

**7 SIMPLE STEPS
TO A
GREAT
BIRTHDAY PARTY!**

BY DAVID FARR



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Step 1

Coming up with a Good Theme

The best birthday parties always have a good theme! I've performed for a lot of birthday celebrations and believe me; the best gatherings have a theme. It can be simple or complex, it really doesn't matter, just make sure to have one. A theme will help make your event that much better and memorable.

Start Early

Start as early as three months prior to the party. Make it fun. Brainstorm ideas with your child and come up with something everyone will enjoy. You can go with a commercial theme or a non-commercial theme.

Commercial vs. Non-Commercial Themes

The advantages of a commercial theme are that you can piggy back off an established kid's favorite character and it's easy to find accessories, but it can get costly. The non-commercial requires a little more creativity, but it will help if you have a tight budget.

Themes on a Budget

Here are some great non-commercial themes that cost very little to put together:

- **Treasure Island**- Ahoy, matey!
If your birthday boy or girl likes treasure hunting, pirates or adventures on the high seas, why not plan a birthday party around that? You could use custom eye patches, temporary tattoos then you can have kids make and decorate pirate hats. A treasure hunt is the perfect addition to this theme
- **Fiesta**
Go with red, green and white colors, turn on some music and let the kids dance their hearts out!
- **Safari**
Turn your backyard into a jungle with a safari-themed birthday party! Greens, yellows and browns will work well for safari decorations. Any and all stuffed monkeys, tigers, lions or other jungle creatures that the guest of honor owns could work well as additional decoration here and there. Plastic safari hats, binoculars, magnifying glasses and butterfly nets can also come in handy for creating a true safari setting. Trail mix, gummy worms and bug juice can be the snack combination of choice for the famished explorers. For girls you could have a butterfly hunt by making and hiding them around the house.

Below is a list of possible themes for your child:

Toddlers

Lady Bug

Teletubbies

Pretend Slumber Party

Preschoolers

Flower Power

Dinosaur Party

Talent Show

Carnival Party

Bubble Party

Box Party

School Aged

Construction Party

Sleepover Party

The Ultimate Bike Party

Sports Party

Splash Party

Twister Party

Magic Party

Music Themed Party

Tie-Dyed Party

Cheerleading Party

Dance Party

Kid's Cooking Party

Scrap Booking Party

Fairy Tale

Pirate Party

Space Party

Bowling Party

Craft Party

Backyard Campout

Team Colors Party

Tweens

Talent Show

Roller Skating

Splash Party

Dance Party

Sports

Magic Camp

Paint Ball

Step 2-Choose a Date & Place

The sooner you start the better for selecting when and where to have the party. If you wait too long you could find yourself competing with other birthday parties and if you want to have the event at an outside source, you might not be able to secure the location.

Home vs. Outside Venue

If you're on a tight budget then the home is the best place to have the party. Below are some advantages and disadvantages for having an in-home party.

Advantages

Saves Money
Convenient
Can Set Up Early
Most Needed Items in Home

Disadvantages

Space Limitation for Smaller Homes
More Cleaning on the Front End
More Cleaning After the Party

Using an Outside Venue has Advantages and Disadvantages as well.

Advantages

No Cleaning Before the Party
Clean Up After the Party is a Snap
Fun Atmosphere
Work with Professionals
Simple

Disadvantages

Can be Expensive
Inconvenient (if you forget something)
Large Crowds Possible

Time is Important

It's best to start your party on the quarter hour (*See Bonus #2- How to Get Your Guest to Arrive on Time*). If you're planning to feed everyone then have it around lunch or dinner time. If you don't want to feed the attendees, then have the party mid-morning or mid-afternoon.

Step 3 - Plan the Party

Decorations

Here's some ideas on ways you can add a festive atmosphere to your party:

- **Streamers** – This is one of the least expensive ways to decorate.

- **Balloons** – These can be attached to a mailbox or a sign outside to let guests know where to find the party. They make great decorations and kids love to take them home. And while we are on the subject...

A Few Tips about Balloons

Here are some things to consider when you are shopping for balloons:

- For best results always have a professional inflate the balloons with helium. It's best to have a grocery store, Walmart or a party store handle it.
- Always pick up your balloons the day of the party! The fresher they are the better. **DON'T PICK THEM UP THE DAY BEFORE OR THEY WILL DEFLATE!**
- Some stores offer treated balloons that will hold the helium longer.
- Keep your balloons indoors until it's time to decorate. Balloons can lose their shine or even pop if they're put outside too soon.
- Ask the store to use a separate string to tie off the strings holding the balloons as close the balloons as possible. This will save you from having to untangle them. This simple request can save you lots of time and aggravation.

Food Tips

- Serve cupcakes if you want to save yourself the hassle of sloppy cake cutting. They are easy to serve and eat!
- To simplify things, it's best to have bottled water or juice boxes in a cooler. The less plates, cups, utensils, forks, spoons, etc. the better.
- Pizzas with carrots or grapes are perfect foods for children. Hot dogs can be fun as well. Just cut the wieners along the sides and shape them into a person and boil it. The dog will grow arms and legs! Decorate with mustard or ketchup for eyes and mouth.

Games/Activities

Here's some ideas to get your creative mind going:

Water Balloon Toss – Make sure parents know that their kids will be getting wet.

Relay Races- This activity is always a lot of fun. Use your imagination!

Nerf Football Games- There's nothing like a good old fashioned game of Nerf Football!

Balloon Relay Race. Before the party, inflate about three balloons per child. Divide the guests into two teams. Each child runs to a pre-determined point, sits on their balloon, pops it and runs back to tag the next runner. The first team to pop one balloon per child wins the race. Be sure to have prizes for both the winners and the second place team. Do a re-run if the kids really enjoy it!

Pin the Tail to the Dinosaur- Why not update classic game, and pin a tail on a dinosaur. Just draw the parts yourself.

And don't forget about our favorites...**Ships & Sailors, Limbo, Simon Says and Pin the Tail on the Donkey.** These are all classics for a reason.

One of the biggest mistakes made individuals is over planning of activities. Too many games and a stringent schedule can stifle children and prevent them from using their own creativity to have fun. Kids always find a way to entertain themselves...so don't over plan.

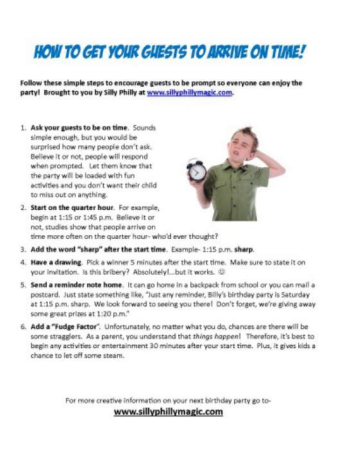
Step 4-Decide Who's Coming

How Many to Invite

On average, birthday parties range anywhere from 8 to 20 kids. You want to have a good turnout for your child's party, but you probably don't want a pack of rambunctious kids either..

A good rule of thumb is to expect 65-75% of the kids invited to attend the party. In other words, if you invite 20 children, on average, around 15 will show up. It's also possible that everyone will be there, so be prepared! Make sure everyone RSVP's. The sooner you get the invitations out the more likely you are to have a good showing (See *David Farr's Birthday Party Checklist*).

Invitations



You can purchase all sorts of invitations locally, online or you can make your own.

Evite.com is a great online service that will allow you to design your own invitations. It's quick, easy and very efficient.

To encourage promptness use the suggestions in the guide that was emailed to you- *How to Get Your Guests to Arrive on Time!*

Step 5- David Farr's Birthday Party Checklist

The best way to climb a mountain is one step at a time. This is true with any large task that you take on...and planning a birthday party is no exception. When you requested additional information from magickidsparty.com one the free gifts was the *David Farr's Birthday Party Checklist*. That thing is time tested by hundreds of party planners, so use it! Start planning at least three months out. Take care of the major things early like choosing a location, planning entertainment, choosing a theme, etc. to avoid any last minute disappointments. Remember, your child only turns their particular age once. Proper planning will eliminate stress and allow you to enjoy the party.

Step 6- Party Setup

If you followed the *David Farr's Birthday Party Checklist* then setup should be a whiz! Charge all video and digital cameras the night before. In addition, make sure all memory cards are clear of photos/videos. It wouldn't be a bad idea to have an extra memory card available as well. Ask friends to bring their cameras too. You don't want to miss any picture perfect moments.

Setup as much as possible the night before. This is a lot easier if you're having the party in your home. If you have decided to use an outside venue then you will need to check with the establishment to see how early you can arrive. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time.

Step 7- Party Time!

This is when all of your hard work pays off. If you've followed the checklist then all you have to do is tie up some loose ends and have a ball! Put any signs and/or balloons in the yard to let attendees know the location of the party. Make it stand out!

Go ahead and get the drinks ready. Remember to put them in a cooler before filling it with ice. It takes about thirty minutes for them to cool if they're packed properly. Any food you're going to serve can be set out fifteen minutes before the fun begins. Make sure you can locate the lighter. We had our daughter's party at a local pool recently and we couldn't find a lighter anywhere. Bottom line- she got to blow out an imaginary candle.

In regards to clean up...GET HELP! Who better to ask then the kids at the party? Make a game out of it. Give prizes for the child who picks up the most trash.

On last bit of advice, make sure to return anything rented or borrowed and get out thank you cards within 24 hours. Get this stuff out of the way a.s.a.p. so you can move on with your busy life!



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763-566-8597