

Children's Birthday Party Checklist

6 Weeks To Go



Set a date for the party. Remember to check that there's nothing else special planned for that day (like a Royal Wedding or a major football match!) Think about school days, holidays and times.



Decide on how long the party should be. For most children's parties 2 hours is ideal.



Set a preferred starting time and finishing time. It's usually best to avoid really early starts on weekends, or tying in with rush hour. If offering food, then think about having the party overlap with lunch or tea time. Also, think about how much time you'll need for setting up.



Decide whether you're going to hire a children's entertainer, such as a magician or DJ, and whether you're going to hire a bouncy castle or similar. Phone round and get a few prices to compare. Also, speak to other parents to find out who they've had and who they'd recommend. Your children might also be able to help as their friends may have talked to them about entertainers they've seen.



Think about how many people you're going to invite. This will affect the size of the place you need to hire, as well as the amount of food. Remember the number of party bags and prizes will also need to increase the more guests you have.



Think about where you're going to have the party. Places can get booked up early so make sure you phone round and find out about availability and costs. Remember to check with them about things such as how long before the party you'll have for getting set up, and how much time afterwards for packing away. Mention about things such as the bouncy castle in case there are any H&S requirements. If you need a kitchen, ask about these facilities. If you find somewhere ideal, make sure you get it booked up straight away.



4 Weeks To Go



Buy or order all party tableware items you'll need. Remember to include party plates, beakers or cups, napkins, table covers, knives, forks and spoons. Buy twice as many napkins as the number of children if you intend wrapping slices of birthday cake up for them to take home in their party bags.



Buy or order room decorations, including banners, balloons, ceiling decorations, streamers and posters. Don't forget to get string, balloon weights, Blu Tak, pins and Sellotape.



Buy or order the invitations and thank you notes, party bags and party bag fillers. If you're not using a DJ you might need to think about ordering a CD of party music.



If you're running the games yourself then think about buying or ordering the prizes as well as any materials you need for the games such as balloons, piñatas, wrapping paper etc.



Send out the invitations to everyone. Remember to include an RSVP date and at least one easy way people can contact you. Either include an RSVP slip, or your telephone number, mobile number or email address. If the party has a fancy dress theme make sure you include this on the invitation.



2 Weeks To Go

Plan the food you need, and start buying whatever items you can. You can freeze some things like bread, but at this stage you'll mainly look to be buying frozen things such as sausage rolls, as well as any tins of things, juice, some sandwich fillings and biscuits.

If you're buying the birthday cake then make sure you order this now. If you're making it then make sure you have everything you need in the cupboard ready, including candles, decorations, icing and a box to keep it in safely on the way to the party.

1 Week To Go

Make sure you have bought all of the ingredients you need for things such as the cake as well as sandwich fillings and any last frozen items or packets. Buy a roll of bin bags for clearing up afterwards.

Make sure you have bought all of the drinks. A choice of two flavours of juice is idea. Don't forget that if you're offering parents who are staying a drink to buy in tea, coffee, milk and sugar.

Get your camera and camcorder ready. If you need to buy film or batteries, do it now. If you need to charge your batteries, get this done now, and don't forget to empty you memory cards so you'll have plenty of room for more pictures.

If there are any guests who have not let you know whether or not they're coming, get in touch with them and find out.

If possible start sorting out the party bags. It can take a surprisingly long time to sort out half a dozen different items into a couple of dozen bags.

Contact the venue, entertainer, DJ and bouncy castle hire company just to make sure all is still well! You'll sleep better for it!

1 Day To Go

Cook, prepare or buy any food you still need such as bread, cheese etc. If cooking pizza, cook this now and then it will be cool and ready to serve tomorrow. Any jellies need to be prepared now too. Make sure you pack a cake knife for the birthday cake.

Double check the batteries in your camera or camcorder really are fully charged!

Make sure you have Blu Tak, pins and string handy for putting up the decorations, and that all the decorations are together and handy.

On The Day

Remember to pick up the cake, and to take everything out of the fridge/freezer.

Check you have all of the table decorations and room decorations, prizes, food, party bags, camera and music.