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Paul's Birthday Party Survival Guide

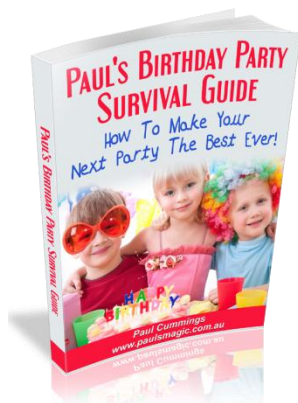
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This E-book is offered 'as is' and the reader is encouraged to seek further information where necessary for planning any party. The reader is to take full responsibility for any decisions they make based on the information provided in this e-book.



INTRODUCTION



Paul's Birthday Party Survival Guide

Welcome to my 'Birthday Party Survival Guide'.

My name is Paul Cummings and as a magician I have entertained at thousands of children's parties and events through my business, 'Paul's Magic'.

I have seen some very poorly planned parties (sadly what planning there was left a lot to be desired) where bored children are in control and running wild. Not a pretty sight. After seeing this so often I figured parents in particular needed a party guide to help them plan a great birthday party.

As children grow-up, one of their most cherished memories is their birthday party. Long after the cake has been eaten and the ice cream has melted, the memories live on. That is why it is important to carefully plan and prepare for your best party ever.



My Birthday Party Survival Guide is filled with ideas and helpful hints to make your next party an overwhelming success. You will learn the secrets to party planning. Included is a step-by-step checklist that will make your life infinitely easier.

This survival guide covers all of the important aspects of throwing a party for children.

Learn the secrets to;

- Sending out invitations
- Preparing food
- Playing games
- Deciding when to open the presents.
- Find out the four most common reasons why a birthday child will cry.
- Learn how to put together a party on a budget.
- Find out the best type of entertainment to hire.

Everyone wants to hear their child say, "That was the best birthday party ever!" And wouldn't it be wonderful if when you child grows up and you ask them "Which was your favourite birthday party?" you will want to hear them say "Well, I really don't know! They were all so fantastic it is hard to pick out just one!"

Well I can't guarantee those sorts of reactions but it would be nice for you to be that parent that your child (and their friends) brag about at school for giving the best birthday parties ever.

Does this mean you have to spend a ton of money to achieve this fame? No, not at all; you would be surprised on how little you have to spend to put on a fantastic birthday party leaving your wallet and child happy.



So read on and survive your next birthday party!

MUST KNOW BIRTHDAY PARTY SECRET TIPS

Face it; getting a group of kids together for a birthday party, regardless of age, takes a lot of finesse, quality thought and consideration, time, and sometimes a lot of headache tablets (maybe not).

Some people have a real knack for party giving and appear to handle it with ease while others escape barely by the skin of their teeth. Those that appear to tackle any size birthday party, regardless of age of child do so because they have mastered the skill of organization and must have nerves of steel. (Or so we may think)

However, for those of us who have not quite mastered the organization nor achieved the nerves of steel, here are some tips that will help your next birthday party go without a hitch. (Except for the fact you may have 25 kids running riot through your house)

➤ PLAN WITH YOUR CHILD

You are creating a birthday party for your child. Unless it is a surprise party, you should always involve your child in the party planning and preparation stages. This gives them ownership of the party and allows them to get excited making it that much more of a memorable event. The anticipation for the grand day alone will keep



them 'pumped' in helping to make sure everything that needs to be done is completed.

Of course, this is to be age appropriate. Allow your child input on theme, location, menu, games, guest list, and decorations. All ages of children can help fill party favour bags and older children can help fill out invitations, and decorate. You may be pleasantly surprised how little you have to end up doing.

➤ **THE GUEST LIST**

The dreaded guest list; this is where you may have to step in and draw some boundaries. For younger children it is easier to compile a list of a few close friends and their children or a few children from your child's day care. Older children, if allowed, would invite their entire school. First and foremost, know your limitations! Ask yourself just how many screaming, laughing, loud, and rowdy kids can you handle at one time?

It's worthwhile thinking about the location of the party and considering the following;

- How many children can the space safely accommodate?
- Do you have enough helpers for the number of children?
- Do you have enough equipment? E.g. tables, chairs etc?

Give your child a ballpark number. (Word to the wise, shoot low first.) Give your child the least amount of kids you can handle comfortably. Say if your maximum is 10, offer your child 5 guests. Allow them to counter and if it gets up to ten you are still within your limitation range, yet they feel like they had a choice.

Keep in mind the ages of the kids being invited as well and how much help you will have when setting your personal limitations. Will adults accompany them or will you be on your own.



If toddlers are attending specify that an adult must remain with the child at the party. This saves you from having to be disciplinarian to a child who may be less than accommodating.

A good rule of thumb with toddlers is to take their age and just add one and invite no more guests than that. Therefore, for a 3 year olds birthday party the most amount of guest you would invite would be four.

It seems in my experience that the average party guest-list is eight to twelve children for children over the age of six. .

True Note: Though I find large parties are more the norm these days, small ones still work great. I did a show for Mr 4 yr old and he just wanted his best friends to attend. There were four children for my magic show and we had a wonderful time. I did a show just today (at time of writing obviously) and had four cousins aged 5,7,9, & 10 and the parents sat around and enjoyed the show too. It was lovely.

Keep in mind where the party will be housed at such as in the home, yard, roller or ice skating rinks, park, recreation centre, public beach or swimming pool, laser tag or paint ball facility, sporting event, convention centre, or a hotel. Some of these locations can be very expensive so you may want to consider the amount of cost per guest of the location when giving an allowable head count.

➤ **HOW LONG TO GO FOR**

Honestly, do you want to have an all day birthday party? Here is when you do get to pull in the reins and set a time limit for the event! How long do you want the party to go on?



Toddler parties are easy to put a time limit on. They tire quickly for the most part and other parents may have their child on a strict routine. So generally, an hour to an hour in a half is ample time for a toddler's birthday.

Kindergarten to 3rd grade can vary a bit more depending on the child personally. However, no more than 2 hours is needed to celebrate in a smashing style. Again, here is a time to know your limitations and stick to them. Probably 99% of the parties I do are 2 hour parties.

Older children are going to think they want their party to go on all day and night. This is where you have the option of saying "Too bad, so sad" or again you can make a low bid offer and allow them to think they are getting more than you desired. Older kids love thinking they are one-step ahead of you. When they are adults, you can pass on the secret to them when they are planning their child's birthday party.

True Note: Probably 99% of the birthday parties I perform at are 2 hour parties.

➤ **PICKING A PARTY THEME**

There are a few things to keep in mind before solidifying on one theme. For a toddler you can pretty much pick a theme by anything you see your toddler taking a special liking too. If they have yet to show any real interest in one thing or another you can be pretty sure whatever you choose will go over just fine.

Discuss party themes with the birthday child. Allow them to pick a few of their favourite ideas and you throw out a few ideas. Take each idea and write them down on their own individual piece of paper or large notebook card. This is where the

brainstorming comes in. You and your soon to be guest of birthday honours will have to write down on each theme what you would need for decorations, food to follow



theme, cake idea, game ideas and party favours as well as where the party will be located at. Once you get the basics written down, look at each individual theme and pick out the top three. Base your decision on your budget, ease of pulling off, as well as child's enthusiasm, within reason of course.

From the top three picks, relook at supplies needed to pull it off as well as location and see if there is anything that cannot be accommodated. If all of them are within your budget and capability range, you can give your child one of two options; they can pick their favourite out of the three or you can throw them in a hat and let them pick that way. Once the decision is made, it needs to be final so make sure you are capable of pulling off any of the three given choices.

Here are some party theme ideas;

Perfect Party Themes for Children Ages 1 through 11

Rug Rats

Pokémon

Bear in the Big Blue House

Clifford the Big Red Dog

The Busy World of Richard Scarry

Paddington Bear

Outer Space or Aliens

American Idol

Barnyard Bug or Critter

Beach Theme Camping

Sports

Dinosaurs

Color Carnival

Dress Up

Firefighter

NASCAR

Pajama

Pirate



Princess

Animal

Rainbow

Safari

Surf

Tea Party

Teddy Bear

Trains, Planes and Automobile

Deep Sea

Wild West

Wizard of Oz

Sponge Bob

Any Cartoon

Spooky

Ethnic Theme

The Land Before Time

Barbie

Perfect Party Themes for Children Ages 12 and up.

Amazing Race

Beach Party

Camping Party

Dance Party

Fiesta

Hollywood

Murder Mystery

Polka Dot

Pool Party

Scavenger Hunt

Slumber Party

Survivor

Bowling Party



Hotel Party

Laser Tag Party

Limo Party

Movie Night Party

Paint Ball Party

Skating Party

Sporting Event Party

Theme Park Party

Retro

➤ **KEEP THE KIDS HAPPY AND ACTIVE**

Have plenty of games for the kids to participate in and keep the downtime to a minimum.

Summer birthdays are much easier to plan outdoor birthday parties for to keep children actively involved, yet it does not mean in the winter a sledding party or an ice-skating party with hot cocoa cannot be done.

There are also many games that can be played indoors that do not require much preparation and regardless of the time of year for the party, you should always have several backup games for the children to play.

Summer time you could be stuck with a rainy day and winter it could be too cold to go out. Have game ideas for both in door and out doors for varying age groups. Factor in approximately two games per hour of party minus time for cake and ice cream.

Make sure to have enough party game gifts that no matter if a guest wins or loses they will receive a gift. No one likes to lose and after all it is a party and you want everyone to enjoy it and be happy.



➤ ALWAYS HAVE A BACK-UP PLAN

Because as we know weather may not always permit the intended party plan it is best have a great back up plan or be ready to see a very unhappy child on their birthday and a houseful of kids with idle hands.

Have an alternate location picked out in advance if your home will not accommodate all the guests at one time should the party be rained on or other situations arise.

Regardless, always make sure food is mobile, and you have plenty of back-up games up your sleeve! Do your best to readjust the party to new environment in a relaxed manner. Getting uptight will be picked up on fast and the young guest will probably react accordingly, which is never pleasant!

As long as you appear to be having a great time, the guest will too.

➤ SLEEP OVERS

Set your ground rules way in advance in regards to sleepovers. If the party was not intended to be a sleepover let your child know that once the party is over, it is over unless you agree in advance for a guest or two to remain through the night.

You will be exhausted by the end of the party so again this is a great time to know your limitations. If the party's theme is a sleepover, then set your ground rules first when making the party plans with your child. Try to steer away from sleepovers for children under the age of ten unless you already know the children well. This will save you from the middle of the night wake ups by children who are not yet experienced in spending the night at someone's home and having to return them or call a parent to pick them up.

➤ PARENT AND CHILD MOMENTS



Make a point to make the birthday child's day a special event between the parent(s) and child.

This is a great time to extend an extra act of kindness or steal a few special moments with the birthday child. Make their favourite breakfast and serve it with a sentimental card or a letter hand written to them telling them all the things that you adore about them.

Yes, you have put a lot of effort into making sure they have a fantastic birthday party but nothing can compare with that special time you sneak in on their special day to let them know they are worth it.

➤ **PINATA**

The famous Pinata that children of all ages adore so much comes with their own special set of rules to live by.

Piñatas are great for a variety of parties and can be filled with practically anything, which makes them great for all age groups. With younger kids though, piñatas can become frustrating when they do not have the strength to bust it. Check to see if your piñata comes with an escape trap operated by a pull string. Smaller kids can take turns pulling on the string until one frees the trap and the candy or toys come raining down.

Regardless of age of kids, make sure the piñata is big enough to hold enough candy to go around. You do not want anyone feeling left out. If there are some shy kids in the crowd, have some leftover candy used to stuff the piñata set aside to give them their own separate bag.

Make sure you hang your piñata in a sturdy location and away from anything that could be broken by a missed swing.



It is more fun to watch when the children are blindfolded swinging aimlessly at the piñata. The children's laughter is priceless.

Spin the blind folded child around a few times and then let them go for it. Set the amount of swings allowed in each turn. Start with the younger kids, first working up in age and size as turns allow.

Most importantly, keep the other children back when one is up to bat!

➤ **DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP**

You will need help. There is no way you can be in more than one place at one time. When it comes time to prepare the food, cut cake, serve ice cream or what-not you will want to have someone who will keep the games going until it is time to settle to eat or enjoy some cake and ice cream.

Some great people to consider in giving you a helping hand are friends, relatives, another child's parent, favourite babysitter, or an older sibling. Generally, you will find most parents of guest will be more than happy to lend a helping hand, especially if you offer to return the favour one day.

Do not be afraid to delegate out some of the responsibilities. You may think you are a super parent but tending to a flock of demanding children and still trying to keep the flow going can be rough no matter how much kryptonite you have under your belt.

➤ **USE A LIST**

Forgetting something can easily break the party and unbelievably yet true, there have been more occasions then you could imagine were the host has forgotten to pick up the birthday cake or in the mix of all the planning did not stop long enough to buy a gift for their birthday child. Trust me on this one, the list will save the day!



➤ **CAMERA/VIDEO READY**

Have your camera/video ready and at your disposal at all times. Try to capture as many pictures as possible. Have other adults that are helping you also have a camera available to them as well to aid in catching shots when you are unable.

Another great idea depending on the children's age is to supply them with a camera at the beginning of the party. Allow them to take pictures in their eyes view as what they see as perfect picture moments.

➤ **POLITE BIRTHDAY CHILD**

Birthday parties are a great time to teach your child appreciation and great social skills. Discuss with your child prior to the party and remind them on the day to make sure to thank the guest for coming and if gifts were brought, thank them for the gifts as well.

A few days after the party, dependant on child's age, sit with them and help them fill out thank you cards to the guests. This can even be done on your computer.

➤ **MEMORALIZE THE EVENT**

A picture may speak a thousand words but a picture story says so much more. There are numerous programs available, many that come on pictures you have developed on disc that allow you to make picture stories out of your pictures. You can add captions, voice inserts, and even music backgrounds into these nifty programs and they are easier to use than you think. You do not need to be a computer geek to make a memorialized picture story disc of your child's' birthday party.

This makes a great keepsake treasure that your child could have for life and pass down to their children. Think how great it would be if your special days had been



captured on disc and your parents had taken the time to add caption, voice inserts, or even popular music of the time, and you was able to view them as an adult. It would make for a great family tradition and something your child will treasure dearly as an adult.

If that is still a bit too high tech, you can make a scrapbook. Incorporate pictures from the birthday party, preparation list, theme cards made to decide what kind of party to have, pieces of the wrapping paper and ribbons the gifts were adorned, and add your own personal notations as to what foods were served, games played, and guest in attendance in the scrapbook. You can also add particular quirks your child had at that age, favourites and dislikes, accidents, bumps, bruises, and what-nots, much like you would in a baby journal. Either way, it will memorialize the day and the

child's life and will make your child feel special on those days when you are no longer around to share those memories.

➤ **ACTIVITIES**

When planning activities, break up the time into 15 minute segments, with a couple of emergency ideas just in case.

➤ **TO EAT OR TO NOT EAT**

If you plan your party around a meal time, 12 noon or 5 PM, you will be expected to feed the kids. Plan foods that children enjoy. Finger foods are great. See the section on FUN FOODS for some unique ideas. Disposable knives, forks, plates etc can make life easier when it comes to cleaning up later.

➤ **DRINKS**



Clear or light coloured liquids such as 7-Up, ginger ale, or white grape juice are best. They are caffeine free and won't leave much of a stain carpet or furniture.

➤ **CAKE**

The cake is the centrepiece of the whole party. Order the cake at least two weeks in advance. **Pick up the cake early encase there is a mistake that needs to be corrected.**

➤ **PARTY SUPPLIES**

Party stores have a wide range of party favours to choose from. Sometimes you can even purchase a 'theme' package which includes most everything you need.

Party bags are very popular. Pick out different party favours and place them in individual bags labelled for each child.

The best time to hand out the party bags is at the end of the party when the kids are leaving.

➤ **BALLOONS**

Order the balloons at least a week in advance. Kids love balloons and it is a great way to decorate the room.

Note: Hang some balloons on the mailbox as a beacon to help people find your house. (Practical and can be very exciting for the birthday child)

➤ **STANDARD SUPPLIES**

- Before the party be sure to have batteries (or recharge) in your camera and spare ones available.
- In this video age, charge the battery on your video camera/phone/tablet and have enough recording space.



- Have a supply of garbage bags and paper towels on hand.
- If the party is during the summer, have some sun block and maybe spare hats available.
- A first aid kit should be close at hand for emergencies.
- Lighter/matches for birthday cake candles.

➤ MUSIC

Pick music that is age-appropriate. Kids love to listen and dance to music, especially if it is from their generation. (Though I did do a show where the 6 year old birthday child wanted 'Beatles' music, so it's worth checking out what music the birthday child wants)

➤ GIFTS

The presents should all be in a specific area, preferably on a table out of reach. It's generally best the gifts are not opened until the end of the party. This can be a part of the party after the cake and guests are beginning to leave or after all have left.

Refrain from allowing the kids to open the presents and take the toys out. Pieces are easily lost and feelings are hurt. It is not a good sight to see the birthday child fighting with their friends over their presents.

➤ MOVIE TIME

A sanity-saving suggestion is to rent a children's movie for the end of the party. Waiting for the parents to pick up their children can be the hardest part of the party. A popular movie or cartoon will help keep the peace and set a calming atmosphere.

➤ PETS



Protect your pets. **Put your pets in a safe area** away from the party. Some children play rough, and animals may bite if threatened.

➤ **INVOLVE THE FAMILY**

Involve the entire family in the party. Assign duties for each family member to help them feel a part of the special day.

➤ **COST SAVING TIPS**

- Make your own invitations and party decorations. Your kids will love this special project, which will ultimately make the party more memorable. A computer can be used to make fun and colourful invitations, banners, and decorations.
- Plan the party around non-meal times. The price of food will increase the cost of the party by two or three times. Kids really only want the cake and ice cream, anyway.
- Instead of party bags, check out a couple of craft books from the local library. For just a few dollars, you can get the supplies for a couple of different projects. Kids will love making the crafts and will have something to take home with them.
- Set up a backyard Olympics. Kids love to play games and you can find out their favourites by asking other parents or teachers. Hand out stickers to the winners (try to make sure that everyone wins at least one game). See FUN PARTY GAMES later in this book for suggestions.

WHAT MAKES A BIRTHDAY CHILD CRY



- **Confusion:** Have the birthday child help in the planning of the party. Go step-by-step through the entire plan of the party so that your child will know what to expect.
- **Attention:** The birthday child expects to be the centre of attention. The birthday child may sometimes think that too much attention is focused on siblings or other guests. Kids may also become frustrated if they do not win every game on their special day. Talk to your child before the party regarding their expectations to avoid this problem.
- **Special Toys:** Make sure that any special toys of the birthday child are put away. **Kids may share at first, but confrontations can often follow.**
- **Tiredness:** Try to keep your child on his/her normal schedule before the party to avoid becoming over-tired.

FUN PARTY GAMES

No one should go home feeling like a loser! Avoid tears by selecting games that allow every child to succeed. Play at least one cooperative game where everyone works as a team and wins together.

Games and Activities for Children 1 through 10

- **Animal Game.** This is a great game to build a couple weeks before the party. Collect a bunch of old magazines or colouring books and cut out pictures of different animals. You may want to glue them to notebook cards to make them sturdier. The game goes like this. Each guest will get animal pinned with safety pins to the back of their shirt. Make sure you let all the kids know first though that they are not to tell each other what animal is pinned to the back of each other's shirt. The child then ask inquiringly "Does it have a tail?" until they can guess what animal they are. This is a great time to have a grab bag



handy. When they guess which animal they are, they get to take one item out of the grab bag... no peeking though!

- **Design your own Name Tag Activity.** Have a craft table set up to where they can design their own nametag. Have markers, stickers, glitter, and what-nots available for them to use their artistic abilities. If they are smaller children, you can help them by writing their name yet allow them to decorate as they wish.
- **Bob the Builder Activity.** This activity is perfect for the Bob the Builder party theme. For this activity, you will need enough unfinished birdhouses (or any like craft project – read on) for each guest to have one and a couple spares, paint, and paint brushes. You can get small birdhouses from many craft stores however if you are handy, rather than purchasing small unfinished birdhouses you can make some out of balsa wood. To bring the theme to life you can make Bob the Builder work aprons. Have the workstation set up and allow the kids to paint their birdhouse in their own special design. Yet another gift the child can take home to their parents or keep as a party favour.
- **The Toothpick Marshmallow Tower Game.** This is a cheap game for your young ones to play. All you need is some toothpicks, and large and miniature marshmallows. It is probably not a wise game to play with real young children, but if well supervised 5 and up should be fine. The object of the game is to see who can build the biggest tower. You can set a timer on it if you choose. So everyone can win you can do this game in sets of three children. For each set, there are three winners: one with the biggest tower, one with the most creativity, and one with the smallest tower. That way each round no one loses.
- **Musical Chairs.** Another freebie! All you need for this game is chairs (enough for all guest or play it in rounds), music, and someone to operate the



music. This game has been around forever and is always a winner with the little ones. You play the music as the kids circle around the chairs you remove one chair and when the music stops whoever remains standing is out. You can either choose to give prizes with this game or not. If you choose to give prizes you can have some set up for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. out rewards. It can be something as simple as stickers! Kids love stickers.

- **Boat Race Game.** This game is great for little ones. All you need is a couple roasting pans or deep cake pans, water, straws, and a few small bathtub toy boats. Give the kids a straw and let them pick their boat and time how long it takes them to blow their boat to the other end of the container. If they are too young to blow very well, have them try to get their boat to the other side only using the straw.
- **The Mining Game.** This game is great for the entire age group and is cheap. Fill a cardboard box with popped popcorn and depending on the theme hide theme based party favours or candy in the popcorn. You can do it like dunking for apples, blindfolded, or with one arm tied behind the back; however you choose. They get to mine until they pull out one item. Everyone wins.
- **Spoon Walk.** Another cheap game that is tons of fun. You can use practically anything but I **do not** recommend using raw eggs especially if indoors. Golf balls or ping-pong balls work great with this game as well. The object of the game is getting the ball to the other side of the room without dropping it off the spoon. If you want to make it a bit tougher for the older kids, have them carry the spoon handle in their mouth.
- **Sock Game.** Games do not need to cost money to be a riot and the sock game is proof of that. I am not sure about other parents, but I have never had much luck getting little ones to put their socks on themselves. Well with this game, they will not only put them on themselves, they will love doing it as



well! Get a mess load of socks, it does not matter if they match or not. The object of the game is to see who can put the most socks on the fastest. Set a timer (age appropriately, more time for little ones, less time the older they get) and have them go at it. You can make up categories so everyone wins such as most socks on one foot, most on two feet, most colourful socks used, shortest socks, you get the idea.

- **Balloon Burst.** All kids love balloons and this is a great activity you can have done up well before the party. Place inside each balloon a slip of paper stating what they have won; it can be a sticker, piece of gum, candy, or a grab out of the grab bag. Blow the balloons up and tie them off. Depending on the age of the children will determine what is used to burst the balloons to see what prize they have won. Little ones you can have them sit on them or help them burst the balloon they chose.
- **Balloon Relay Race.** You need 2 teams in single file lines. Place a balloon between the knees of the first child in each line. When the race starts, the first child on each team turns to face the next child in line. The second child must grasp the balloon with his/her knees and turn to pass it to the next child and so on. If the balloon falls to the ground, the team must start over. The first team to successfully pass the balloon to the last child in line wins.
- **Floating Balloons.** Every child receives a large inflated balloon. The object of the game is to throw the balloon up into the air and keep it afloat by tapping it up. The person that can keep his/her balloon afloat longest wins.
- **Bobbing for Donuts.** The preparation for this game requires tying a string through a small donut (one donut per child). Hang the donuts from a tree or something in your home. The donuts should be hung so they are at the levels



of the children's mouths. The goal is to eat the entire donut without using their hands. This game is a great photo opportunity.

- **Balloon Wrestling.** Preparation requires putting a small party favour inside a balloon, then blowing it up. You need one balloon per child. Use these balloons as decorations for the party. At the end of the party, give each child a balloon. Tell the children to wrestle the balloon (by sitting on it, jumping on it, squeezing it) until it pops. Don't tell them there is a surprise inside and watch their expressions when they discover the secret prize inside the balloon.
- **Pin the Something on the Something.** Traditionally pin the tail on the donkey, but this game can be changed to fit any theme.
- **Treasure Hunt.** Scatter coins or small prizes in the yard and have the kids hunt for them. You can also do a paper clue based hunt with two or three small groups.
- **Guess How Many.** Fill a jar with candy, marbles, etc. And see who get nearest the actual number.

Games and Activities for Children 11 and Up

- **Mystery & Murder Mystery Games.** The internet has made this game free to anyone. A Google search with 'Free Mystery and Murder Mystery Games' will bring a ton up for you to choose. You can also purchase more advance versions of this type of game online. This would be a great task for the birthday child to get ready. All Instructions are included and they are great fun for this age group.
- **Indoor Golf Ball Croquet Game.** This game makes for some hysterical pictures. Each guest will need one pair of panty hose and two golf balls. Place



the one golf ball in each leg of the panty hose. Tie the pantyhose around the waist with the long ends of the legs hanging down in front of the guest. The guest will then take turns trying to hit a golf ball that is placed on the ground into designated targets. You can use duct tape as targets or pieces of paper.

- **Karaoke Contest.** For the brave teens, a karaoke contest can be a blast. They can pretend like they are the next up and coming Pop Star and other guest can play the roles of the judges.

FUN FOOD KIDS LOVE

- **Bugs on a Log.** Cut celery into 6" lengths and spread with peanut butter. Put raisins ('bugs') pattern. Or you can have the children add their own 'bugs'.
- **Pigs in a Blanket.** Ingredients include hot dogs, cheese, refrigerator croissants. Cut the hot dogs lengthwise and cut the cheese into strips. Unroll the croissants and stuff them with hot dogs and cheese. Roll the croissants back up and bake as directed.
- **Silly-Face Pizza.** Use English muffins, pizza sauce, and shredded mozzarella cheese to make individual size pizzas. Use pepperoni, sliced olives, mushrooms, and green peppers to make a silly face or design to match the party theme.
- **Cupcake Cones.** This is a great. Fill flat- bottomed ice cream cones 3/4 full with cake batter. Bake, frost, and decorate. Easy to eat and NO DISHES after.

PARTY FAVOURS

It is generally accepted as necessary as a parent to provide your child's birthday party with party favours. Course, you can always buck the trend. It does not mean you need to break the bank, it just means you had better have something to offer.



This is like the coolest thing to a kid when they go to a party and the one thing your child's friends will comment on is what they got. Kids can grumble if there are no favours and complain immensely about what a bore the party was.

Creativity can pay off huge here. The chapter regarding party games and activities offers quite a few activities have built in party favours. That is one way you can accomplish to light two candles with one match!

Depending on the age of the child is also going to factor in on the amount of money forked out for party favours. Luckily the older children, 14 and up do not necessarily expect party favours anymore. However, a 10-year-old girl inviting 10 friends over for a make-up party can get costly in party favours. As far as make-up party themes go, I suggest you check with your nearest make-up dealer and ask to look at their discounted or close out items. It is a great way to get fingernail polishes and lip glosses for the preening beauties.

Dollar stores are another great way to save the pocket book for any theme! They carry everything from party supplies such as loot bags, or otherwise known as goodie bags, and a wide variety of party toys and toys in general that would work great. A couple of packages of army men coming 30 in a package will work great split up used in goodie bags for an army theme party.

Some great standbys that make excellent fillers for goodie bags are individually wrapped cookies, candy, suckers, and token toys such as rings, pencils, stickers, noisemakers, and small individual play dough packages.

One key pointer to keep in mind is, the bigger the bag, the more you have to buy to fill it properly. Think of things you have seen your child come home with from parties. What was your first impression? What was your child's impression? Base your shopping off that. If your child was less than thrilled with the party favours received at another's party you can bet that if you buy the same types of things the guest will not be pleased either.



Some ideas for kids that are 10 and older are glow led necklaces, light up rings, bracelets, necklaces, hats, photo frames, personalized gifts, wrapped candy bars, personalized pens or pencils, die cast cars, or nail files.

Just use your imagination and in the three to four weeks you have to plan watch for things on sale or discontinued that would be unique.

Here are just a few more activities you could incorporate into your birthday party festivities where party favours are built in. Purchase either 3x5 inch or whichever size you prefer of stock paper picture frames (the kind where a picture slides into them). You can get these at any art and craft supply store or order them online. Take a group picture on a digital camera of the birthday child with all their friends around them and print off before the guest leave putting each one into a photo frame. When the guests leave they have a picture of the guest of honour with them in it.

You can buy white tee shirts cheap when you get them three in a pack or more or order them online. Purchase enough tee shirts for all the guests and supply them with fabric paint for them all to autograph the tee shirts where everyone name.

Kites and basal wood rubber band operated airplane kits work great with the boys! It gives them an activity as well as a party favour and still get a lot more fun out of them.

Sun visors and flip flop/thongs can also be purchased very cheap if you buy them plain. Get enough for each guest and birthday child of course. Purchase some decorating supplies such as fabric paints, glitter, ribbons, and pom poms and anything they would get a kick out of using. Allow them to decorate their own ending up being yet another party favour.

Prizes for party games do not need to be anywhere near as fabulous as the party favours. Stickers, mini note pads, pencils and other items fit perfectly. It is not so



much you are awarding a win, or keeping a child who lost feel better; you are, in a small gesture, thanking them for playing along.

ENTERTAINMENT

- Children have a short attention span. Professional children's entertainers are an invaluable resource in your party planning. A high quality magician, clown, or balloonist will be able to keep the children entertained for the duration of their show, and create wonderful memories for the birthday child.
- Ask a friend if they can recommend anyone. Word of mouth is an excellent way to choose an entertainer you have never seen.
- Look in the free parenting magazines or the Yellow Pages under entertainers, magicians, or clowns or search the web.
- Ask a lot of questions. Is the show age-appropriate? How long is the show? Ask for specifics; if they can't tell you about their show, they may just 'wing it' each time they perform.
- Ask the performer for references and his/her experience.
- Contact the entertainer at least a month in advance. Quality performers are in high demand and you don't want to miss out.
- Give the performer detailed directions and a contact phone number. If the entertainer doesn't confirm a few days before the party, call with a friendly reminder.
- When the performer shows up for the party, be sure to introduce him/her to the birthday child.
- A good entertainer will make the birthday child the star of the show (have a camera ready).
- Relax and enjoy the show.



PARTY CHECK LIST

The Party Date: _____

At Least Four Weeks Before the Party:

- Choose date and time
- Choose theme
- Complete guest list
- Book entertainment
- Decide on location

At Least Two Weeks Before the Party:

- Send invitations
- Plan activity schedule
- Plan food
- Purchase party supplies
- Order balloons
- Order cake

At Least One Week Before the Party:

- Confirm cake order
- Confirm entertainment
- Phone any guest who has not RSVP'd

At Least Two Days Before the Party

- Check camera
- Clean and childproof home
- Check video camera/batteries
- Purchase food for party

Day of the Party:

- Review party plans with child
- Decorate house
- Prepare food
- Secure pets
- Pick up cake/balloons
- HAVE FUN
- Put balloons on mailbox

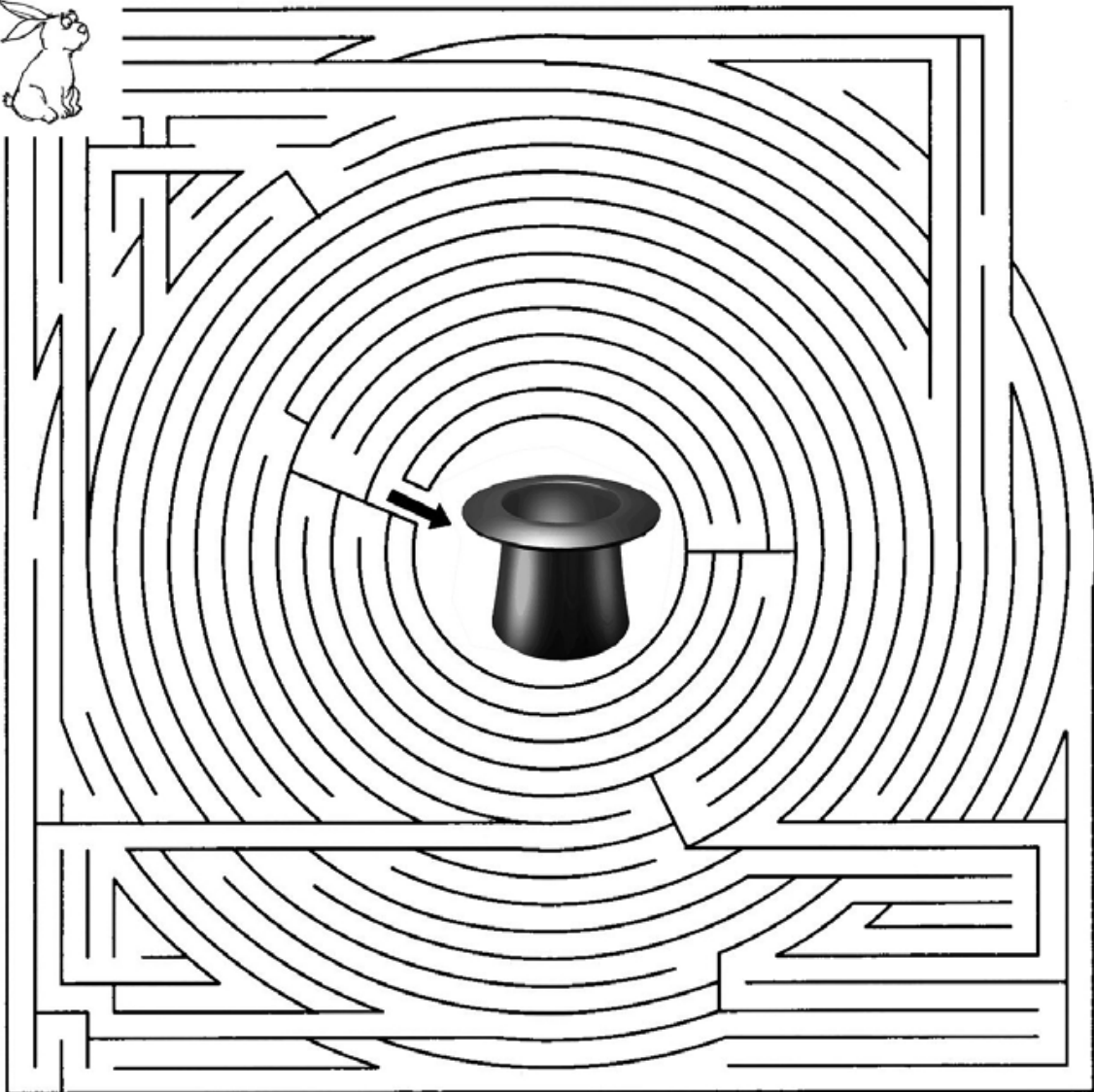


MY BIRTHDAY PARTY TO DO LIST



MAGIC MAZE

Can You Help Stu Find His Way
Back to the Magician's Hat?





Paul's Magic

MAGIC COLOURING PICTURE





Here are some links to magic tricks you can download

[Mind Reading Magic](#)

[Learn Some Easy Magic](#)

[Pro Magic Tricks](#)