

Squeaky Clean Productions Awesome FREE Planning Party Guide!



7 Steps to a Successful Event

How to Get Your Guests to Arrive on Time!

The Ultimate Party Planning Checklist

I am pleased to offer you this free party guide to make YOUR party as stress free as possible. Please feel free to share with your friends and family to make it easier for them when they host a party too!



**Magically and Ballonically
Harvey Simpson
HSMagic.com**

Squeaky Clean Productions Awesome, FREE Planning Party Guide! (part 1 - 7 steps to a successful party!)

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Step 1 – Choose 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.

Brainstorm 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 and temporary tattoos. and 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.

Here are more ideas of possible themes for your child's party:

Toddlers

Lady Bug

Teletubbies

Pretend Slumber Party

Preschoolers

Flower Power

Dinosaur Party

Talent Show

Carnival Party

Bubble Party

Box Party

School Aged

Sleepover Party

Fairy Tale Party

Twister Party

Space Party

Kid's Cooking Party

Craft Party

Tweens

Talent Show

Roller Skating

Splash Party

Dance Party

Sports

Paint Ball

Step 2-Choose a Date and a 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

Ideas for Outside Venues in the So Cal Area

Griffith Park
Travel Town

Underwood Family Farm in Moorpark
Any Local Park

Time is Important

Although your invitations should say the party starts on the hour or half-hour, it's best to actually start your party 15 minutes later. 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

One of the biggest mistakes we make 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 plan the activities, but give yourself a break and don't over-plan.

Decorations

Here are some 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 party store handle it. Some stores offer treated balloons that will hold the helium longer.
- 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!**
- 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 to the balloons as possible. This will save you from having to untangle them.
- Always make sure each Mylar or "Foil" balloon is individually tied with an approved weight. If you having the balloons inflated for you, the party store **MUST** supply and tie the weights.

Food Tips

Some simple ways to feed those hungry mouths:

- Serve cupcakes if you want to save yourself the hassle of sloppy cake cutting. They are easy to serve and eat! (And sooooo much more hygienic when it comes time to blow out the candles!)
- To simplify things, it's best to have bottled water or juice boxes in a cooler. The fewer plates, cups, utensils, forks, spoons, etc., the better.
- Pizzas with a side of carrots or grapes are perfect foods for children. Hot dogs can be fun as well: just cut them along the sides to make arms and legs, and boil. The hot dog will turn into a person! Decorate with mustard or ketchup for eyes and mouth.

Games and Activities

Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- **Water Balloon Toss** – Make sure the parents know that their kids will be getting wet.
- **Balloon Relay Race** – Before the party, inflate about three balloons per child. Divide the guests into two teams. Each child runs to a predetermined 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.
- **Pin the Tail on the Dinosaur** – Why not update the classic game, and pin a tail on a dinosaur? Just draw the parts yourself
- And don't forget about the old standbys – **Limbo, Simon Says, and Pin the Tail on the Donkey.** They are classics for a reason.

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 RSVPs. The sooner you get the invitations out the more likely you are to have a good showing (See *The Ultimate Party List* below).

Invitations

You can purchase all sorts of invitations locally or 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.

Step 5- Use "The Ultimate Party List" 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. Make sure to use *The Ultimate Party List*. The checklist 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 my *The Ultimate Party List* 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.

Set up 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 check list 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 than 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 asap so you can move on with your busy life!

Squeaky Clean Productions Awesome, FREE Planning Party Guide! (part 2 - How to Get Your Guest to Arrive on Time)

Follow these simple steps to encourage guests to be prompt so everyone can enjoy the party!

1. **Start on the quarter hour.** For example, begin at 2:15 or 2:45 p.m. I learned this technique from a professional meeting planner years ago...It works!
2. **Add the word(s) “Sharp or On the Dot” after the start time.** This will help plant the time in your guest minds. Example- 2:15 p.m. **On the Dot.**
3. **Request that your guest be on time.** This should go without saying, but you need to say it. Use the words, “Please be on time” in your invitation. Most people will respond when asked.
4. **Reminders should go out one week before the party.** You can mail a postcard or you can send out an email. Evite.com is great online source for managing invitations. Just state something like, “Don’t forget, Billy’s birthday party is Saturday at **2:15 p.m. Sharp.** We look forward to seeing you there!”
5. **Add a “Fudge Factor”.** Unfortunately, no matter what you do, chances are there will be some stragglers. As a parent, you understand that *things happen!* Therefore, it’s best to begin any activities or entertainment 30 minutes after your start time. Plus, it gives kids a chance to let off some steam.

Squeaky Clean Productions Awesome, FREE Planning Party Guide! (part 3 - Ultimate Party Checklist)

Follow these steps to reduce stress , bring peace and make your child's special day more enjoyable for everyone!.

3 Months Before Party

- Pick Theme
- Choose Date
- Book Facility (if needed)
- Book Entertainment (if needed)
- Other _____

START NOW!

6 Weeks Before Party

- Make Invitation List
- Create Invitations
- Plan Activities/Food
- Order Accessories
- Rent Supplies (if needed)
- Other _____

2-3 Weeks Before Party

- Send Invitations
- Order Cake/Food
- Make Supply List
- Other _____



1 Week Before Party

- Send Reminders
- Ask Friends to Help
- Buy Everything on Supply List
- Assemble Party Bags
- Other _____

DON'T LET THIS LINGER! →

3 Days Before Party

- Order Balloons
- Prepare Games
- Buy Drinks/Water
- Locate Cooler
- Grab Lawn Size Garbage Bags
- Other _____

THESE SAVE
LAST MINUTE
STRESS!

1 Day Before Party

- Pick up Cake/Candles
- Buy Ice
- Decorate (if in your home)
- Charge Camera/Clear Memory Card
- Ask Friends to Bring Cameras ★
- Pin/Paper for Proper Present Credit
- Other _____

Day of the Party

- Pick up Balloons
- Fill Cooler
- Decorate (if at a facility)
- Prepare Table for Gifts
- Put Out Food
- Give Out Goodie Bags
- Get Help for Clean Up (kids!)
- Other _____

24 Hours After the Party

- Send Thank You Notes
- Return Anything Borrowed/Rented