

PLANNING THE BEST PARTY EVER!



TOP 20 TIPS

1. A *great party* doesn't just happen. *Organization* and *preparation* are key.
2. The *most important* thing to remember is that kids just want to *play* and have *fun*.
3. The *Party Agenda* – start with a half-hour of arts and crafts, continue with a mixer, go on to non-stop fun activities and games, cake and ice cream, present opening, then... before you know it... the party's over!
4. Plan a wonderful party that is *appropriate for your child's age and stage* of development.
5. *Involve* the birthday *child* from start to finish – make your *child* feel *special!* This is the child's big day – he or she gets the first bite of cake, is first in every activity, and gets to play with the gifts before the guests do.
6. Let your birthday *child help with planning and shopping*. Pick out the party favors together.
7. Listen carefully to your child and accommodate your child's wishes and desires – even though they may not be what you had envisioned (i.e., party theme, who to invite, etc.).
8. Create a *memorable party* by starting a *family tradition* that can be repeated at every birthday. Children look forward to those special birthday moments and will carry them through their entire lives.
9. Plan *activities* that alternate between *active* (a hunt or a game) and *quiet* (art activities or present opening).
10. Make a *game* out of *opening gifts*. Have the guests sit in a circle with the birthday child in the middle. While the music plays, the guests pass a favorite toy around the circle. When the music stops, the guest who is holding the toy gives his or her present to the birthday child.
11. Always have one adult or helper for every three or four children. *Solicit help* from spouses, friends, relatives or favorite babysitters.
12. Saturdays and Sundays are the *best days* for parties.
13. The *best times* for parties are 1:00 – 2:30 or 3:00 PM. Limit the party to 1½ to 2 hours. It's an ideal length of time. Any longer and they'll wear themselves (and you) out.
14. If your child's birthday occurs during a *school holiday or vacation*, have the party *before school lets out or after it starts up again*. Keep the party separate from any holiday celebrations.
15. Call the parents of your child's *best friends* to make sure the intended guests can come on the planned party date. Let them know you'll be sending a written invitation later.
16. The *#1 party location is outdoors* – whether it's a park, playground or your own backyard. Plan a backup in case the weather doesn't cooperate—a garage or basement will do fine.
17. Scoop *ice cream* ahead of time. Place scoops in cupcake liners placed in muffin tins and refreeze. When it comes time to serve, *just pop them out of the tins and onto the plates*.
18. *Keep the games simple and short*. Plan games in which all children participate at the same time. Most kids have little patience and the longer they have to wait their turn, the rowdier they get.
19. Play "*everyone wins*" *games*– non-competitive, cooperative group games– there are *no losers!* Children play together and they *all get* little *prizes* just for participating.
20. Instead of buying plastic party bags, let your guests make their own using white paper lunch bags and stickers and markers. Fill a prize chest (a box, bin or cooler) with an assortment of small toys and candy. After completing each activity or game, let guests select a toy and candy for their party bag!