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Children's Birthday Party Planning: When and When Not to Have a Big Party

By Kimberly Hargis

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Age 1: Invite only family members and close friends only because this birthday is more for the parents than for the child. At age 1, a child doesn't understand the concept of "Birthday Party." He or she is getting a lot of attention—which is all a 1-year-old wants or understands anyway. You should not go overboard on presents because too much could scare or confuse a child. You should consider getting specialty items such as a plate that says "First Birthday," a 1-year-old candle, and possibly a table cover that everyone could sign with fabric paint to have as keepsakes that can someday be shown (or given to) to your grown child.

Age 2: 2-year-olds should have one or two playmates over for a small Birthday Play Day. Again I suggest you keep a birthday plate and other keepsakes for your 2-year-old.

Age 3: 3-year-olds should have three to four playmates over, and at this age you might have try a birthday game such as "Who can stack the blocks the highest?" I do not recommend having a clown or playing any games that require a blindfold over a child's eyes such key due to the fact either can scare children at this age. Remember your child has just turned 3, and the playmates are around that age. They are still not able to understand fully structured games very well. They only know if they do something good or better than other children, everyone will give them attention. Again I suggest you collect keepsakes.

Age 4: At 4, children should now be ready for a "real" party. I suggest four or five playmates. 4-year-olds are ready now for party decorations, but I suggest you do less and save your money for the big number "5" birthday (or buy decorations that you can put away and use again). Games such as Musical Chairs, and carrying a hard boiled egg on a spoon to the finish line without dropping it relay race can be appropriate, but remember that games will be played and finished much sooner than you think. Consider having a few of your child's favorite videos on hand. Even if the kids have seen them 100 times, they will enjoy them. After an hour or so, you will probably need a break and the children might be cranky. A movie they are all spellbound by will be a great way to relax the kids and you. You

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might want to consider spreading a couple of blankets on the floor and have some pillows handy for sleepyheads!

Age 5: 5-year-olds should have a big party, but remind them that this is because they are the big "5," and either starting school or just in school, and having a "big" party will not happen every year. Explain to them that big parties are only for special birthdays such as 5 because they have started or are starting school, 10 because that is the first double-digit number, and of course 16 ("Sweet 16" for girls and "Driving Age" for boys). This will save you money in the long run. On the fifth birthday, I suggest you first decide if you want to do it yourself, rent a building or park area but still do it yourself, or call local businesses (like McDonalds) to see what party-planning packages they offer. I personally suggest renting a park area if weather permits because the kids will be just as happy playing on park equipment as they would if you spent a ton of money on a professionally planned party. Have several inexpensive disposable cameras on hand and let your Birthday Boy or Girl take pictures of his or her first "big" party!

Great games for 5-year-olds whether inside or outside are: Hitting a Piñata that is full of candy. Relay races, which can be held in a garage, carport, or park. Water balloon fights if weather permits (and you have advised the parents that the children are likely to get wet). Dancing to music and "freezing" when the music is stopped to see who looks the silliest (this is a great game and everyone should win a party favor). Pin the tail on the donkey (consider a game that uses Velcro instead of pins).

You can also do face painting and movie time. As with the 4-year-olds, you need to over plan for games and activities and a movie is a great back up (or a much-needed rest time). Another helpful hint is to take enough large plastic trash bags to cover your kitchen floor and lightly throw all colors of paint on them. Allow for adequate drying time before the party. Then you can use these bags to cover your kitchen floor before cake time to catch cake droppings and milk or soda spills (which WILL happen).

Ages 6–9: Birthdays can be simple overnight parties ("slumber parties" for girls and "all nighters" for boys) filled with popcorn, junk food, movies, and video games. As long as you let the kids stay up all night and sleep in half the next day, this type of party can still be "cool"—what kid doesn't love the idea of staying up all night (even if they don't make it all night). If it is summer time, think about letting them sleep outside in a tent or on a screened-in porch (just be sure to let the parents know exactly where their children will be sleeping and you should plan to check in on them a few times during the night).

Age 10: This should be done about the same as age 5 in terms of it being a "special age" (and reminding your child that "big parties" like this will not be done every year. Ten is a good age to consider renting a facility such as: Pool parties: most local pools offer after-hour times when you can rent the pool for birthday parties. Roller- or ice-skating parties. Local arcades or pizza parlors often have special birthday packages. A day at the Zoo for your child and their friends.

Hint: To save money, check with the place where you plan to hold the party to see if you can decorate, bring in the cake, and other party favors instead of buying the supplies from them.

Ages 11–15 do the same as ages 6–9 with a simple overnight party.

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At 16, if they even agree to let you have a "party," then consider yourself lucky. If they do, then you need to let the teenager decide what kind of party it should be. Remember kids at that age are very "into" who is popular and who is not. Don't push your child into inviting everyone you might think they should (because they might be afraid of being made fun of for having a party at home with their parents.) They know who they can invite and who they can't without fear of peer pressure. My best suggestion for this age is either a pizza party at home or at a pizza parlor or a pool party, depending on the teenager's interest.

Any party that you give should be "Fun" for your child. Expect that your only reward will be the memories you create for yourself. If you happen to get a hug and a kiss from a very happy child at the end of the day, then it will be a bonus to remember!

Kimberly Hargis owns and operates Mom's Break PMS. Printables Madness Syndrome n. 1 : a chronic condition characterized by an uncontrollable urge to find Free Printables on the Internet: sometimes

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What Party Supplies do I need to make my party a Hit?

By Mike Yeager

The birthday party supplies you will need for a birthday party can be balloons, decorations, food and many other things. You will have to buy many different items for the party you're planning. Finding wholesale party supplies can also be helpful and can save you money. A theme party can also be great fun such as a pirate party, or an outdoor garden party. An important time in every person's life is graduation. There should be a graduation party for each graduate. Any type of graduation is very special. Some traditional gift ideas include money, clothing and other accessories. It's a big day and a graduation party is a wonderful way to celebrate that accomplishment. Why? Well it's because a graduation happens so rarely in a person's life.

You should buy discount party supplies to save money. If you buy discount party supplies you can really save some money compared to retail prices. Everyone has a birthday, which means that everyone will have some kind of birthday party. These parties should be very fun and interesting; you could even consider throwing a surprise party.

To make your life even more fun, try and attend at least 1 party this year and have fun.

Using the right party supplies is very important for any party you have. A well organized party with interesting and exciting party supplies will be remembered long after the occasion. Whether it's graduation party, birthday party or a relaxing outdoor summer party remember that the right party

supplies and decorations really can make the difference.

Mike Yeager
Publisher

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