



## **Everything you wanted to know about planning a birthday party but were to afraid to ask!**

### ***How many birthday party guests should you invite?***

This is always a primary concern with parents who are hosting a birthday party for their child. There are a number of options here. One of the standard approaches in the realm of birthday party planning is to start with the age of your child plus 2. In other words, if your child is turning 5, invite 5 children plus 2 more for a total of 7. This is a perfectly good method for inviting children but of course we don't live in a perfect world so here are a few more options.

- 1). SMALL SIZED BIRTHDAY PARTIES - Invite 4 – 6 children
- 2). MEDIUM SIZED BIRTHDAY PARTIES - Invite 7 – 12 children.
- 3). LARGE SIZED BIRTHDAY PARTIES -Invite 12 – 20 children.

These are some general guidelines that seem to fit most birthday party scenarios but in the end, there is no set standard. Keep in mind that large sized birthday parties can be very stressful to you so please make sure that you have at least one other adult to help you with the party. The one important factor that you should consider in the birthday party invitations is to make sure that your child has priority in choosing their choice of friends. This is the most important factor when you start your invitation planning.

### ***What about themed birthday parties. How do you put one together?***

Every so often the birthday child would like a special theme to be a part of their special day. This is quite normal and not very difficult to orchestrate. If your child decides on a theme for their birthday party, you can customize the party by decorating the room with color matching balloons and other theme ideas. For example a 'Barney The Purple Dinosaur ' themed party could have purple balloons, a Barney table cover, Barney birthday party hats and noise makers and of course a Barney birthday cake. These are all novel birthday party accessories that can be purchased from most party stores, drug stores novelty stores and so forth. You could even plan your activities and party games around the theme. Forget about pin the tail on the donkey, when you could have pin the tail on Barney.

Some birthday party themed parties could also incorporate having the children arrive to the party in a costume that compliments the theme. Or better yet, they could make their own costumes when they arrive. For example a fairy themed party could have the children dress up in costumes that they construct out of arts and crafts. All you have to provide is the necessary add-ons such as cardboard for the wings that the children could

trace and cut out as well as coloring markers and glitter. You would need to provide glue, scissors, paper, markers and strings to attach the wings. Add some cut out stars which are also colored and taped onto a piece of doweling or straws and you have a fairy wand. The possibilities are endless. Just make sure you help out with the cutting, gluing or anything else that may be a little difficult for the really young ones to do. Always make sure that you have adequate adult supervision and assistance for any arts and crafts endeavors.

You may also want to make the magic show theme oriented in some way. I personally have no problem with incorporating some form of the theme into my shows as it takes only a little work and I can easily adapt one or more of the magic tricks to be suited for the theme of the day. I also perform in many different themed characters such as a wizard for my Wizard/Harry Potter themed shows, a jester for my Merry Enchanted show, or even various forms of clowns for my magic clown shows. Don't be afraid to customize your child's show if they ask you for it. It is fun and your child will have a memory to last forever after.

### ***The Magic Show – How much space do our magic shows require?***

I can honestly tell you that any living room, play room, common room or basement will be perfectly suitable for a magic performance by me in any of my characters or themed shows. All of the magic shows are specifically designed to adapt to all environments indoors or out.

Did I mention outdoors? Oh yes, when summer comes it is truly a time for fun in the sun, which means that birthday parties can also take place outdoors in your backyard or a park. I have performed many, many birthday party shows outdoors and if you decide that your child's party is to be held outdoors then you should make sure that if it is in your backyard that you have an alternate room indoors set up for the show in case it starts to rain. You must also make sure that you have proper shading for the children. A backyard canopy tent is very good for this purpose or a side of the house that is sheltered from the sun also works well. Children will enjoy the show much better if they are not sitting out in the sun for 45 – 60 minutes. It is also healthier for them as the sun can cause certain problems such as heat stroke and/or sun burn.

### ***The party schedule. How to have a successful birthday party.***

The day of the party is approaching. Do you have it all planned out? It is really easy to have a wonderful and successful birthday party for your child. All you have to do is be organized. Keep in mind that most parties should be around 2 – 2 1/2 hours at the maximum. All parties have a defined beginning, middle and end. It is easy to break it down into 3 sections so here it goes.

### ***THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF AN AVERAGE BIRTHDAY PARTY***

***The Birthday Party is between 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.***

(Your times will vary but most birthday parties start between 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.)

### **THE BEGINNING**

**1). THE ARRIVAL** – 2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. If you have stated on your birthday party invitations that the party is between 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. then you should anticipate your guests arriving between the hours of 2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. As they arrive, you should greet them with a warm smile as some kids can be very shy when arriving to a birthday party especially when they may not know all of the other children. It is also highly recommended that your child greets them as well. After all they are the guests and they have brought a special gift for your child as well. It is a great ice – breaker to have them greet you and the birthday girl or boy as soon as they arrive. Once the children start arriving it is a good idea to have them stay in one designated room or area of the house until all the children have arrived. A video, quiet activity or a nice selection of toys will occupy their time here until the magician arrives. If you are going to feed the children lunch, you may do that at this time also. Light snacks and light lunches are always best and you don't want to make a big mess. Use lots of disposables such as paper plates, cups and cutlery as it is very easy to clean up and dispose of and is also economical. You should also have a dedicated area or room for all of the lovely gifts. This also adds a great deal of excitement for your child as they witness the growing mountain of presents getting bigger with every guest's arrival. ***Always remember that gifts should be opened at the end of the party. That event is of course the finale of the party and cannot be followed by anything better than that. Opening gifts before the magic show will definitely take away from the magic show because the birthday child as well as most of the other kids will be interested in playing with the gifts only.*** Unfortunately this has happened to me on a few occasions and I can honestly say that it isn't much fun doing a magic show when most of the kids and the birthday child only want to play with the new toys and have lost the interest in any form of entertainment after that.

### **THE MIDDLE**

**2). THE MAGIC SHOW** – 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. approx. I show up on your doorstep making a very merry and magical entrance and I greet and congratulate the birthday child on their special day as well as all of the guests. It takes me a few minutes to set up my show and I am ready to delight the children with a trip into my zany world of magic. I begin the magical adventure and sweep the children away to a wonderful world of magic and fun. ***\*\*\*\*\*THIS IS ALSO THE PERFECT TIME FOR YOU TO HAVE A BREATHER AND RELAX FOR A WHILE.\*\*\*\*\****

**3). THE MAGIC ADVENTURE COMES TO AN END** - 3:30 p.m. approx. The children are now ready for the next step. ***THE EATING OF THE BIRTHDAY CAKE.*** This is also a good time to give them goody bags if you have decided to include that aspect of the birthday party. Some parents prefer to give goody bags at the very end of the party as the children are leaving. There is no right or wrong here. It is really your choice and it will be the right choice for your particular party.

**4). TIME FOR THE HAPPY BIRTHDAY SONG, AND CAKE** – 3:45p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Well the name says it all. This is when the children have just experienced a wonderful and enchanting magic show and have built up their appetites for the ever popular BIRTHDAY CAKE! All the children should be lead into the cake eating room as the singing of 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' begins and is followed by the yummy birthday cake.

## THE ENDING

**5). TIME FOR PRESENTS** 4:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. – Well you are approaching the end of a successful birthday party so here you are at the home stretch. Have the children sit in an orderly fashion in the designated gift opening room or area and allow the birthday child to go wild with what will be the best part of their day as nothing can top the opening of the birthday presents. If you wish to keep track of which guest brought what present in case you want to send thank you cards a few days later, simply have the birthday child announce out loud who gave them that present as you jot down the name and gift on a note pad or a guest/gift list. This is of course strictly up to you and once again is not a mandatory requirement. Once all the gifts have been opened, which usually doesn't take too long as your child will have ripped open every one in an assembly line fashion, allow the kids to play with the new toys for a short time.

**6). GAME OR ACTIVITY TIME** 4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. You are almost home free. Only a little more time to go and the birthday party has been a success. You have about fifteen minutes left before most of the parents are going to be arriving to pick up their kids, so why not have a quick party game or two or maybe a final activity. The time will pass very fast here so keep the games or activities short and simple.

**7). PARENTS ARRIVE TO PICK UP THEIR KIDS** 4:30 p.m. – HURRAY!!!! You did it! You survived the birthday party experience and you have given you child something very special. A memory that they will have forever after and the fact that you provided them with a magical guest will also be something that they will appreciate and never forget as they get older. They can look back and say my parents are pretty cool! They gave me magic on that day in so many ways.

*After you have cleaned up treat yourself to a nice relaxing evening at home with a movie, put your feet up and have some quiet and stress free down time. Remember you only have to do this once a year for your child so make that special extra effort for them on the most special day of their year.*

***GOOD LUCK AND BEST WISHES IN PLANNING YOUR BIRTHDAY PARTY!!!***