

PARTY PLANNING CHECK LIST



6-8 weeks out

- Decide on your party budget (parties can cost anything from \$50 to \$5000 so decide what works for your family).
- Start talking to your child about party options and theme ideas they might like.
- Write invite list (have an idea in your mind how many children you're happy to host based on your budget... and sanity!)
- Make sure key people (best friend/ grandparents) are available on your chosen party date before writing invites out.
- Decide on a date and time for the party (remember to work around sleep times if your youngster still naps during the day).
- Book any venue or entertainment you want to use.
- Order your party supplies (*Party in the Box* will be mailed within 2 days and contains all your themed invites, decorations, tableware, party bags and novelty toys for each guest). Remember that with *Party in the Box* you're not restricted to a party in the home, take it to the park, bowling, play centre, beach – wherever your party is :)

4 weeks out

- Send out invitations.
- Keep a list of invited guests on your phone or on the fridge so you can update as you receive RSVP's. (When you receive each RSVP ask if the guest has any dietary needs you should know about. If you are unfamiliar with their needs, ask for some food suggestions). Our recipes online have lots of allergy notes for gluten free, dairy free and colour free so check them out for some ideas.

1 week out

- Decide on party agenda and write out a time schedule to follow on the day of the party. This need not be rigid, but provides you with a guide so you don't miss something important due to running out of time.
- Purchase party favours (note: if purchasing a *Party in the Box*, party favours for every child are included).
- Choose your party games and buy some little prizes. Stickers or small wrapped chocolate are simple.
- Decide on your menu and write your shopping list. Remember you don't need too much food for children if you're also serving them cake.
- Follow up any outstanding RSVP's with a phone call.

2 days out

- Do all your food shopping – including any ingredients for the birthday cake you need.
- Charge your digital camera and video camera.
- Prepare jelly and any slices or biscuits you're going to serve. Slice and biscuits store well in air tight containers for a few days.
- Pack the party favour bags *with the birthday child* to start building anticipation.
- Speak to a neighbour or family member about having any pets at their house while the party is happening, as some children may be afraid or have allergies.
- Make sure you have candles and matches for the birthday cake.

1 day out

- Cook the birthday cake in the morning. Wait until the evening to decorate it as it will be cold by then and easier to ice (keeping it in the fridge during the day can help with this). It's also nice for the birthday child to wake up the morning of the party to see their cake ready :)
- Move any breakables or valuables out of reach of small children.
- If you're hosting a morning party, decorating the house the night before will ease the chaos in the morning. If it's going to be an afternoon party you can set up together in the morning. Save a few blown up balloons to hang on the letterbox before the party starts.
- Take a few minutes before bed to talk to your child about party etiquette and manners.
- Tidy the house and party area if having the party at home.
- Check the weather for the following day so you can make any party adjustments you need to (if having your party at a park make sure you decide at least a few hours out if weather means you need to move to your home or sheltered area).
- Prepare any food that can be done the night before – the less cooking you have to do on party day the more relaxed you'll probably feel.

4-5 hours out

- Set party table – will it be self-serve or a sit down meal? Will you have all the food out at the beginning or do you prefer to wait until a certain time to eat?
- Check on basic supplies – toilet paper, paper towel to clean up spills, garbage bag for mess.
- Having a box or container for gifts to go in will reduce lost pieces once presents are opened. Have a paper and pen handy to record who gave which gifts (or write gifts on the back of each card).



- Have game props and order of games/ activities ready. Pass the parcel is an game to start a party with.
- Cue music for entertainment/ background or for games which require music also.

1-2 hours out

- Tie balloons on your letterbox or on the entrance to the park. If you want people to come around the back of the house have a little sign directing them where to go.
- Get everyone dressed and ready, including yourself!
- Write children's names on cups and have drinks available throughout the party as games and party food can make you very thirsty.
- Decide what time you'll sing Happy Birthday and either set a reminder or get another adult to keep an eye on time for you as times goes quickly when you're hosting a party. It's so common for parents to arrive for pick up and the cake hasn't been done yet.
- If you want a family photo, have this taken before the party starts as everyone is clean, less distracted and not trying to entertain guests.
- Make fairy bread, fruit skewers and whatever other food needs doing at the last minute.

During the Party

- If parents are not staying, make sure you have an emergency contact number for each child.
- Relax, enjoy and have FUN!
- Remember to hand out party favour bags as each guest leaves and thank them for coming.

After the Party

- Pack up and clean up together. Consider making this a fun time for the whole family to join in – set the music and clean up to a song or take photos as you clean up so it still has some 'party magic' about it.
- Put the kids to bed – then do something to congratulate yourself on being a brilliant parent! You made it through yet another party and your child had a magical time, felt a million dollars and will remember fondly the day that was set aside to celebrate them :)