

# Party Starter Checklist



## ○ PARTY THEME

Let the birthday child help choose the party theme, then apply it to all aspects of the party. If you plan to hire someone to host your party, make that your first call.

## ○ GUEST LIST

Some suggest limiting the number of guests to your child's age plus two. Others are comfortable inviting an entire classroom.

## ○ INVITATIONS

Invitations set the tone for the party. Be creative and informative. Give guests a start and end time. Include directions and phone number. Let them know what will happen at the party (swimming, bowling etc.) so they can dress appropriately.

## ○ MEAL PLAN

Decide if you will serve food or just cake and ice cream and indicate on the invitation. When possible, be aware of food allergies any guests may have and offer alternatives.

## ○ MUSIC

Child friendly music playing in the background sets the party mood. Many sound tracks of children's movies are available.

## ○ DECORATIONS

Decorations should include the front door to help people find the party.

## ○ HELPERS

When hosting a party yourself it is always good to have a second pair of hands. Enlist the help of a friend, family member or guest parent.

## ○ WELCOME

Arriving guests should be invited to do a quick craft and get to know each other. If the children do not know each other, play a name game. One option: Have children sit in a circle and toss a soft object (such as a bean bag or theme-related stuffed animal) to each other. The child who catches it shouts out their name then throws it to the next. Once everyone gets a chance to tell their name, pass the object around the circle and let the other children shout out the names.

## ○ GAMES

Plan three or four games to play with the children. Alternate between something physical with a slower-paced game so they can catch their breath. If you have time left, play a quick game of tag, Simon says, freeze or other childhood game you enjoy.

## ○ PRIZES

Prizes only work if everyone gets one. As an alternative, applaud the winner, start the game again or move on to a new game and save the prizes for the goodie bags.

## ○ GIFTS

Have a designated place for the gifts and set a special chair for the guest of honor. Keep track of gifts so guests can be thanked properly.

## ○ GOODIE BAGS

Children love candy, but why not fill the goodie bags with a theme-related toy instead? The goodie bag itself could be part of the gift. A sports bottle, frilly purse or colorful crayon box are just a few options.