

RARE FORM LIMOUSINE

Throwing a Successful Birthday Party

Getting ready for a birthday party can unnerve even a normally well-organized parent. A surprising number of details need to be planned. Here are some tips that will smooth the way to your child's birthday bash. With a little planning and imagination, you can help your child have the best birthday celebration ever.

GETTING STARTED

The first step to throwing a successful birthday party is to decide on the number of guests to invite. Some schools with small classes have a rule that if you invite more than half a class, you should invite the remainder of the class to avoid making anyone feel left out. Even if it's not an official rule, you may want to follow this guideline to avoid hurt feelings.

Get your child's input. Let him or her decide on a theme, such as a cartoon character, a movie, or a favorite sport or other activity. Select party favors, room and table decorations, snacks, and games to illustrate this theme.

Book your party well in advance if you're having it away from home. You might get a better deal if you have the party Sunday–Thursday rather than on the weekend.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Pick a locale for the party. Whether it's at home, in a park, or at a family fun center or a restaurant, make sure the environment is appropriate for the kids' age and energy level. If you're going to a theme destination, like a bowling alley, video arcade, or inflatable jump park, your entertainment is set by the venue. If not, choose the entertainment for the guests, such as arts and crafts or old-fashioned games like musical chairs and pin the tail on the donkey. If your child is older, consider throwing a pool or slumber party.

If your party location is not at your home, consider taking the party to the destination in a limousine. Rare Form Limousine has found that children are usually very respectful and subdued when traveling in a chauffeured limousine. Children under the age of 16 are required to wear seatbelts at all times. Children age 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult in the limousine passenger area. Kids age 13 to age 17 may ride in the limousine unaccompanied by an adult, allowing room for one additional child; the adults can follow in their own vehicle.

FOOD AND PRESENTS

Pick up the cake early. This is an important part of the birthday party for the kids, so give yourself time to catch any mistakes and have them fixed. Keep foods simple—pizza, ice cream, chips, cookies, fruit, and juice are perennial favorites. If you are going to a theme destination, food is typically provided with the birthday package.

Decide, based on the age of the guests, whether you want to include a time for opening presents or whether you will wait to open them later. Keep in mind that younger guests may get confused as to whom the presents are for. If you do open gifts during the party, make sure to have the birthday child say thank you as the gifts are opened.

INVITATIONS

Mail invitations directly to the guests, or send them in care of their parents or guardians, and ask for an RSVP. When the guardians call to confirm, you can discuss party logistics, such as food and dress. Request that an adult accompany children under 5. Provide for the needs of the adults at the party as well. For older kids who are being dropped off, be sure to let the parents know when they can expect to pick up their children.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Guests might arrive early, so have a video playing or a craft set ready to entertain them until the party officially begins. Similarly, have a final fun send off—you might need an activity for the partygoers waiting to be picked up after the festivities.

Moreover, be flexible and keep a sense of humor. The point of the party is to have fun, not to have everything perfect. Someone will spill a drink. A plastic prize will get stepped on and broken. Deal with it and move on. If your party is well orchestrated, you should have just as much fun as the children. Invite a friend or another parent to help keep everything running smoothly, and enjoy the fruits of your labor!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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