

THE PROVEN PARTY PLAN



**Your FREE Step-by-Step Guide
To Organising a STRESS FREE Party**

Karl Jeffery

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Please accept this proven party planning guide with my compliments. It has an excellent track record for success. Thousands of parents have used it to organise and enjoy stress free and successful birthday parties for their children.

At the very least, if I am unable to help you in person, I will have been able to offer you some assistance in written form, and point you in the right direction to having a birthday party which is unforgettable.

I have provided helpful checklists and action plans to keep you in full control from start to finish. They are at the end and can be printed off for your convenience.

It is my hope that what follows serves you as a useful guide, and helps you have the best birthday party ever. If you have any questions, please don't be frightened to ask. I am here to help you however I can.

Best Wishes



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1 - Plan ahead

The 'Party Planning and Action checklist' provided at the end of this guide will help you plan your party. I have done most of the work for you. All you need to do is print them and fill in the blanks. They are on pages 19-33.

They will make planning your party so much easier. Use them to stay in control of everything, and to keep an eye on the progress you're making.

There's an old saying, failing to plan is like planning to fail. Print out those resources now, and you'll be ready to organise a stress free party. It doesn't matter if your party is 6 months or more away - It's never too early to start making plans.

2 - How many children to invite?

Some parents feel obliged to invite the whole class from school. My advice is: Don't invite more children than you have room for or can cope with. Keep the numbers manageable. You are going to provide food and take responsibility for all of them. The more you invite the more pressure you will be under.

If you feel you can handle 40 children, and your venue will hold them all comfortably, and it's something you want to do, then invite them. Going on my own experience the most successful parties tend to have between 20-30 children. I'm not saying that a party with 40 children won't be a success (they have proved to be just as successful). All I'm saying is from your perspective, having less children to prepare party food and make provisions for, is going to be much better for your sanity and stress levels.

Import note: Each child comes with extras

Every child that you invite will arrive with a parent (or two) and possibly a sibling. 30 invited children can quickly become 40 (including 10 additional siblings) plus 35 extra adults. Before you know it you have a venue filled with more than 75+ people, not counting your own family!

Don't mix the ages

It's not a good idea to combine something like a 6 year olds birthday with a 3 year olds. If you're having a party for 6 year olds, invite friends of a similar age. Younger children have different attention spans and different entertainment requirements. Younger children are also vulnerable to being

knocked over when the older ones run around (which they will). Inviting a load of 3 year olds to join them could mean accidents and other troubles.

3 - The party venue - considerations and expectations

Many people forget how important the venue is. The wrong choice could mean problems for your party in ways you'd not imagined.

The aim is to pick a venue that gives your party the greatest chance of success.

The minimum requirements for a stress free and successful birthday party

- Guaranteed free parking for you, and all your guests travelling by car.
- A guaranteed FREE parking space as close to the entrance as possible for your entertainer.
- Good accessibility, and a function room/hall space on the ground floor. This is necessary to ensure you and your entertainer can set up everything needed for the party quickly and without any fuss.
- The performing area for 'The Birthday Show' needs to have a minimum clear square space of 3 meters by 3 meters (approximately 10ft by 10ft). There also needs to be a minimum gap of 150cm between the audience and the performing area.
- In addition to the performance area the children will need their own large clear area to sit and watch the show. They will also need this space to run around and play games afterwards.
- Exclusive use of the kitchen facilities.
- Toilet facilities.
- Exclusive use of the hall or room you've hired.
- Enough tables and chairs to accommodate all the children and guests.
- The freedom to position tables and chairs to your preferred set up.
- Enough space for all the children to run and play games.
- Enough space for everyone attending your party to be able to move comfortably.

Double check the venue is appropriate for your party requirements. If your chosen venue doesn't have the minimum requirements - swap it for one that does.

A true story...

A few years ago I worked at a venue in which the mum was convinced it was large enough for 30 children. Unfortunately, she forgot to take into account that each child would arrive with a parent. Some came with both parents. Some came with a sibling. They all stayed.

By the time everyone had arrived, the room was packed with 30 children, 10 extra siblings, around 50 adults, plus mum, dad, birthday child, his brother, 3 cousins, both sets of grandparents and 2 sets of aunties and uncles. Over a hundred people (counting me) squeezed into an area only designed to hold 30 children. Everyone was squashed like sardines.

By the time the show finished, the heat from everyone's bodies had steamed all the windows and there was very little air left in the room. Also there was not enough space for the children to run and play, so the party games had to be abandoned.

As the guests left, they did so muttering how grateful they were to finally get out of that place, and if they'd known it'd been so squashed, they wouldn't have come.

How long to hire the venue?

You might want to hire the venue for up to 4 hours for a party that will last 2 hours. It takes longer than many people think to get everything set up for a party.

By the time the tables have been retrieved from store cupboards, had their legs un-clicked, then positioned, and covered with table cloths, then the room decorated with happy birthday signs, balloons, etc, the first guests could already be arriving, and you haven't had a chance to set out any chairs for them, or started unpacking the food!

It is a great idea to hire the venue an hour before the scheduled party start time. This will save you becoming stressed, especially if any last minute interruptions prevent you from setting up the room as you'd planned it. At the very least, you will need 30 minutes to set up. The longer you give yourself to set up, the less stressed you will be.

Allow a minimum of 30-45 minutes to pack and tidy everything up at the end too.

Parking for your entertainer

You need to provide a guaranteed FREE parking space as close as possible to the venue entrance for the entertainer. Without one, it might not be possible for them to provide you with entertainment. Or at the best, they will be set up late, long after your guests have arrived. In the interim, you'll be desperately thinking of ways to keep the children entertained and occupied until the entertainer is ready.

If it helps, here's what it is like from an entertainers perspective: I have many heavy cumbersome boxes and equipment which require several trips back and forth to get them all inside the venue. The closer I am to the entrance, the quicker and more efficiently I can be ready to entertain for you. If the function room is not on the ground floor, you will need to provide full details about the accessibility, distance, width of stairways, etc, and actually provide physical assistance before and after the party getting equipment to and from my vehicle. The last thing you want is me not not being able to set up in time for your party. I'd hate that to happen too, especially as I want your party to be a roaring success. The closer I am parked to the entrance of your venue (thanks to you keeping me a guaranteed FREE parking space) the quicker I can be set up and ready to provide you with the best party service I possibly can.

Thankfully, most people remember to keep a space for me. In some cases where the parking is known to be tricky, people have parked their car the night before. Then when I arrived, they moved their car and let me have their space.

Unfortunately, some people have completely forgotten the importance of reserving a parking space. Once upon a time I was forced to drive around and around the streets of Jesmond searching for somewhere to park. I eventually got a space after about 20 minutes. But I was parked so far from the venue that by the time all my equipment had been carried one box at a time into the venue, then the half hour it took to set the show up, the party had almost finished and I was only able to give them about 30 minutes of entertainment. Sadly it wasn't a one off. I still have nightmares about the ones in Darlington, and Cramlington.

Please remember it is your responsibility to ensure a parking space for your entertainer. Doing so will guarantee they are able to set up in time and make your party one that will be remembered for all the right reasons.

The BEST venues to hire

With 12+ years of experience from entertaining at thousands of birthday parties all over the UK, I can tell you the best venues for a children's birthday party are places like, church halls, community centres, & village halls.

99% of the time you will have exclusive use of the venue. No uninvited members of the public can gatecrash, obstruct, or disrupt your private celebration. They usually have more than enough on site car parking which is free for you and all your guests. They normally always have the necessary space for the entertainment. The children get a large area to run and play, and the children are usually contained in one area making it easier to ensure their safety.

There's generally plenty of extra room for the adults and usually enough provisions such as tables, chairs, etc. These venues often allow you the freedom to choose your own layout of tables and chairs, setting things up wherever you like. They usually have excellent kitchen facilities. The toilets are usually clean and hygienic, and you don't have to share them with the general public.

When trying to book your venue its worth remembering that some are run by volunteers or part time staff, so be prepared to make a lot of phone calls at different times of the day until you get to speak to someone.

Do the paperwork

When it comes to booking, sign the necessary forms and pay deposits or booking fees right away. A lot of provisional bookings are time sensitive and if you don't commit straight away it will suggest you're not serious about making the booking - If they suspect this, the slot will be offered to someone else.

Get it in writing

Ensure you get written confirmation from the venue. You are best having written proof that it is guaranteed to be yours on the date and time you need it. The same applies to your entertainer. If they are not willing to send you written confirmation of your party booking, I would be suspicious of whether or not they will turn up on the day.

Venues to avoid

Avoid places like leisure centres, town centre venues, venues with pay and display car parks, pubs and clubs, venues in which the function room doubles up as a restaurant or cafe, and venues that require a permit to park in the street outside due to it being a 'resident only' parking area. Also avoid those surrounded by double yellow lines.

There are some great pubs and social clubs that I have worked at with designated function rooms. Part of planning a successful party means visiting unfamiliar options to ensure that as a potential venue, they will meet all your requirements.

It is also worth noting that venues in which the function room doubles up as a restaurant or cafe (to be cleared and used as your party room) will not hurry up any paying customers to finish their meal just so you can start getting your party room organised, at least none of the ones I've been to have. I've been in a few situations where the mum has been frantic to set up, but the owner won't disturb the couple still finishing off their pub lunch, despite having promised the mum exclusive use of the room.

4 - Don't go overboard with entertainment

Some parents really like to push the boat out and have as many different ways of keeping the children entertained as possible. Some parties have ended up as elaborate as what you'd find in Disney Land. The golden rule for entertainment at a children's birthday party is 'less is more'.

Less is more

Say for example you book me to provide your entertainment. The children will be treated to a full 60 minute magical puppet show, they will be captivated from start to finish. You'll see them laughing, having fun and enjoying themselves the whole way through. If you've also got me to host the party games, then that's another 30 minutes of non stop action packed fun for them too. The only thing left is the food, and the singing of happy birthday (I'll get them all singing for you while you bring in the cake) this usually takes 30 minutes. In total you'll have filled 2 hours with non stop fun and pleasure, and then it'll be time to go home.

If you do book additional entertainment such as a face painter, balloon modeller, disco, bouncy castle, superhero or movie character lookalike, etc, you will create a conflict of decisions and distractions for the children. They

won't sit and watch the entertainment as they'll be torn between all the options. It will create a chaotic atmosphere and your party will be more like a free-for-all at a fair ground rather than a solid, fun, captivating and entertaining theme that flows smoothly from beginning to end.

If you have hired me for my Platinum 'stress free' Party Package, I will basically host the party on your behalf. All you need to do is provide the party food and feed them. There's nothing else for you to do other than relax and enjoy it with your family and guests. Leave the puppets and me to take care of everything else. We will keep the children laughing and entertained from start to finish. I guarantee it.

5 - Invitations and RSVPs

Invite guests to arrive at the right time

When is the right time to invite the guests? Invite them 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of your party. I know it might sound ludicrous, but trust me. I'll explain why it works...

Inviting your guests to arrive 15 minute before the start of your party will give you a cushion of time to allow for latecomers. e.g. If you want your party to start at 3pm, put on the invites for your guests to arrive at 2.45pm. Please don't panic and think that all your guests will be there 15 minutes early, in all my years of people following this advice I have NEVER been to a party where all the guests were there 15 minutes early. If it happens at your party it will be the first time ever in history! Yes, a few might arrive at precisely 2.45pm but the majority will arrive over the course of those 15 minutes, and there will still be the odd latecomer.

The last thing you want is to have to wait until 3.15pm because of the latecomers - especially when the party is scheduled to last for 2 hours. That's 15 minutes of lost 'entertainment' time that can't be added on at the end.

Invite them to arrive 15 minutes earlier, and enjoy every single second of the party entertainment you've paid for.

When to send the invites

Give your guests as much notice as you think they'll need, especially if your party falls in school holidays. The suggested time to send invites for a

children's birthday party is 3-4 weeks before the party date. But definitely no less than 3 weeks. You will need time to buy provisions.

Set a deadline for their return

Print a clear deadline date on the invite so people know when to RSVP by. This should be no later than 14 days before your party date. Make it clear you need to know if they are coming so you can 'plan for food, etc'.

About a week before the party date, you should have all the RSVP's back and know how many people to prepare for.

Chasing up

It is not uncommon for people to fail to RSVP, so be prepared to chase a few up. If the birthday person has given the invites to their friends, their friends might have forgotten to pass them to their parents. It might be easier to hand the invites out yourself.

Keep a list

Make a list of who's invited. This way you can keep track and tick them off as the replies come back. I've created an 'invitation list' for you in the resources section at the end. Print it and you're all set.

6 - Party Food and drink

Waste

The children won't eat much, no matter how much effort you've gone to. If you make tons of food, be prepared for a mountain of leftovers.

Keep it simple

The choice of food is entirely down to what you are able to manage and prepare in time for the big day. Keeping it simple with not too much choice will help reduce your stress and workload.

If you're preparing the party food in advance, you can put individual lunches in cardboard party boxes. If you're not sure what these are, Google: party boxes for food. The added advantage is once you've packed them in the boxes, that's it! All you need to do next is place them on the party table. This

is much simpler than creating a buffet style where the children start at one end with a plate, then walk to the other choosing the foods they want.

Party food suggestions

If you need some suggestions as to what to put inside your boxes, or what to offer as party food, how about:

- A ham or cheese (mild cheese) roll or sandwich
- A cocktail sausage or small sausage roll
- A Packet of crisps
- Cheese strings are quite popular
- Yoghurt (child size) - don't forget the spoon.
- Chocolate biscuit of some kind, or a small cake.

I've been to many parties where the traditional sausages, sweeties and chocolates were substituted with carrot sticks, dips, and grapes. I was surprised at how successful this was. The kids loved it!

Hot food

If you are providing hot food, e.g. pizza and chips, and intend to cook this in the venue on the day, bear in mind the oven might be much lower powered than yours at home, so make sure you get it warmed up well in advance.

I've seen a few people leave the food in the hands of the nearest fast food burger restaurant. They placed their order earlier that day and set off to collect in time of the 'food break'. Sadly, the 'hot' food came back cold. Worse was when they failed to return in time thanks to situations beyond their control. One person got stuck in a traffic jam and the food arrived long after everyone had gone home.

Don't chance it. Keep the food simple and completely under your control to avoid the stress of it not being ready when you want it.

Drinks

Bottles of Orange, Lemon and Blackcurrant squash are great choices for drinks. A few jugs of water later and you'll have diluted more than enough for your party. This is simpler than taking several bottles of fizzy drink, or cartons of drink (unless of course you have a carton of drink inside each of the party boxes).

How long to eat?

Party food usually takes 30 minutes to get through. This also allows enough time for the singing of happy birthday, blowing the candles out, and time for children to wash their hands or go to the toilet.

7 - When to sing happy birthday and cut the cake

Some choose to sing happy birthday when all their guests take their seats before the start of the party food. This works well as you have everyone's attention before they start eating.

Others choose to do it at the end of the party food. You'll need to work harder here because some children will finish faster than others and leave the table to play with their friends. Getting them all back again can be tricky unless you have a very loud voice, or an entertainer dedicated to helping you. If you've hired me you can relax as I will round them all up for you.

Some people like to save the singing until to the very end of the party. This isn't the best idea, especially if you need to cut the cake and give it to your guests before they go home.

8 -The day of the party

Arrive at the venue early. When you've finished setting up you can relax and look forward to enjoying the party with your family and guests.

How to prepare the venue for your birthday party

What follows are the basics. You might want to add your own ideas to the list.

- Designate an area for the entertainment, large enough for the show set up requirements.
- Clear plenty of space for the children to run and play. This can also be their seating area in the show.
- If possible set party tables and chairs close to the kitchen area to save long walks back and forth with drinks, etc.
- Designate a table to receive the party gifts. Presents given by guests can be placed on it during the party.

- Stick up happy birthday banners, posters, balloons, etc,
- Arrange seating for the adults. It's a good idea to position chairs for them as far away from the performance area as possible.

Seating for the adults

When the entertainment starts, the children and adults usually enjoy the entertainment together. Sadly at about 10% of parties some adults have no interest and only want to talk with their friends. They'll often talk louder than the volume of the entertainment, making it difficult for the children to hear what's going on.

Over the years I've tried many ways of trying to overcome this by asking them politely to talk quieter, or explaining that the children can't hear me. I've even tried to compensate by turning my volume up more so I can be heard over their conversations. In most cases they either ignored me, reacted like I was being rude, or talked even louder still. The only person they ever take notice of is the person who has organised the party. You might need to ask them to keep the noise down, but if you do they will be apologetic and sincere. For some reason they don't always take kindly to an 'entertainer' asking.

If you can set the seating for the adults as far from the performance area as possible, you'll have done your best to provide distraction free entertainment for the children.

Balloons and other toys

Some people like to give the children balloons or other toys to play with when they arrive at the party. You are welcome to do this. However, I do advise that you collect them all back before the show starts otherwise I guarantee the children will not watch the show, instead they will play with the balloons or other toys. I am happy to help you collect them before the show begins as I know from experience that the show will be more successful without the distractions of balloons. After the show the children can have them all back. The same applies to party blowers and other toys. Anything that children can play with, or make noises with, are best left hidden from view until after the show is over.

Keep toddlers safely out of the way

It is always requested that guests with toddlers take responsibility for them. 95% of parents do, but there are always the odd few that believe it is part of the entertainers 'job' to look after the toddler while they either watch from afar,

or chat to their friends. They allow the toddler to wander into the performance area. Ask any entertainer and they will tell you their own horror stories about how the show suddenly comes to a grinding halt.

The toddler might look cute, but your party entertainment will be affected. As an entertainer it is impossible to 'entertain' when a toddler is within the performance area. Toddlers are inquisitive by nature, and their curiosity does have unforeseen dangers that their parent is probably unaware of. In the past I've had a few try to pull the live electrical wires from my equipment. One actually managed to do so and fused the circuit which blew the PA resulting in no more shows that weekend. I've had them pull speakers over - almost crushing the child, they've wandered off with props in their mouths, and I had one break a much loved entertainment item that I'd purchased for £2000. There was also the toddler I accidentally knocked over. I didn't know he was there until I felt a knock against my knee.

Your party entertainment will be a million times better without toddlers in the performance area. Parents with young children are always welcome to sit on the floor and watch the show with them, becoming part of the audience with everyone else. It's always lovely to see mums and dads on the floor with the little ones sharing the fun.

9 - Party games

If you have hired me to provide the party games, you don't need to read this as I'll be hosting a full 30 minutes of fun filled 'non elimination' party games on your behalf. All the children will be involved from start to finish and you'll get to relax, take photos and watch them all having fun.

If you are hosting your own party games, (or maybe will one day in the future) what games will you play?

Advice on organising party games

- First: Keep them relevant to the age of the children.
- Second: Make them appropriate to the size of your venue.

e.g. if your having a party at home in your living room, you'll be better off playing something like 'pin the tail on the donkey', rather than getting the children to 'Limbo' around the coffee table.

- Third: For a stress free party, keep the games simple, age relevant, and non elimination.

Still struggling to think of what to play? There are some great resources filled with party game ideas online. The internet is an excellent place to start looking for inspiration.

Party game prizes

The old way: Traditionally, party games resulted in prizes being awarded to winners, and sweets offered to the losers. If you want a stress free and successful party then don't use this approach.

I have hosted thousands of party games. Through many years of experience I can tell you some children become very upset if they don't win. This can take the form of either a full blown tantrum slap bang in the middle of your 'fun party'. Some begin screaming that the winner cheated. Some will take themselves off to the corner and sob their heart out. Some sulk and refuse to take part in any more games because 'it's not fair'. Sometimes a whole bunch of children boycott the 'fun' and the party games deteriorate into a nightmare experience for everyone.

The old way also involves giving sweets to losers. Children running around with sweets in their mouths is a choking hazard. The consequences of which don't bear thinking about.

The Best Way: *No tears, just fun from start to finish.* There is a much simpler way which will guarantee success, and no stress. I worked hard until I found this solution, and now an increasing number of professional entertainers have cottoned on to my success and copied my 'Non Elimination Party Games' formula.

The idea is all the children take part throughout the whole 30 minutes of party games, and all of them have fun and enjoy every moment in the fun spirit the games are intended.

I have modified all my games so there are no individual winners. I make all the children feel like champions. With no winners, there is no need to award individual prizes. Without prizes no one gets upset. There are also no losers, which means all the children take part for the whole 30 minutes. No one is forced to sit out and wait until the next game starts. They all join in the whole way through, and at the end of their fun filled half and hour, I treat all the

children to something special. They all get exactly the same reward and all of them go home happy with huge smiles on their faces. Non elimination games guarantee the party is fun from start to finish.

How to prevent disruptive behaviour

Disruptive and naughty behaviour at children's birthday parties is rare - but from time to time it does happen. Have a designated responsible adult sitting close to the children when the show starts. This is usually enough to prevent any 'behaviour' issues. The children sense their presence and usually calm quickly. But if something should happen, this person is immediately ready to step in and discourage the disruption.

Known naughty kids

If you know of a particular disruptive child (or group of children) don't invite them. Why risk them spoiling your child's birthday if you think there is a chance that it could happen. Don't feel guilty. Feel empowered. If in doubt, leave them out.

10 - The number one thing to do on your child's birthday party

Relax and enjoy it with your child and your family. You'll have already gone to a huge amount of effort to arrange and organise this day. You'll have organised food, drinks, venue, entertainment, decorations, a birthday cake, invited people, got frustrated when they didn't all reply, brought extra supplies just in case, set out tables and chairs, and done so much more in order to put on a very special party.

When the party starts, relax and enjoy it with your child and the rest of your family. Enjoy every moment of the entertainment you organised, and celebrate in the fun atmosphere that you worked so hard to create. The time will fly by very quickly, and before you know it, it'll be over and people will be thanking you for such a fantastic party.

If you are hiring me to provide the Platinum Party Package, I'll take care of all the entertainment for you. I'll keep the party running smoothly from the beginning until the end. I want you to sit with your family and guests and enjoy the party too. Don't forget to bring your camera and take photos.

Finally, make sure you have a treat waiting for you at home. Some people have a nice bottle of wine, or a big box of chocolates waiting for them. Organising a birthday party is a huge task. Reward yourself with a treat. You will have more than earned it.

Conclusion

I hope this simple guide has been useful. I wish you the very best of luck in organising your child's birthday party, and I hope you have a fantastic celebration on the day.

If you have any questions, or would like to enquire about hiring the puppets and me to come along, you can either email me karl@themagicalventriloquist.co.uk or contact me by phoning **(0191) 266 8928**

In the meantime, please print the resources and tools on the following pages to make planning your child's party even easier.

Best Wishes



Karl Jeffery



www.themagicalventriloquist.co.uk

Resources and Tools to make planning your party easier

Print and keep the following pages. Use them to help with your party.

1 Party Planning and Action Checklist

Use this to help plan and organise your party. Fill in the blanks and then tick each task as you complete it. You will see how much progress you're making and exactly what's left to be done.

It is a good idea to review your Planning and Action checklist from time to time as there is bound to be something you'll suddenly remember that needs to be added. When it's complete, you can stop the planning and start looking forward to the day itself. Plan for success and double check your plan for anything you may have previously overlooked. Consider everything that could cause you stress, then find a solution to prevent it.

e.g. If running out of time to set up the party room would be stressful, book the room earlier or have the party start later. If you don't think you'd cope with 30 children, invite less, etc. It's worth repeating - Avoid things that could cause you stress and plan for success!

2 Party items tick list

Don't leave the essential items at home on the day of the party. Use this sheet to compile a list of everything you need. I've already got you started by adding some things you'll probably be taking, then tick them off as you load them in your car or pack them into your bags before setting off to the venue.

3 Day of the Party Checklist

Use this to keep you focussed and organised on the big day itself. Make certain you add all the other important things that need to be done in the run up to your party. Keep it safe and take it with you.

4 Guest invitation List

Use this to keep track of who you've invited, if they're coming or not, and anyone else you still need to chase up. When it's complete you'll know how many people to cater and prepare for on the day.

5 Party Register

Compile a list of everyone who's coming and tick the guests names as they arrive. You'll know who's still to come, and when they're all there!

Party Planning and Action Checklist

Type of party? e.g. Traditional, Fancy Dress, etc

How many children are you going to invite? Think, how many can you cope with?

Does the venue have the suggested requirements for a successful birthday?

Tick what it does have from this list:

- Enough guaranteed free parking for you, your entertainer and your guests.
- Good accessibility and on the ground floor to ensure a simple and quick party set up.
- Exclusive use of the kitchen facilities.
- Exclusive use of the hall or room you've hired.
- Enough tables and chairs for everyone.
- The freedom to position tables and chairs to your preferred set up.
- Enough space for the performance requirements of your entertainer.
- Enough space for all the children to run and play games.
- Enough space for everyone attending your party.

Essential information

What time will you party start? What time will it finish?

What is the address and postcode of your venue (always useful knowledge for your guests)

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What time can you get into the venue to start setting up?

What time does the venue want you to be cleared up and out by?

Do you think you have the venue long enough to set it up in time for the party?
(You might want to hire the venue for up to 4 hours for a 2 hour party.)

If the venue has a designated key holder or caretaker who is going to meet you at the venue and open up for you, what is that person's name and contact telephone number?

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It is important to have a way of contacting this person, just in case they 'forget' about you on the day. It's never a bad thing to give them a phone call the day before just as a gentle reminder about meeting you and what time you need them to open up for you. You'll sleep better for it.

Essential information continued:

Number of children invited?

How many of your family members will be there?

How many parents might also come along and stay (any extra siblings?)

Does your venue have enough space for everyone?

Do you need to trim the invitation list?

Anything else you need to make a note of?

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If you're having a themed party, write down where you can buy what's needed, like matching cups, plates, balloons, etc . The internet is a great place to start looking.

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The Birthday Cake

Will it be a character cake, or a fun party cake?

Where will you get it?

Don't forget the candles and something to light them with.

Balloons

Do you need enough for every child, or just a few for decoration purposes?

How many balloons (if any)?

Decorations

How many happy birthday banners, or posters, table cloths, etc do you need?

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Party games

If you're doing these yourself, work out the games most suited to your venue. Don't forget to make them all 'Non elimination games'. Instead of prizes, offer the same treat for all of the children when the games have finished. The treat could be the party bags themselves!

What games might you play?

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Party bags

If you are having party bags, write down what you're putting inside, and how many of each thing you'll need.

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What have you forgotten?

Write everything else you'll need here:

Important: Look at the 'Day of the Party Checklist' and 'Party items tick list' on the following pages. They will help keep you organised and focussed on the big day. Now is the time to start adding anything else that needs to be done on the actual day of the party. Keep the lists safe and take them with you on the day.

‘Day of the Party’ checklist

Keep this handy and use it on the day of the party. Refer to it to keep yourself organised and focussed. You can also use it to allocate jobs to any helpers.

First, is there a treat waiting for when you get back home?

Leave your mobile phone switched on. Your entertainer, venue, or guests might need to contact you.

Contact Numbers

What about if you need to contact people? What important contact numbers do you need?
Add any additional names and numbers to this list

Karl Jeffery office (0191) 266 8928

Karl Jeffery mobile 07854 600226

What is the contact number for the venue or the key holder contact person to open the venue?

Venue / key holder Office:

Venue / key holder

Mobile:

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If you are preparing hot food, take your own oven trays in case the venue doesn't have any, and get the oven warmed up early.

Get to the venue early and set up in plenty of time.

Unpack everything in the appropriate areas, e.g. food and drink in the kitchen, etc.

Setting up the venue:

- clear an appropriate sized area for the entertainment (3m x3m)
- Keep plenty of clear space for the children to run around in and watch the show from
- Set your party tables and chairs close to the kitchen area.
- Designate a table to receive the gifts.
- Decorate the room with banners, balloons, etc to your preference
- Position chairs for the adults as far from the performance area as possible. Don't be afraid to have a polite word or hush any that get too noisy, they will take notice of you.

'Day of the Party' - Checklist part 2

Remember to keep any toddlers safely out of the way. Ask their parent/guardian to take responsibility for them if it looks as though they need reminding.

Appoint a responsible adult to sit close to the children just in case any situations arise.

Relax and enjoy the entertainment and celebrations with your family. Take plenty of photo's or video as much as you can.

Sing happy birthday either at the start, or the end of the party food. If you have party games after the food you'll have enough time to cut the cake before your guests leave.

Allow 30 minutes for them to eat the party food. This is enough time for the singing of 'happy birthday', blowing the candles out, and time for children to wash their hands or go to the toilet.

Add any thing else you need to be done here

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Thank your guests for coming.

Tidy up.

Double check you've collected everything you came with, plus any gifts that your child might have received.

Go home, and enjoy your well earned treat.

Party Register

Tick the guests names as they arrive and you'll know who's still left to come and when they're all here!

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