

## The Ultimate Party Checklist for a Stress-Free Kid Party!



### 2 Months Before

- ☐ Pick a Theme (and a Budget!)  
(In the next 8 weeks worth of shopping trips you will invariably run into some perfect party items - for the theme you've decided on - especially items on sale!)
- ☐ Set a Tentative Date (Check your schedule carefully).
- ☐ Start making the decorations  
Handmade can be cheap/nearly free but takes a lot of time – start early and do it a little each day – makes it stress-free. Even a very simple long paper chain can look very cool!
- ☐ Consider making a piñata – but start now (!)  
Kids love Pinatas – and they don't take as much “hands on time” as you suspect – slap on some wet pasty newspaper strips, put aside for a day (or 2) and repeat the process a couple times.  
Add some features in the last round of paste and paper wrangling. Then paint (not forgetting to add the rope – detailed instructions in our blog under Piñata). The waiting time can add up to week or two and – trying to get a piñata to dry in a hurry is no fun!
- ☐ Hire Help  
Entertainment , babysitter to help with smaller children, a high school student photobug with a good camera to take pictures ...
- ☐ Book the Venue (If it isn't to be a home party).



### 6 Weeks Before

- ☐ Decide on Games and Activities  
This is the most crucial component of the party (more than the décor and even the food)  
  
Write them down and make sure there are lot of activities on the list so if some games don't “fly” you can do other ones.  
  
Please note that if you can't explain the game in 30 seconds don't do it (unless you have a party for older children).  
  
Find out if the Child's Best Friend/Friends can make the tentative date that you set ...  
If not, try to alter the date to suit the best friend and *then* set the date
- ☐ Decide whether Siblings are invited and whether it is a “drop-the-kid-off” party. (It can be rather difficult to try to “fight a war on 2 fronts” – entertaining both kids and parents!)
- ☐ Order Party Supplies (Candles, Decorations, Favour Bags, Prizes, etc)



### **1 Month Before**

- ☐ Send out Invites  
Remember that less can be more (especially for younger children). Fewer children can mean a more enjoyable party.
- ☐ When sending out the Invites consider making a request for special attire.  
Wear black for a spy party, clashing bold primary colours for a superhero party, a pretty dress for a princess party – nothing too difficult for the guests to find. This can add to the party ambiance – and makes for cute pictures!
- ☐ Confirm with Helpers (A party guest's mom, a friendly neighbour, a pal, a favourite aunt...)
- ☐ Confirm the Guest List  
Can be tricky – if they don't RSVP – call them, get on this early as when you know someone is definitely not going to be there you can invite an extra child. Set an RSVP deadline.



### **2 Weeks Before**

- ☐ First Round of Shopping (especially for all those non-perishables like cake flour)
- ☐ Finish up all those Craft Projects (Piñata and any Handmade items)



### **1 Week Before**

- ☐ Decorate (don't leave it to the Last minute!)
- ☐ Set up your Musical Play List (a cd disc is nice as you can move a boombox around the room with you).
- ☐ Have a run through with your chosen Craft Activity  
If you are going to have Craft time as a warm-up, prep the craft stuff (such as pre-cutting items) so it will only take a child 15-20 minutes to complete (more information in the Craft Ideas section of the Blog).
- ☐ Prepare the Food (that can be Prepped ahead of Time)  
You can save money and make all the ice for the party (one ice tray at a time).
- ☐ Clean the House (don't bother with the areas that you will be "cordoned off")
- ☐ You may want to double check with your helpers-that they will indeed be at the party.
- ☐ Make the Cake and Freeze the un-iced cake  
(Homemade buttercream –already in the piping bags – freezes nicely too). The advantages to this are that you aren't making the cake at the heart-pounding last minute and a frozen cake ices easily – especially if you do a thin "crumb coat" (loads of cake decorating advice in the Cake Decorating section on the blog).



### **A Day or Two Before**

- ☐ Do the second round of shopping (for more perishable items)
- ☐ Recharge your camera batteries! (make sure you have an empty memory card too). It's always a good idea to hand the camera to someone at the party and let them snap a few pics (you will be too busy).



### **Day of Party**

- ☐ Cleaning Touch-up and Finish the decorating you did days ago (have the Birthday child help).

Don't forget the clean towels and extra toilet paper and kleenex (for those runny noses/sticky fingers).

Also - if you have time try to do a quick tidy of the fridge (as you will need space for the cake/bottles of soda and it will be easier to move the food in and out if the fridge is tidy with extra room.) A few extra things that are nice to do: taking out the trash ; setting up a "cloakroom" area ; bringing out the extra chairs and having the table all ready.

Also set up a tripod (if you haven't one – see if you can borrow one) near where the cake candles will be lit and blown out. (A much nicer photo if you turn off the flash and use the ambient light).

Take a Picture of the House looking so nice and clean with all the decorations (pat yourself on the back!) It is nice to have a shot of the "calm before the storm".

- ☐ Pick up the Cake (if you didn't make it Earlier)
- ☐ If you made and froze the cake – ice and let defrost
- ☐ Set up the Activity Stations (essential – more in the Party Activities Section of the Blog)
- ☐ Dress in Costume (if you are a big kid yourself!)
- ☐ Blow up the Balloons

Use a Pump and have someone help you if you can – as you can get dizzy and sick trying to blow up lots of balloons under duress. (A pump is more hygienic too.) If you want lots of Balloons you may want to consider investing in some "High Float"- a jelly that you squeeze into quality latex balloons that will keep balloons fresh for days and days!

### **During the Party**

- ☐ Insist on one group shot (even though it can be a pain to set up – in later years you will want to remember who was there). Pick a good time ( maybe ....pre-cake or pre-pinata).
- ☐ Try to get one shot of each guest separately (to be emailed after – loads of Photo-op advice in the photo-op section of the blog).
- ☐ Party! and don't forget to enjoy yourself ... Well Done!
- ☐ Have a "Gate Keeper" (good pal) at the door – sending the parents quickly on their way without delay ☺

### **After the party**

- ☐ Don't forget to send out the Thank-you's !

Try setting the condition that the Birthday child can't use gifts until thank you's are sent.

Write down the birthday child's verbal thank you verbatim on a postcard and have the child simply sign their name.

*It may seem excessive to start so early, but if you work at it slowly-but-surely the party will come off smoothly and with a minimum of stress. Just a little every day ... I find that when I watch tv in the evening for an hour or so I can do something with my hands, (a lot of TV shows don't require your full attention to follow along!) If running a kids' party fills you with dread - enlist the help of a good pal. Lots of women will enjoy "whooping it up" with the kids ... especially when you've made the celebration room fun and have made the food and planned everything! At the end of the day the kids just want to be together and play (no screens allowed!). Focus on having fun with the kids, not trying to "keep up with the Joneses"!*