



**A parent's guide to hosting a  
children's birthday party**

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As professional party organisers, we're often asked for our handy hints and tips on how to create the most memorable, enjoyable and stress-free event. With a view to answering frequently asked questions and providing the best advice that we can, we've come up with 12 steps to a fabulous party experience.

# 12 steps

Of course, each party is unique but these simple steps should help parents as well as the kids to have fun when it comes to party time!



# Before the day...

## Step 1 Choose a party theme:

This is the hard part—getting to the bottom of the long list of possibilities! Once you have a theme, or a specific entertainer, then it's far easier for the rest to fall into place.

## Step 2 Set the time, date & venue:

Try to find out when friends' birthdays are to avoid double bookings, consider mealtimes when timing your party and make sure the venue is big enough for the planned activities (i.e. for the type of entertainment booked, the number of children participating and accompanying grown-ups! You might also need to consider a separate room for party food). Give clear directions to the venue.

## Step 3 Invitations:

Be sure to mention the party theme and if specific dress or footwear is required as a result. Depending on space limitations, it's also recommended that you provide advice on whether siblings can join in or not.

## Step 4 Planning— food & party bags:

Note any special dietary needs and, for energetic parties, plan to have the food at the end to avoid poorly tummies! If you're ordering food boxes/party bag goodies online, leave plenty of time for them to arrive. Simple 'finger food' is best and remember candles for the cake and something to light them with! (Before buying prizes, discuss any ideas with your entertainer as these may well not be needed.)

# On the day...

## Step 5 Prepare the venue:

Arrive early to have enough time to put banners up, secure balloons—if you're having them—and arrange furniture (making sure to leave enough room for the main entertainment and a table for any gifts).

## Step 6 Welcome the guests:

Have a sheet ready for families to note their contact details on if they're leaving their child with you and confirm the pick-up time. Guide the grown-ups to the right area and introduce the kids to the entertainer and/or give them an idea of what's coming up to settle them in.

## Step 7 Manage the kids:

Make sure all the kids know who the 'organisers' are (you and the entertainer, if you have one) and that they can talk to you if they need anything. Point out where the toilets are, when to expect refreshments/party food and what siblings can do.

## Step 8 Manage the grown-ups:

Be clear where the grown-ups can sit and/or mingle (safely!). Recruit grown-ups to help you manage safety issues around the edges (chairs, bags, coats etc) and noise levels (so the kids can hear the entertainer). And if you can manage tea and coffee for the grown-ups then this is always gratefully received :)

## On the day...

### Step 9 Cut the cake:

If you're planning to cut the cake on the day and put a piece in each of the party bags then it's highly recommended that you sing 'happy birthday' and blow out the candles just as the children sit down for food. This then gives you lots of time to cut and wrap the cake whilst the children are busy working their way through the party nibbles!

### Step 10 Party food & drinks:

Organise the location and timing of the party food and drinks around your entertainment to provide the best experience for the kids. In smaller venues, it's often possible to save putting the party tables out until towards the end of the entertainment to avoid distractions and compromising on space. It's also a good idea not to put the sweet nibbles out before the children have finished with the savouries.

### Step 11 Party bags:

Giving party bags out at the end of the party is a good way to indicate to guests that it's time for that 'taxi' home! If you have an entertainer, don't hesitate to ask them to assist you in spreading the 'home time' message.

### Step 12 Home time...and relax:

Once the VIPs have been collected, that's it! Time for a quick tidy round and to put your feet up...or start all over again with the excitement of opening all the presents...



# 12 steps - checklist

for easy printing

<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Choose a party theme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>decide on party theme</li> <li>book party entertainer</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Set the time, date &amp; venue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>choose a clear date</li> <li>consider mealtimes</li> <li>choose a big enough venue</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Invitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mention dress / footwear</li> <li>consider siblings</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Planning—food &amp; party bags</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note special dietary needs</li> <li>plan timing of party food</li> <li>order goods online early</li> <li>don't forget candles/matches!</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5</b>	<b>Prepare the venue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>put up any decorations</li> <li>arrange furniture practically</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6</b>	<b>Welcome the guests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have a contacts sheet</li> <li>guide the grown-ups in</li> <li>introduce kids to the entertainer</li> </ul>
<b>Step 7</b>	<b>Manage the kids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduce the other 'organisers'</li> <li>point out the toilets</li> <li>give an idea of timings</li> </ul>
<b>Step 8</b>	<b>Manage the grown-ups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manage practical safety issues/ noise levels (with their help!)</li> </ul>
<b>Step 9</b>	<b>Cut the cake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cut the cake in plenty of time</li> </ul>
<b>Step 10</b>	<b>Party food &amp; drinks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organise party tables and refreshments at good times</li> </ul>
<b>Step 11</b>	<b>Party bags</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give party bags out at the end to indicate 'home time'</li> </ul>
<b>Step 12</b>	<b>Home time ...and relax</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quickly tidy up...and you did it!!!</li> </ul>



Written in consultation with experienced  
parents and party organisers

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