



# Checklist for a Party in a Hired Room



## Six to eight weeks before the party

### Make the booking

- Check availability of the venue and book a date and time, pay any deposit necessary. If you haven't already been there yourself, plan a visit with any questions you may have (see right).
- Get a contact name at the venue and ensure all details are confirmed in writing to avoid any surprises on the day!
- Decide on a theme for the party.
- Are you planning to hire an entertainer? If so contact them for availability, ask any relevant questions and book them.

### Find out from the venue...

- ✓ Minimum/maximum number of children
- ✓ What is/is not provided (eg tea/coffee)?
- ✓ How long is the room available for?
- ✓ Can the venue be decorated and can you have access earlier to prepare?
- ✓ Are entertainers/djs allowed?
- ✓ Can the room be arranged as you wish?
- ✓ Are there kitchen facilities for cooking food?
- ✓ Find out where the toilets are

### Cake

- If you have decided to order a birthday cake from a supplier, contact them for samples or pictures of cakes they have made.
- Specify the date you need the cake for and order early as for some cakes the icing will need time to set. If the name is to be iced onto the cake, make sure they have the correct spelling!



### Food

- Think about the timings of the party as well as your catering budget. If it is held at 12 noon or at 5pm, guests will assume you will be providing a meal. If your budget doesn't allow for this, then hold the party in the middle of the afternoon when you can get away with serving a few nibbles or ice cream and cakes and make sure you say this on the invitation.
- Decide if you are going to use an outside caterer, and if so, contact them and check their availability.

### If using a caterer...

- ✓ Does the caterer hold a sufficient certificate in hygiene standards?
- ✓ Find out the type of food they provide and ask for a price list or whether they charge a flat fee.
- ✓ Will the caterer be present to ensure food is stored correctly and uncovered at the right time?
- ✓ Do they deliver?
- ✓ Do they serve the food, do they tidy up after?
- ✓ Do they provide table linen, napkins, crockery and cutlery? Is a deposit required for this?
- ✓ Do they serve specially requested food?
- ✓ Will the caterer need access to the oven?

### Invitations

- Confirm the names of guests to be invited, finding out surnames and dietary requirements - keep a list of names and numbers of guests as they reply.
- Include an RSVP with contact name, tel no, a reply date and info about the venue such as directions and contact details.

## Two to three weeks before...

### Entertainment and activities

- Sort out a device for playing music and decide on a playlist/cd and designate someone to control the music.
- If using an entertainer, a dj or a magician, check if they need access to power points in the house and decide the best place to use as the 'stage', the dancefloor and the eating area.
- Select party games to play ensuring you have props and prizes for games such as Pass-the-Parcel, and organise the party bags.

### Decorations

- Source decorations, balloons, streamers, table confetti, 'Happy Birthday' banners, party hats or masks.
- If you are using helium balloons and wish to hire a helium gas bottle, they are usually available from balloon suppliers, so contact them and ask if they deliver or if you have to collect.

### Allocating tasks

- Plan who is going to help at the party such as other parents or relatives etc, you can't be everywhere at once!
- Ask someone to be in charge of taking some photographs throughout the party so you can concentrate on making sure the birthday child is having fun. Let them know any key pictures you would like, ie. blowing out the candles on the cake.

## One to two days before...

- Ensure you have bought all the food you need if catering yourself. Buy in bulk and find items that just need to be defrosted so you don't spend all morning cooking!
- Pick up the birthday cake, plus candles!
- Find your camera and make sure you have extra film and batteries, or if it's digital, ensure battery is charged. If you are filming the party, check the equipment works!
- Follow up on any non receipts of RSVPs for a final count.
- Fill all party bags and wrap the parcel for Pass-the-Parcel.
- Write a "to do" list for the party day.
- Decide what the birthday child and you are going to wear at the party and get it ready.



## The day of the party...

- Make sure everyone eats properly before the party.
- Set off to the venue in good time.
- Organise your helpers.
- Prepare the food, drink and birthday cake.
- Blow up the balloons and put up decorations.
- Set out the table and table decorations.
- Greet and organise entertainer or dj.
- Start the music and welcome the guests.

**Relax and enjoy yourself!**



### Find more ideas and help with your party planning on Netmums

Your local Netmums site is the place to go to plan your party. You'll find venues in your area, recommended local suppliers, games to play at the party and much more. If you can't find what you are looking for, or want to ask other local mums, visit your local Noticeboard.

