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# Children's Party Planner

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## How to use our Party Planner

Our party planner takes you through planning your perfect children's party step by step. Starting at about 3 months prior to the party up to sending the Thank You notes.

It's also full of tips and advice along the way and we hope you find it any invaluable resource.

We can't cover every type of party so if you have any questions or suggestions please email us at [info@whatson4kidsparties.co.uk](mailto:info@whatson4kidsparties.co.uk) and we'll do our very best to help.

## Day minus 3 Months



### Step 1 – Size and scale of your party

Decide on your budget and “must haves”

If you have a strict budget then this will dictate a lot of your options. But don't rule out things at this stage because if you have to spend more on the venue then you can make savings on other things such as the cake (make it yourself!) or the party bags. Decide what is absolutely essential for your party at this stage – do you want a particular venue or entertainment? *Tip! A joint party with your child's friend will keep the costs lower and they will love sharing the excitement!*

Decide on guests

How many little friends will you be inviting? This will influence a lot of your choices and budget at this stage. You could set a limit and work your guest list to this or you could write the guest list and then you will know your numbers. Bear in mind that not all invited guests will make it. Also consider if any adults will be coming to the party? This could be friends of the family, helpers or parents of younger children. Also bear in mind that there may be some younger or even older children than your children – how will you cater for and entertain them?

Decide on your theme

Your party theme will drive most of the other arrangements you need to make so decide this early on. Older children will have their own ideas about what they want too. We have some great ideas on our Party Ideas pages so we hope these inspire you.

### Step 2 Decide on the time and location

Decide on date and time for the party!

Sounds obvious but it probably won't be the actual birthday date but it doesn't have to be a Saturday afternoon either. Parties can be at anytime, after school or even on a Sunday morning (although don't make it too early if you go for this one!). Also bear in mind meal times, will the party food be the children's “lunch” or “tea”? Also be prepared to be flexible on your venue as your first choice might not be available.



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### About Party Organisers

Party organisers take most of the hassle and leg work out of organising and executing a party. Probably not required for most smaller children's parties but if you are planning an extra special party or if you have a lot going on in your life then a party organiser is worth considering.

### Book your venue

Use [www.whatson4kidsparties.co.uk](http://www.whatson4kidsparties.co.uk) to find your local venues and quickly find out prices and facilities without spending ages ringing around.

Community venues are an inexpensive choice. If you're looking for particular facilities like a kitchen or car park then do check with the venue. And ask if you are expected to clean floors etc afterwards, you probably are! Also make sure that you book extra time to set up and then tidy up after your party.

Specific party venue such as soft play centres or bowling alleys often have a party package for you to choose from so find out what is included for what price.

Ring and book the venue as soon as possible as the most popular party times will get booked up quickly.

*Tip! Visit the venue if you can before the party so you are familiar with the facilities*

### Step 4 Decide on the two most important things, food and entertainment

Plan your party food and drink menu (or book the catering). See our [Party Food](#) and [Party Recipe](#) pages for ideas.

The key with children's party food is KEEP IT SIMPLE, especially with for parties for younger children. Also consider the amount of food a child is likely to eat – it probably is less than you think! Also we have all tried to include lots of fruit and veg in our party food to make us look like sensible parents but in reality most will be left untouched or extracted from sandwiches!

Below is our suggested party menu for a 5-year-old:

- ½ round of sandwiches (cheese spread, marmite, jam are all simple and easy fillings – use white/brown/multigrain sliced bread with no crusts if you can) or a small roll
- 2 handfuls of crisps (Quavers, Pomm Bear, Hula Hoops, Wotsits are all good choices)
- 2 cubes of cheese (mild cheddar)
- 2 mini sausages or sausage rolls
- 3 grapes
- 2 strawberries
- 2 biscuits
- 1 small cake



*Tip! You could even put this in a party box for each child to save laying all the food out on plates.*

Water or diluted fruit juice in paper cups is a good option, or you could buy individual drinks in cartons or plastic bottles for ease.



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Also don't forget the adults that may be at the party – but don't plan to give them a banquet either. Depending on the time of day you could provide soft drinks and crisps, cake or cheese and biscuits, a cup of tea might be appreciated in the cooler months! Alcohol won't be expected.

### Book your helpers!

Don't think you can set up and run a big the party by yourself! Ask a few friends if they can help set up, run and clear up after the party.

Decide on and book your entertainment

All children love party games and these are simple and cheap to organise. See our [Party Games](#) page for ideas.



Much like your venue you can use [www.whatson4kidsparties.co.uk](http://www.whatson4kidsparties.co.uk) to find which party entertainment (magicians, clowns, discos, bouncy castles etc) that will travel to your party venue. Again your choice of entertainment may be dictated by your theme and choice of venue and some venues will be the "entertainment".

\*\*\*A note about the weather \*\*\*

If you are having a party in the summer it can be nice to make use of your garden or outside space at your venue. But don't rely on it. Beg a gazebo or make sure that your indoor space is adequate.

## Day minus 1 month

### Write a list or two

A list of everything that needs to be done before the day of the party is essential.

Write a separate list of all the food and drinks you need based on numbers and your menu.

Plan a schedule for the day such as:

- Things to do at home prior to leaving such as food
- What time to arrive at venue, will someone meet you at the venue?
- Jobs that need doing at the venue before the party such as lay out tables, lay out food, put up banners
- What time the entertainment will run? *Tip! Do some running around games before the entertainment to burn off some energy*
- When will food be eaten? *Tip! Don't schedule too much running around after food!*
- When will you do "happy birthday" candles?
- Clearing up time



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Then make sure you have enough people to do these jobs:

- Who is laying out the tables?
- Who is putting up banners?
- Who is plating up the food?
- Who is running any party games?
- Who is cutting up the cake for the party bags?
- Who is handing out the party bags?
- Is someone looking after the birthday boy/girl at the venue or bringing them after everything is set up?

If children are being left by parents someone needs to note contact names and numbers and we suggest that each child has a name sticker too! Download our [parents contact list](#) PDF.

*Tip! Make sure that you are not doing too much, you need to have a chance to enjoy the party and see how much fun your child is having!*

### Plan the games

If you are going to run some or all of the entertainment yourself now is the time to plan it.

We've a list of some great games on our [Party Games](#) page for different ages or you can buy a book on the subject.

Find some suitable music

Add prizes for the games to your shopping list

### Order your cake (or plan your own!), balloons, party bags etc

At [www.whatson4kidsparties.co.uk](http://www.whatson4kidsparties.co.uk) we have details of local and national companies that can help with all these things

### Write and send invitations

There are a wide variety of pre-printed invitations in card shops and supermarkets. Or you could make your own on your PC, there is a range of card software you can buy to help you with this, or on the Internet.



Things that must be on you invite:

- Name of Child
- Details of event (birthday party or other party, is there a theme or fancy dress etc)
- Start and End Time and Date of Party
- Location of the event with postcode (for all the Satnavs out there!)
- RSVP Date
- RSVP phone number, postal address or email address
- Can/should parents stay



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Keep a note (or spreadsheet!) of all the RSVPs *TIP – Keep this for when the presents are being opened in case you have any presents without a tag or that you can decipher*

### Buy the party goods

Tableware (such as plates, napkins, bowls, plastic cutlery)

Decorations (such as balloons, party banners)

Buy Party Bags and contents (if you're doing your own) – plus any prizes and sweets for games

### Day minus 1 week

Confirm the venue, cake, balloons, catering and entertainment etc

Confirm adult helpers and make sure they know where to go and what time to be there

Write a list of everything you need to take on the day and make sure you have containers (boxes, cool boxes/bags) to carry everything in.



### Day minus 1 or 2 days

Buy the food and drinks for the party.

Charge cameras or video camera batteries and take spares if you can

Make or collect the cake

### On the Day

Get everything that you can ready at home before you go to the venue and this includes your child! Who will be dressing them and getting them ready?

### Do you have?

- Food
- Drinks
- Party Bags
- Party Banners, balloons, balloon pump
- Camera/video camera
- Scissors
- Sticky tape/blue tack
- Dustbin liners
- Paper plates, bowls, napkins, tablecloths, table clips and plastic cutlery
- Stereo and music
- Matches or lighter for the candles!
- Decent knife to slice the cake
- Baby wipes



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Kitchen roll

Vacuum cleaner (if needed)

### At the venue

Before things start:

Make sure everyone knows what their job is and they have everything they need to do it

Make sure you lay out enough tables and chairs – don't forget one for presents that is easy to get to

Make sure you put a birthday banner or balloon at the door or gate so guests can easily spot the entrance

Be there to welcome your guests, accept presents and direct guests to where you want them at the start of the party. The older birthday child can join you for this but younger ones will be playing with their friends!

### During the Party

Stick to your schedule as far as possible and make sure the helpers know what they are doing

### And enjoy it!

Leaving:

Make sure that guests have a party bag

Make sure that children go home with their parents or carers only

### After the Party

Recover!

When all the presents are being opened keep a pen and paper handy to note who gave what present

Write and deliver "thank you" notes within 10 days of the party if possible

### How to be a perfect party guest!

1. Make sure you RSVP by the date required
2. Make sure you know where the party is, the start and end times and whether it has a theme
3. Find out if the birthday child has a birthday present list or would like something particular
4. If you know the birthday child's parents offer to help
5. Make sure you know if you can leave your child or not and that your child is okay with being left
6. Arrive on time, not early and not late
7. Clearly label your gift with a tag that won't come off and that the child's name is clearly written *TIP! If your child writes their own name, write it again underneath so it's completely clear who the gift is from*
8. Collect your child promptly
9. Thank the hosts before you leave





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