

Birthday Party Tip Sheet

Children's birthday parties need not be extravagant. Keeping it simple and engaging guests will ensure a good time for everyone. Don't forget the party is for your child, not you or grandparents and other family and friends lobbying for a big blowout. Have fun and eat lots of cake!

Things to Remember

1. Set a budget and stick to it.
2. Limit the guest list. The traditional rule is the child's age (plus one) is the number of friends to invite.
3. Send invitations over email if possible. This saves money on postage, is eco-friendly, and you can get automatic responses from guests. Check out websites such as www.evite.com or www.paperlesspost.com
4. Buy food in bulk. Shop for items with the number of guests in mind.
5. Keep snacks around for kids and adults to munch on during games and activities. Healthy snacks like fruit work well.
6. Make your own cake or make cupcakes which are easier to serve and less mess.
7. Limit party favors to something small. Don't worry too much about something extravagant. One item can go a long way.
8. Use solid colored plates, napkins, etc. with a couple of "character"-themed items rather than buying everything with a character.
9. Choose a free party locations- home, local park, etc.
10. Take advantage of the dollar store as needed, just screen for choke able items and toxic paints. Best used for paper products and decorations, not toys.
11. Use items around the house for games and decorations (see websites on next page for ideas)
12. Engage your children as much as possible in the planning process
13. Have a back-up plan in case of rain or other unforeseen circumstances
14. Keep the kids occupied. Planned activities, games, and fun favors and toys will keep the party momentum going.
15. Safety proof the venue beforehand. Go through and check there are no dangerous items or electrical areas. Lock away any items you don't want kids to get their hands on.
16. Have trash bags on hand for food, plates, utensils, and wrapping paper.
17. Keep the party short. It's better to send guests home happy than tired and cranky.
18. Keep children engaged during the party to avoid meltdowns and utilize kids' energy. If hosting an all day event or sleepover for older children, think about quiet activities for end of party wind down, such as a movie or story time.
19. Make sure there is time at the end to say "thank you" to all guests. Don't forget to send out thank you cards after the party.
20. Prep your child before the party and remind them to be polite and welcoming. Thank them after the party for good behavior.

Helpful Websites

Inexpensive: Party Locations, Birthday Party Invitations, Decorations, Food and Drinks, Party Favors, Games
plus links to more great websites

<http://www.squidoo.com/cheap-kids-birthday-party-ideas>

Throwing a Budget Birthday Party

<http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/847993/cheap-birthday-party-ideas-for-children>

Birthday Party Ideas from PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/birthdayparties/>

Homemade Birthday Party Favors and Decorations

<http://familycrafts.about.com/od/birthdayparties/a/birthdayfavor.htm>

Birthday Party Game Ideas

<http://www.momswhothink.com/birthday-party-games/birthday-party-games.html/>