



Children's Birthday Party Planning Tips

# Creating a Great Party Stress Free

By Steve Wickenton





## Introduction



As a Father of twin boys, an Uncle of seven and a Children's Entertainer and Magician, I have spent a lot of time attending and planning kids parties. While I don't claim to be an expert on the subject, I certainly have seen a lot of what does and doesn't work.

The following tips are based on my observations that I have collected over the many years. I hope that at the very least you find something new or inspirational in these tips and that at the very best, they help you create a memorable party for your child with ease

Planning a Childs Birthday Party can actually be an enjoyable and stress free experience. Getting the child involved at some level always makes it more rewarding as they get excited by the prospect of possibilities and feel that they are contributing. Be aware though that as the adult, it is best to always remain in control of the decision making. Rather than letting the child run wild with ideas, gently steer them in the direction that is achievable, to your approval, and fits your budget. A rocket ride to Mars with everyone from Kinder would be great and memorable, but obviously not at all achievable.



**The first decision that needs to be made is if the party will be in a home, garden, or at a party/play venue.**

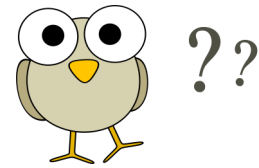
**If you choose a party/play venue,** then make sure you know exactly what you are getting and how much it will cost. Some of these venues are overpriced and offer limited food and drinks. If it is a young child's party, between 1 and 6 years, then make sure that the adults will also be catered for. Often with older kids, the parents are more likely to drop off and pick up, so it won't matter as much but if parents do stay, be sure they can get some kind of food and beverage too.



**If you choose to have the party in your home or garden,** or even at a local park, then you have full control over budgets and all the aspects of the party. While to some this may seem a daunting task, others will love the planning and creating. Either way it doesn't have to take over your day to day life, and can be as big or small as you like.



## How many should be invited?



There are all sorts of dubious tips on this subject planted all over the internet. Some say the rule of thumb is the Birthday child's age plus 1, other say even numbers only, while some suggest the child's whole class.

I prefer the logical method.

First, decide realistically how many can fit into your home or party environment and how it effects your budget

Then, ask the Birthday Child who they want to invite. (You may be surprised )

Last, find an even ground between the two that means your child's closest friends can make the list. Keep in mind that you don't want it too crowded for little kids as they find it over whelming.

Also remember that you will probably also invite some similar aged relatives, (cousins etc) and that you will have to supply food and drink for everyone that attends. (Adults included)

Next make a list of everyone you are going to invite (including the relatives). Keep track with this list as you receive their RSVP so that you know exactly how many will be there on the day.



## What is the best sort of Invitations?

Lots of time can be spent on getting the right invitation, but in short, it needs only to do 4 simple things

- Tell the guest they are invited to the party
- Tell them when it is (Date and Time)
- Tell them where it is.
- Tell them how to let you know if they are coming or not.

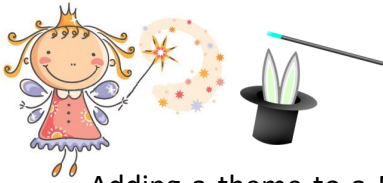


Once these are achieved, everything else on an invitation is simply sparkles and glitter (Not literally, unless of course that's what you want to do).

If you are planning a themed party, then it is a good idea to emphasize this in the invitation. It helps give the guests an idea of what your child likes, dragons, fairies, Lego, Barbie etc.

Likewise if you want it to be a dress up party, then make sure that it states it clearly on the invitation.

If you are clever with Computer publishing programs you can easily design and print your own. Otherwise you can buy varying sorts from the newsagents or search online for free downloadable ones that suit your needs. Just make sure that the 4 main points are covered.



## Theme or not to theme?



Adding a theme to a Birthday party can create a personal element. While completely unnecessary, it can be hint for your guests as to what the birthday child likes at this stage of their life, and also shows an angle of their personality.

To use a theme, can be as simple as stating that it's a Fairy or Pirate dress up party on the invitations, or you can take it to the further extreme and decorate the whole house, get paper plates and cups and games that all fit in. Again it depends on your budget and how creative you want to be.

A favourite at my kid's parties each year is that I make a pin the tail on the donkey game that reflects the theme. I simply download a large image from the internet that matches the theme, then pick an item from the image and use that as the thing to pin. A basic knowledge of any photo editing suite is all you need.



Some examples I have done are: Pin the Lightsaber on the Jedi, Pin the eye patch on the Pirate, and Pin Elmo's nose on Elmo.

If either you or someone you know is creative in the kitchen, then you can also create a themed Birthday cake. If you're not. then simply source a figurine or small toy that matches your theme and use it as the decoration on a standard birthday cake.



## Food and Drink



Probably the most difficult part to navigate in terms of children's needs and wants is the food factor. This really depends a lot on your own personal preference. Some people have strict guidelines as to what their children can and can't eat, while others say it's a party, let them have whatever they want.

Wherever you sit on this scale makes no difference to how much fun the kids will have. What does matter is that there is enough food for all the guests (including any adults that are likely to stay)

A rough guide is simply to multiply what you know your child can comfortably eat by the number of guests. Usually the children won't eat as much as they normally would due to excitement and distractions.

Using this formula, any food you have left over will be minimal and usually quickly taken up by still hungry adults.

## Party Games

The traditional party games still remain favourites with most kids. While an element of competition is obviously conveyed, try to remember that it is all in the name of fun. Kids don't really care if or what they win, as long as they are having fun and lots of laughs doing it.

As they get older the competition factor becomes more important and some will try different tactics to win. This is when you may need to tighten the rules a little, but always try to keep it simple and easy to understand. If it takes more than 30 seconds to explain the game, the kids are going to lose interest.

Usually two or three games spaced out between eating, and general play is plenty for most parties.



**Pin the tail on the donkey**, and variations as mentioned before in themes, is always a good one. As the kids get older the rules need to be more refined though. Don't allow them to feel the wall and image with either hands, and also try tricks to make double sure they can't see through the blindfold.



**Pass the Parcel** is another all-time classic. If your party has boys and girls invited, then make sure that prizes are non-gender specific. Choose the music that the children of their age can relate to, and if you have any specific rules, make sure they are explained before you start.



**Musical chairs/cushions** is still a favourite with young children, be sure not to allow any bumping and pushing. And again state any rules clearly before you start.



**Treasure hunts** are another great game for kids that can keep them busy for up to 30 mins depending on its complexity and their age. If you have room outside and the weather is likely to be good, then this is a great opportunity to get them out of the house where they can really burn off some energy.



## Do You Need a Children's Entertainer?

Of course as a Children's Party Magician I would like to say YES!! to this, but really the answer isn't that simple.

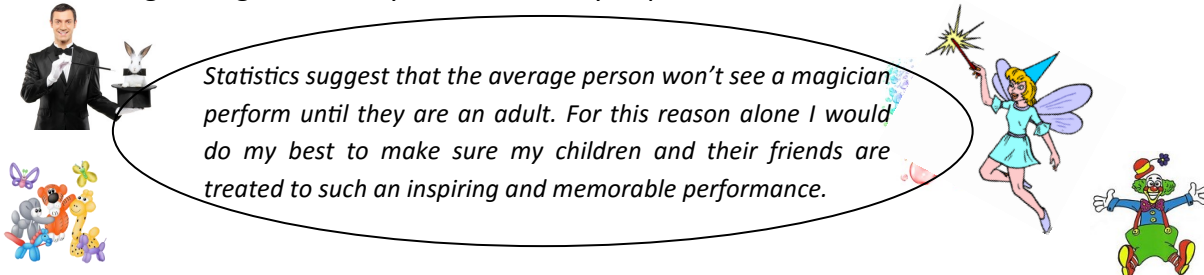
Hiring in an entertainer for a child's party is usually looked upon as an extra special thing. It is an added cost to the party budget and is often thought of as one more thing to worry about.

However choosing the right entertainer can actually reduce the stress of party planning as they take control of the party and kids for an hour or sometimes more. This gives you the time to relax and enjoy the party too.

Interestingly the average cost of a Children's Magician is roughly equal to what you pay for a Children's Party Venue Hire or taking the party to well known family restaurant.

Keeping this in mind I know my children would get more entertainment value and lasting memories from a quality entertainer than from a handful of slides and video games in a place shared with other kids they don't even know.

Of course there are varying forms of entertainers that have a variety of skills that might include face painting, bubble shows, character impersonations, clowning and magic. So choosing the right sort for your child is very important



*Statistics suggest that the average person won't see a magician perform until they are an adult. For this reason alone I would do my best to make sure my children and their friends are treated to such an inspiring and memorable performance.*

If you do decide to treat your child to an entertainer, there are some very simple rules that I recommend to help you choose the right one.

- Watch any videos they have on their website or YouTube and decide if it looks entertaining to yourself and something your child will enjoy
- Read any reviews and testimonials and make sure they sound like they deliver what they promise.
- Make a connection with them either by phone or email and get a feel for the sort of person they are.
- Check if they offer a guarantee. Professional entertainers who know how to entertain properly, always offer a full money back guarantee.

The main thing is to make sure you are getting entertainment that your child and their friends will enjoy and that the entertainer will deliver on time, a high quality show that the children will remember and talk about for years to come.

## In Conclusion

As a child I only ever had one birthday party where I was able to invite my friends and that was my 10<sup>th</sup>. This wasn't because my parents were mean, but because my birthday was in the middle of the school holidays and my Dad was a teacher so we always went touring around Australia every chance we got.

But while my one party is a strong memory, so is the fact that I was in Sydney for my 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Adelaide for my 7<sup>th</sup>, Flinders Ranges for my 8<sup>th</sup>, Brisbane for my 9<sup>th</sup> etc.

I tell you this because however you decide to make your child's party happen, always know that your children will appreciate it and remember it as happy time no matter how big or small.

So have fun planning and most importantly remember to enjoy it with your child.

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