than Perry the Magician to do the honor!

When not performing for private events, Perry is frequently invited to perform for hundreds of kids in the schools & libraries around the Bay Area.

Aside from magic, Perry is also a highly skilled Balloon Artist! His balloon art goes ways beyond the standard dogs, and swords. Perry takes multiple balloons and creates masterpieces that will leave both kids and adults amazed.

In 2011 the Rain Forest Cafe (in SF) choose Perry to be their official entertainer after a city wide search of the most talented balloon artists. Perry can now be seen every Wednesday night at the Rain Forest Cafe where he is creating smiles and memories for the restaurant patrons.



www.PyMagic.com

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Planning a Magic Birthday Party!

Magic is one of the most exciting themes for birthday parties, especially if your child has an interest in magic. Kids love magic! It's amazing to see the look on a kid's face when they see something vanish for the first time! Words can't describe what it's like for a kid to have a quarter pulled from behind their ear!

Having a magic birthday party is a great choice because it's an easy theme. You don't have to figure out what items go well with the theme. Stars, wands, top hats, rabbits, and anything that sparkles all fit with a magic theme!

Reviewing the information in this book will help make sure you've covered all your areas and will help make sure your child's special day goes off without a hitch!

Date and Time



Date:

Start planning your party early! A good party takes a while to plan, especially if you don't want to be frantic in the days before the party.

If possible, begin planning your party 4-6 weeks in advance. This allows plenty of time for booking an entertainer, online shopping, cake orders, sending out invitations, and RSVPs.

The party doesn't have to be planned on your child's actual birthday, most kids don't mind celebrating a few days early or late. You might want to wait until the weekend, for example, to allow more kids to come.

TIP: Be sure to include the birthday child in the party-planning process! From helping to create the guest list, writing the invitations, planning the food, and choosing the games, allowing the birthday child to help plan makes it more special and personal.

Most people will want to have their birthday party on a weekend afternoon. Saturdays are the most popular day, but Sunday parties are also common. A Saturday party gives you Sunday to relax and recover. A Sunday party gives you Saturday to prepare! If you chose to have you party on a Sunday, you're less likely to have conflicts with sports and other activities. However, many people reserve Sundays for church and family, so

choosing a Saturday might allow the most people to come. If you're going to plan your party for a Saturday afternoon, plan it as far in advance as you can.

In general, avoid planning the party on a weekday. Friday afternoons can work, but Monday-Thursday is often not possible due to school and after-school activities. Of course, in the summer, any day of the week can work great for a birthday party.

TIP: Remember to check all of your calendars (school, church, sports, etc.) to make sure you're not scheduling the party on a day when most people will be somewhere else.

Choosing a Date Checklist:

- Pick a few dates that work well for you
- Check your calendars (school, church, work, sports, etc.) to make sure you're not scheduling on a day when most people will be somewhere else
- If there are important guests coming (extended family, close friends, etc.) make sure the date works for their schedules.

TIP: If you're scheduling an entertainer, call them and check their availability as soon as possible. The best entertainers often fill their schedules (especially weekends) several weeks or even months in advance!

Time:

Afternoon birthday parties are the most common, followed by late morning and early evening. Start your party no earlier than 10:00am and no later than 6:00pm, unless of course, it's a sleepover!

When choosing a time, consider routines such as naps. Younger kids seem to be happier in the morning/early day, so plan accordingly.

You'll also want to consider meal times. If planning your event around a common meal time, you might want to include food or at least snacks. For example, if your party is between 11am – 1pm, or 4pm-6pm, you'll probably need to provide a meal. Otherwise, you can just provide a snack. See the Food & Drink section in this book for more information.

Location



Choose a location that will accommodate the number of people you plan on inviting, as well as the types of games and activities you plan on doing.

Outdoors vs. Indoors

If you plan an outdoor party, make sure you know what the weather is going to be doing! Unless you live in an area where the weather is predictable (or your weatherman actually tells the truth!), you'll want to make sure to have a backup location planned. Remember, even a small breeze outdoors can wreak havoc on balloons, table cloths, and games.

Consider the following locations and choose the one that best suits your needs.

Home

Advantages of a home party include plenty of set-up time, having all your party supplies on hand, and being in an environment the birthday child is comfortable with. If you're having the party in your home, confine the party to two or three rooms. Consider moving valuables to another part of the house. It works well to have activities in one room, entertainment in another, and food in another.

TIP: If you decide to have the party at your home, make sure you consider protecting your valuables. Move valuables from rooms where kids will be playing, and decide beforehand where food and drinks will be allowed.

Park/Outdoor Area

Parks can be a great party location because they're usually free (or cheap), there is plenty of room for kids to play (playgrounds and fields), and they're usually conveniently located.

If you choose to have your party at a park, remember that you have to bring everything to the park, including a lighter for the birthday candles. Plus, you'll need additional adults to help make sure kids don't get lost or run off.

Make sure to call ahead to reserve the park, if needed, with your local Parks and Recreation department. Have them send you a list of rules they have for that particular park area. Rules can differ and may include regulations on things such as emptying garbage, playing music, etc. If your park doesn't allow reservations, make sure you get someone to go early and reserve the spot you want, or you might risk losing it!

Community Recreation Centers

Most community rec centers offer activities, as well as rooms you can reserve for birthday celebrations. Make sure to ask the center about any special rules they have about things like third-party entertainment, food, etc. Call in advance to reserve a room.

Restaurants and Family Fun Centers

Restaurants are an option, especially those that have a play/arcade area. They are usually set up to run several birthdays every weekend and have streamlined the birthday process. Family fun centers offer several activities under one roof and are used to accommodating birthday party groups. I recommend choosing a smaller center where your party won't be going on at the same time as several others. Things tend to get hectic with kids from several parties running everywhere at the same time!

Especially in larger centers, be aware that a lot of little hands are touching all those games and germs are easily spread.

If possible, reserve a private room or a back room that can be sealed off or has doors. Otherwise, it may be difficult to have entertainment and/or games and activities. The added privacy will also allow you to enjoy a more intimate birthday setting.

TIP: Wherever you choose to hold your party, make sure to use balloons or signs to mark the party spot, making it easy for your guests to find!

Lastly, keep in mind potential safety issues. While the children are at your party, you're responsible for them! Be especially careful with stairs, pools, chemicals, glass, and public places.



Invitations

Invitations should be sent as far in advance as possible. I've heard horror stories of parents who sent invitations out with just a few days notice, and didn't request RSVPs then had very few kids show up for the party. I heard of one family putting the cake in the freezer, telling the few kids who did come to play for an hour, and re-scheduling the party for three weeks later! Not only is this embarrassing to the birthday child, but it means you're actually planning and preparing for two parties! Save yourself the embarrassment and extra effort by sending invitations out well in advance. Most of the other preparations can even be done as late as the day before if necessary.

Who to invite

Of course, you'll want to start by considering any family. Ask the birthday child if there are people they'd especially like to have at their party. Make sure you think of everyone. You don't want there to be hurt feelings because you forgot to invite someone!

How many kids to invite

While there is no "magical" number of kids to invite to a party, you'll want to make sure it's enough to make the party feel like a party, but not too many that you can't manage them.

One suggestion is to invite one child per year of age. A five-year-old, for example, would get to invite five friends. Of course this rule probably won't apply to the first few birthday parties!

It can be a good idea to invite more children than you'd like to attend, because several won't be able to make it. Between kids being out of town, soccer games, piano recitals, and being sick, you're likely to get a few less kids than you invite. Plus, you don't want to invite six kids and have two or three not show up! Now it's a play date instead of a party!

Most birthday parties have between ten and twenty kids, but there are no hard and fast rules. Make sure you can comfortably accommodate the number of kids you're planning on.

These days, inviting a child's entire school class isn't uncommon. In fact, some schools require that you can only hand out invitations at school if you're inviting the entire class. With 25-30 students per class, assuming some can't make it, you're looking at 15-20. However, make sure you are prepared just in case everyone can make it!

You don't want to invite too many kids. Managing groups larger than 20 or 25 can be a challenge, and the birthday child won't be able to interact with everyone.

Gender

Young children's parties are often a mix of half girls, half boys. As kids get older, they tend to invite more of one gender. That's fine, but make sure that if you're having boys and girls at the party, there are several of each gender. It can be awkward to be the only boy or only girl at a party.

You will want to consider if siblings are invited. Many parents assume it's okay to bring additional children to the party. However, this can be a problem because activities that might work well for five year olds, for example, won't work so well for eight year olds. If you don't want additional children at the party, you might want to subtly suggest it on the invitation or when you accept the RSVPs. It's not easy to control how many people show up to your party, but you can plan ahead by having plenty of food, party favors, etc.

Generally parents of children 3-4 years old will plan on staying at the party. This is a good thing because you'll have extra help. Parents of older kids might decide to stay, others will leave. Most kids ages 7-8 will just have their parents drop them off.

Invitation Checklist

Make sure your invitations contain all of the below information:

- Your child's name
- The date and time of the party (consider putting the day as well, ie Saturday, March 5th, 20XX)
- Location and address

- Directions or a map (if necessary)
- Party theme
- Any special instructions (activities that might require special clothing, such as swimsuits)
- Your phone number
- RSVP date

You might also put whether or not parents are invited, and whether or not siblings are invited.

RSVPs

When someone calls to RSVP, make sure to get a phone number in case you need to call them with last minute location changes (due to weather), problems with their child, etc.

Also make sure to ask about any allergies. A kid having an allergic reaction at your party would be terrible!

Length & Schedule



Length

Most birthday parties last 1 ½ – 3 hours. I recommend having at least two hours. For younger kids, 1 ½ - 2 hours will be plenty. When planning the length of your party, remember that not everyone will arrive on time. Don't plan essential activities during the first 15 minutes. If you start the birthday party immediately, some kids will invariably miss out. Also, it's often during these times when the kids interact most. Keep in mind that it takes time just to move groups of kids from one activity to another. Plan that some parents may arrive a few minutes before the scheduled end of the party, so try to have the most important party events finished by then.

Sample Schedule

(The invitation reads "Tommy's Birthday Party – 3:00-5:00pm Saturday")

2:45 – The first child arrives

3:00 – The party officially starts (free play, craft project, or other activity)

3:15 – The final guest arrives, entertainer/organized activities start

4:15 – Cake and/or presents

4:45 – Free play, parents start arriving to pick kids up

5:00 – The party officially ends

5:15 – The last child is picked up

5:16 – The chaos has ended, sit back and relax! (or start cleaning up!)

TIP: Have one or two backup activities planned just in case. A game or activity might go quicker than you thought and you don't want to be left with nothing to do!

Activities you may want to have on the schedule include a craft project while guests are arriving, games, entertainment, eating, and opening presents.

Opening presents

There are varying opinions on whether or not to open presents at parties these days. Some people are concerned that it might seem too materialistic or that other children's feelings might get hurt if certain gifts are appreciated more than others. Others say that people want to see their presents opened, and it's a natural closing activity for a birthday party. Choose what you think is best, people do it both ways!

Bottom Line: Have an itinerary or schedule for the party. There is no greater destructive force than a crowd of excited young kids with nothing to do! Keep the party moving, but also be flexible. If the kids don't seem to be enjoying an activity, move on.

Decorations



When it comes to decorating, all you need are a few items that represent the theme. The rest of the items can match in colors. Magic is an easy theme; top hats, wands, rabbits, playing cards, and stars all are traditional magic symbols. You might also consider decorations that feature a famous magician, the entertainer who's coming, etc..

Call or visit your local party supply store to see if they have magic-related decorations. Remember, you don't need to go overboard. A few strategically placed decorations are often better than covering every square foot in color. Check with online stores such as www.OrientalTrading.com and www.PartySuppliesWorld.com. They often have larger selections and cheaper prices, but keep in mind you'll need to pay shipping and it will take a little longer to receive your items.

Balloons and streamers are classic party decorations. You also might consider posters, cutouts, wall decorations, confetti, center pieces, and more. It's fun for the birthday child to see their house changed for their big day! If your child has any toys or small items that complement the party theme, it might be fun to add them to the table for a more personalized display.

It's your choice whether to set the table completely before the party. Some parents choose to lay out only the napkins, forks and spoons, saving the plates and cups until the food is served. Others enjoy the overall visual effect of the party-ware on the table when guests arrive.

Another way to add to the magic theme, is to dress up yourself, your child, and maybe even the party kids. You can get black fabric and make capes, and buy cheap plastic top hats and magic wands for all the kids. Having the kids dressed up really adds to the fun. You can even have the kids decorate the hats and wands as one of the activities.

Games and Activities



You'll probably need to plan at least one game or activity for the party, even if you have an entertainer coming. Activities can range from simple games to pony rides and bounce houses. Don't overload the kids with activities, they'll want some time to play with each other!

You might start with a game that lets the entire group interact. You can rename classic games to match the magic party theme. For example, you can play pin the rabbit on the magician's hat, musical chairs with magical music, have a scavenger hunt for magic items, or play "Magician Says" for a variation of "Simon Says". You might also include some non-competitive games such as a treasure hunt where all the kids work together and games where everyone is a winner. This is particularly important with younger kids. It's not worth having a kid start crying because he/she didn't win the game. If you want, you can have small prizes for those who win games.

With a magic-themed party, there are a lot of possibilities for activities. For example, you could have a potion-making activity, play M-A-G-I-C (bingo) or have the kids put on their own magic shows using tricks they learn in books. You can have the kids decorate their own magic top hats with

stickers and glitter glue, as well as their own magic wands! Everyone goes home with a craft project they completed, plus everyone is dressed for the theme!

Keep the games short. You don't want the kids to get bored with the game. Make sure to have plenty of options so that if a game ends sooner than you thought, you have something else prepared. Also, keep the games simple. Little kids sometimes struggle with learning all the rules, so choose games and activities that are easy to learn.

Additional Help

Don't do it alone! You can't be cutting the cake, watching kids, and leading musical chairs at the same time! Enlist a spouse, other parent, older, responsible teenager, babysitter or even a professional (entertainer, party planner, etc.) to help with the party. You will enjoy the party much more, and so will your child, if you can relax at least some of the time!

Enlisting others to help can also help with the budget! Have an uncle that's good with photography? He can be the official party photographer! Have a neighbor who bakes cakes? He/she might provide the cakes or dessert for a reduced fee.

Older brothers and sisters are a natural source of help. Older siblings or cousins often enjoy managing groups of smaller children for short activities, and can help keep the kids organized and even take care of young ones.

Don't be afraid to ask for help from parents who stay for the party. Parents know how hard it is to have that many kids around, and are usually more than willing to help. Plus, they'll often know some of the kids and can help manage the group.

Entertainment



In addition to games and activities, a live entertainer is a wonderful solution to entertaining kids and taking away some of the stress of managing all those kids! Once again, there is no greater destructive force than a crowd of excited young children with nothing to do! Hiring a good, live entertainer is well worth the added expense. Kids love it, and it will free you up to prepare food or arrange the next activity.

There's a wide range and variety of entertainers, and an even wider range of prices and quality! The best way to find a good entertainer is to ask around. Talk to friends, ask other parents, your child's preschool or daycare, local libraries, and even check online blogs. If your child comes home raving about how funny and entertaining the performer was, call the parent or center and ask them for the contact information of the performer. Ask your child if they want that entertainer to come to their party. Kids love repetition and familiarity (that's how they can watch those silly cartoons over and over again!), so chances are they'll love seeing the entertainer again, but at their party this time!

Booking your entertainer should be one of the first things you do. The best entertainers are always booked far in advance and you want to make sure you get the date/time you want. If possible, contact your chosen entertainer with a few possible dates.

If you don't have luck through referrals, you can search online. Visit www.KidsBirthdayMagicians.com to see birthday magicians in your area, or do a simple internet search with your city's name and the word "magician". (For example, "Portland magician" or "Houston magician.") In most cities, you should be able to find a few different options. Visit their website, and make notes of your top choices. After a few phone calls, you should have it narrowed down.

TIP: Chances are that you'll be investing money and trust in whichever entertainer you choose, so make sure to do some research. Great entertainers can be worth their weight in gold!

Always remember you're looking to book someone who will entertain your child and their friends. Make sure you find a magician who specializes in entertaining children. A children's entertainer may not do the most complicated tricks, but will be funnier and more entertaining for the kids.

When contacting perspective entertainers, provide them with enough information to give you an accurate price quote. A good entertainer will want to know what the occasion is, what the setting of the show is, how old the birthday child is turning, about how many kids will be attending, etc.

Questions to ask potential entertainers:

What packages do they offer?

Are there different options, upgrades, add-ons or show lengths?

What do they do for the birthday child?

Remember, the party is for the benefit of the child. It doesn't matter if they won the "Sleight of Hand Magician of the Year" award, how is that going to help your child have an unforgettable party?

How long does their show last?

You'll want to know how long their show lasts to be able to plan around it. (Most go about forty-five minutes to an hour.)

Do they have a website with photos, videos, and testimonials?

Make sure this person is a professional! They should be able to show you they've performed in a variety of situations, and video and photo can show that! You'll also want to read any references and do some online research before you book them. Booking a professional vs. a "hobbyist" will make a huge difference in the quality of your whole experience with the entertainer.

Are there any extra charges?

Are there any travel charges? What about additional fees for extra kids? Make sure you know exactly how much your final bill will be, or what to expect when it comes.

What time will they show up?

Most entertainers will arrive 10-20 minutes before the start of the show time. This gives them time to set-up their props and prepare for the show. It's usually best if you can plan for the kids to be in a different room

during this time. This allows the entertainer to set up quicker and makes the experience more exciting for the kids when they enter the room and the show starts.

Most professional entertainers charge a deposit to reserve a date and time. This can also give you peace of mind knowing they're committed to showing up!

TIP: If you feel the entertainer did a good job, don't hesitate to include a tip! A gratuity is a great way to let the entertainer know you thought they did a good job or exceeded your expectations.

Food & Drink



Don't plan too much time for food, kids these days inhale food as fast as it comes! Plan 20-30 minutes max for the kids to have cake and/or pizza.

Times are changing from the days where Pizza, Kool-aid and Cheetos were a great meal to have at a party! Nowadays most people are eating healthier. Some parents even have their children bring their own low-sugar or organic options.

Be sure to offer healthy snacks (listed below), but don't force kids to "eat their veggies" either. The best thing to do is offer a wide variety of foods so guests are sure to find something they like, as well as something their parents will approve of.

If you're holding your party around meal times, plan on serving a small meal. Keep the food simple. Easy foods to serve include things like pizza, pigs in a blanket, chicken nuggets, corndogs, sub-sandwiches, and other finger foods. Healthier options can include string cheese, vegetables and dip, fruit slices, dried fruit, trail mix, etc.

Drinks

As with food, consider offering a variety of drinks, not just soda. Offer water, a low-sugar natural juice, and maybe fruit punch or soda for those who want it.

Don't pour the drinks before the kids get to the table, pour the drinks after the kids are seated as this will cut down the possibility of spills. Also, only fill the cup $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ full, as this makes it easier for the kids to drink from the cup without spilling.

You might also consider pre-packaged juice cartons. Spills are less likely, and each child can choose their own and take it to their seat.

The Table

For aesthetics you might want to have everything laid out on the table before the guests arrive. Spread your table cover on the party table, but be sure to put a protective covering on first if you're concerned your table could become damaged by spilled beverages.

It's a good idea to create place cards so each child knows where to sit. This helps prevent hurt feelings when they discover that not everyone can sit next to the birthday child. Plus, your child isn't put on the spot of deciding who gets to sit next to him or her, because it's decided before guests arrive. Party favors marked with the names of guests are a great substitute if you don't have time to make place cards.

Cakes & Desserts!



You've got several options when it comes to desserts! Cake and ice cream is still the most popular, but consider the following options:

Cake and Ice Cream

You will have a lot of options here. You can have a cake decorated, shaped to go with the theme, or a traditional cake with the colors of the theme. You can have an ice cream cake, or cake with ice cream! Use your imagination! I've seen some amazing cakes, and I've seen some simple cakes. You can make or order almost anything! You can even have a cake with a photo put onto it. Be fun and creative.

Here are a few magic-themed cake ideas to get you started!



CUPCAKES

Cupcakes are becoming more and more popular. Kids love them and everyone gets the same size so no one is upset that someone else got a bigger slice or a decoration, etc. Cupcakes can be arranged in a shape to match the party theme or the child's age, and then passed out after the birthday child blows out the candles. Not only does this save time, but it also makes clean up easier.

Cupcakes can be served on a tiered platter (to look more like a cake), or on a flat sheet. Serving cupcakes also gives you the option to serve two different types of cake like rainbow chip and chocolate, for example.

CHOCOLATE FOUNTAINS

Chocolate fountains are fun, unique, and growing in popularity. Kids enjoy them so much, they're almost an activity in themselves! Chocolate fountains can be rented from most party supply stores and are easy to set up and run. Some even resemble tiered cakes! You can offer a variety of things to dip in the chocolate, including strawberries, marshmallows, bananas, pineapple, pretzels, donuts holes, and more!

ICE CREAM CAKES

Another popular cake is the ice cream cake. They are easy to serve (just take them out of the freezer), store well, and eliminate the need to serve ice cream separately! Plus, they usually come in a variety of popular flavors/candy bars. Check with local ice cream stores (Ben & Jerry's,

Baskin Robbins, etc.), bakeries, or even your local grocery store to order one.

ICE CREAM SUNDAES/PARFAITS

Sundaes can get a little messy with younger kids, but they love building them! It gives them a chance to be creative and use foods they like! You can use ice cream, or a healthier alternative like frozen yogurt. Using small parfait bowls, you can let each child build their own using the provided ingredients. Offer things like pudding, fresh fruit, crumbled cookies, candies, sprinkles, cherries, granola, and whipped cream. Have the ingredients prepared beforehand and let kids go through “buffet-style.”

COOKIES

Have the kids decorate their own sugar cookies, already cut and baked into shapes that go with the party theme! This is a fun activity for the kids! You can offer sprinkles, frosting, and decorations and allow each child to make their own.

Several bakeries also offer jumbo-sized cookies. These are generally cheaper than cakes, and can still be frosted with a personalized message or to match the party theme.

Cookie cakes are especially good when they’re warmed up and served with ice cream on top!

Magic-Themed Desserts

Any dessert can be made magical by using a few embellishments. Things like edible glitter, star-shaped decorations, and shiny dragees (silver balls) can add an extra flair to otherwise non-magical desserts. Use your imagination! Here are a few simple ideas to get the ball rolling!

Magic Popcorn Balls - Sprinkle edible glitter on popcorn balls. Try making several different colors.

Chocolate-Dipped Pretzel Wands – Dip pretzel sticks in dark chocolate, allow to dry, then dip the ends in white chocolate to make it look like a magic wand. Finish with edible glitter!

Magic Hat & Bunny Sugar Cookies – Make sugar cookies in the shape of magic hats and bunny rabbits. Allow each child to decorate their own using sprinkles and other candies.

Miscellaneous Candy - Label bowls of candy differently for different spells and tricks! For example, a bowl of Skittles might be “Magic Love Potion Pills!” Be creative and use your imagination!

Birthday Party Etiquette



Here are some common concerns parents have before a child's birthday party, and some ideas for how to deal with them:

Q: Do I have to invite everyone from my child's school class to his/her birthday party?

A: No. Just make sure your child doesn't talk about the party a lot at school, and don't let your child hand deliver the invitations if this is something you're concerned about. If your child will be inviting class members to the party, check with the classroom teacher for their policy.

Q: Should I call the people who don't RSVP to find out if they're coming?

A: Yes. You want to know as exact as possible how many people are coming. Many people simply forget to RSVP, even though the party is on their calendar.

Q: How do I make sure my child is polite to his/her guests?

A: Birthday parties are great opportunities to reinforce those good manners you know are lurking somewhere deep within your child! Make

sure your child greets each guest at the door, and thanks them for coming. If they brought gifts, make sure they are thanked for bringing the gift as well. You can also have the birthday child be in charge of handing out goodie bags to each child as they leave.

Q: Are competitive games a bad idea?

A: Not necessarily, but try to make sure that everyone goes home with a prize!

Q: What do I do if someone brings a sibling or a parent stays unexpectedly?

A: Do your best to plan, but always have a few extra goodie bags and prizes on hand, just in case a few extra people show up. Parents who stay probably won't mind helping.

Q: One child is being rude and ruining the games and party. What should I do?

A: Try to distract the child with a job to make him/her feel special with extra attention. If there is another adult present, have the adult supervise this particular child. If all else fails, warn the child you're going to have to call their parents to pick them up if they don't settle down.

Q: What if the birthday child doesn't like one of the gifts?

A: You can avoid this scenario altogether by not opening gifts at the party. Many parents prefer to open the gifts later with the family anyway. If you do decide to have your child open the gifts at the party, you can talk

with your child beforehand, making sure he or she is prepared to thank each person for their gift and pretend to be excited, no matter what!

Q: Should we send “Thank You” notes?

A: While not required, they are recommended, and are always a nice gesture. It teaches responsibility, politeness and respect for others.

Goodie Bags



Times have changed. There used to be a day when the birthday child was the only one to get gifts. These days, goodie bags (or at least some type of take-home gift) for each child are considered a must. This can sometimes be the most difficult part of putting a party together. The bags may carry the party theme, however, they don't have to.

Goodie bags are something the children take home to remind them how much fun they had at your party. You don't need to overdo it; a few small, inexpensive items are all you need. You might include a mixture of candy, novelties, magic tricks, games, etc. Plan on spending \$3-\$5 per goodie bag, but remember the party is for the birthday child, not the guests, so you don't need to make these too complicated.

If you've hired an entertainer, ask them if they offer goodie bags or party favors. They often buy party supplies at wholesale and can (and often do) offer them as add-ons to your show. Having the performer bring the party favors also saves you the hassle of going out and looking for everything yourself, which is well worth the cost! In addition, most entertainers provide some type of customized giveaway at their shows, so be sure and ask about that.

Final Thoughts



Remember, the party is for the benefit of the birthday child and his/her friends. Your primary goal should be to make the birthday child feel special! Your second goal is to make sure that the other guests enjoy the party. The kids will remember whether or not they had fun, not whether your house was spotless!

Don't forget to give the birthday child responsibilities. They'll appreciate the party more if they've put effort into it. Remember though, it's their special day, so they probably shouldn't be relegated to dish duty and vacuuming after their friends leave!

Finally, don't forget to enjoy the party yourself. Each birthday only comes once, so take the time to enjoy the celebration of your child turning a year older. Take some time during the party to simply look around and remember how much fun your child is having, and don't forget to take pictures!



Checklist

Remember, the earlier you start preparing, the more time you'll have to plan the party! Planning early can save you money (eg., allowing you to order decorations online) and give you peace of mind! Plan to have almost everything done the day before the party.

Four Weeks Before the party	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose the date & time <input type="checkbox"/> Choose the theme <input type="checkbox"/> Decide on the venue (call and reserve) <input type="checkbox"/> Book the entertainer <input type="checkbox"/> Begin collecting decorations <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a tentative guest list
Three Weeks Before the party	<input type="checkbox"/> Make/buy and send invitations <input type="checkbox"/> Order cake (if needed) <input type="checkbox"/> Buy/order party favors/decorations
Two Weeks Before the party	<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on games/activities <input type="checkbox"/> Finish gathering decorations/supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Buy gifts for the birthday child <input type="checkbox"/> Decide on menu, make shopping list
One Week Before the party	<input type="checkbox"/> Call anyone who hasn't RSVPd <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare goodie/take-home bags <input type="checkbox"/> Gather supplies for activities/games
Day Before the party	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm entertainer <input type="checkbox"/> Clean house <input type="checkbox"/> Set up party room (remove valuables, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Put out party-ware/serving dishes <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up cake from bakery (or bake and decorate) <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up balloons <input type="checkbox"/> Begin preparing food (thaw frozen foods, etc.)
Day of the party	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Decorating <input type="checkbox"/> Put balloons/signs outside the house <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare food
After the party	<input type="checkbox"/> Send thank-you notes <input type="checkbox"/> Send entertainer thank you