

Birthday Party Blueprint

An essay in party planning by M. A. Gicman



Planning your child's birthday party can be a very time consuming and frustrating task. Not to mention disappointing if the celebration does not go well. Here are some tips that will help alleviate some of the preparation anxiety and make your child's next birthday bash a big success.

- ◆ About 4 weeks before the birthday, sit down with your child and discuss the type of party he/she would like. An initial draft of the guest list will be useful for further planning.
- ◆ If you are considering a professional entertainer, it is a good idea to make your calls and book the performer 4-6 weeks in advance. The more popular and talented entertainers will book up quickly.
- ◆ Be cautious when having costumed characters into your home. Small children may be quite frightened by them. Having these characters in your living room is a very different situation than when the character is 6 inches tall on the television screen and your child is in full control of the volume.
- ◆ Plan a set length of time for the party. One and a half to two hours is generally enough time for the party to start and end in fun.
- ◆ Request the assistance of several other adults. You will need about 1 adult for every 5 children ages 5 or under and 1 adult for every 8 children ages 6 and up.

- ◆ Plan more activities than you expect to have time for. There is a chance that a few of the activities may take less time than you had anticipated.
- ◆ Avoid hard candy and other foods that children may choke on. There is a real temptation to run and eat at the same time.
- ◆ For safety and for the good of your home, make sure that the party area boundaries are well defined. Remove any potential dangers and items that may be easily broken.
- ◆ Keep siblings involved in the party by giving them special jobs to accomplish. Ask them to greet the guests, place gifts on the gift table or dispose of the wrapping paper as the gifts are opened. Keeping siblings positively involved in the party will help to defuse potential conflict.
- ◆ Try to make the entire day special for your child. The night before, tie helium balloons and streamers to the child's bedposts once they are asleep. Relieve them of their daily chores. Let them pick their favorite food for one of the meals.
- ◆ If you have any birthday party tips or ideas that you would like to share, please drop a notes to the address below. They will be passed along in future issues.

Happy party planning!

