

7 SIMPLE STEPS TO A GREAT PARTY!



THE
AMAZING
IVAN

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Step 1

Coming up with a Good Theme

The best parties always have a good theme! I've performed for a lot of 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.



Start Early

Start as early as three months prior to the party. Make it fun. Brainstorm ideas with your guest of honor (GOH) 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 favorite 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:

- Color Dujour- Have your Guest of Honor pick their favorite color and have the guests come dressed in that color; serve everything in that color- food, drinks, plates, cups, etc.
- Dress up- Pull out all of your old clothes- hats, shoes, shirts, socks, etc and blindfold the kids and let them dress themselves.
- Jungleland- Put your kids stuffed animals that are collecting dust and put them around the house. Kids can come dressed as their favorite jungle animal or in safari attire.
- Pizza Party- Everyone makes their own pizza with the toppings of their choice.
- Sports Party- Can include Nerf Football, Wiffle Ball, Kick Ball, etc. Use your imagination.

Below is a list of possible themes for your child's party:

Toddlers

Lady Bug	Teletubbies	Pretend Slumber Party
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Preschoolers

Flower Power	Dinosaur Party	Talent Show
Carnival Party	Bubble Party	Box Party

School Aged

Construction Party	Sleepover Party	The Ultimate Bike Party
Sports Party	Splash Party	Twister Party
Magic Party	Music Themed Party	Tie-Dyed Party
Cheerleading Party	Dance Party	Kid's Cooking Party
Scrap Booking Party	Fairy Tale	Pirate Party
Space Party	Bowling Party	Craft Party
Backyard Campout	Team Colors Party	

Tweens

Talent Show	Roller Skating	Splash Party
Dance Party	Sports	Magic Camp
Paint Ball		

Step 2-Choose a Date & 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 peoples 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 Sources in the Long Island Area

- Dave&Buster's
- Public Parks
- Private/Public Pools

- Adventureland
- High School Track
- Lasertag

- Bowling
- Chuck E Cheese's
- Skating

Time is Important

It's best to start your kids party on the quarter hour (*See Bonus #2- How to Get Your Guest to Arrive on Time*). 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

Decorations

Here's some ideas on ways you can add a festive atmosphere to your party:

- **Streamers** – This is one of the least expensive ways to decorate.
- Make sure to add anything that fits in regards to your theme.
- **Balloons** - Not only can they serve as decorations, but as party favors too. Have a huge bunch of balloons and as the kids leave, give them one. 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. Filling balloons on the day of the party is a huge task and can add stress. It's best to have the balloon store handle it.
- 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!**
- If you want long lasting balloons then have them treated. Professionals use a compound called Super Hi-Float and it will last for days. Some businesses will include this in the price, some will charge extra. Just be sure to ask if you want long lasting balloons.
- Make sure they use 100% helium. From time to time there are helium shortages. During these times, some stores will use a mix of air and helium. These stores usually charge way less than stores who use 100% helium...ASK! Balloons that are filled with this mixture will usually go down in a few hours.
- Keep your balloons indoors in a cool dry place until it's time to decorate. If you plan on putting them outdoors, they will oxidize (fog up) and if it's a real hot day, there is a chance your balloons will pop.
- Ask the store to use a separate string to tie off the strings holding the balloons at their base. This will save you from having to untangle them. This simple request can save you lots of time and aggravation.

Food Tips

- Serve cupcakes if you want to save yourself the hassle of messy cake cutting. Fill flat-bottom ice cream cones $\frac{3}{4}$ full with cake batter, bake, ice and decorate. Easy to serve and eat! You can purchase a small cake to sing happy birthday with, then serve the kids cupcakes. You can let them decorate their own with a 'cupcake bar'. It's best to use hard candy like sprinkles and avoid things like chocolate chips.
- To simplify things, it's best to have bottled water or juice boxes in a cooler.
- Pizza squares with mini-carrots or grapes are the perfect foods for little hands. Hot dogs can be fun as well. Just cut the wieners along the sides and shape them into a person and boil it. The dog will grow arms and legs! Decorate with mustard or ketchup for eyes and mouth.

Goody Bags

Goody Bags can be made simple or extravagant- it's up to you. Check out your local party store or go to your local dollar store. If you are hiring entertainment, see if they provide goodie bags.

Games/Activities

Here's some ideas to get your creative mind going:

Water Balloon Toss – Kids will need to dress appropriately so make sure to put this on the invitation.

Relay Races- This activity is always a lot of fun. Use your imagination!

Dizzy Dizzy Bat Race – This is definitely an outside game. Have a starting line and a finish line, about 20 feet apart. And you'll also need several bats. Split the kids into teams – the first child puts the top of the bat on



the ground and bends over and puts their head on the other end and spins around three times, stands up, and runs to the finish line, tags a teammate, and he does the same thing. The first team to finish wins.

Decorate cookies or cupcakes.

Obstacle course.

Remember to use the things you have in your house. Ping – pong table, foosball, pool table, swimming pool, etc. Don't

underestimate these things. Eventhough your kids may have access to them all the time, others may not. And watching other kids play them may inspire your kids to start using them again.

Tie in your entertainment with a craft idea. i.e. If you have a ventriloquist or puppeteer, make sock puppets. A magician? Learn a magic trick. Or get a bunch of cheap top hats and the kids can decorate them. A clown? Try face painting.

Nerf Football Games- There's nothing like a good old fashioned game of Nerf Football!

Balloon Relay Race. Before the party, inflate about three balloons per child. Divide the guests into two teams. Each child runs to a pre-determined point, sits on their balloon, pops it and runs back to tag the next runner. The first team to pop one ballon per child wins the race. Be sure to have prizes for both the winners and the second place team. Do a re-run if the kids really enjoy it!

Pin the Tail to the Dinosaur- Why not update classic game, and pin a tail on a dinosaur. Just draw the parts yourself.

And don't forget about our favorites...**Ships & Sailors, Limbo, Simon Says and Pin the Tail on the Donkey.** These are all classics for a reason.

One of the biggest mistakes made by individuals 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 don't over plan.

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 75 screaming kids either.

A good rule of thumb is to expect 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 RSVP's. The sooner you get the invitations out the more likely you are to have a good showing (See The Amazing Ivan's Party Checklist).



Invitations

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! Brought to you by The Amazing Ivan at www.theamazingivan.com.

1. **Ask your guests to be on time.** Sounds simple enough, but you would be surprised how many people don't ask. Believe it or not, people will respond when prompted.
2. **Start on the quarter hour.** For example, begin at 1:15 or 1:45 p.m. Believe it or not, studies show that people arrive on time more often on the quarter hour - who'd've ever thought?
3. **Add the word "sharp" after the start time.** Example: 1:15 p.m. sharp.
4. **Have a drawing.** Pick winners five minutes after the start time. Make sure to state it on your invitation. Is this bribery? Absolutely...but it works. ☺
5. **Send a reminder note home.** It can go home in a backpack from school, you can mail a postcard or you can send out an email. Just state something like, "Just a reminder, Billy's birthday party is Saturday at 1:15 p.m. sharp. We look forward to seeing you there! Don't forget, we're giving away some great prizes at 1:20 p.m."
6. **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.

For more creative information on your next birthday party go to: www.theamazingivan.com.



You can purchase just about any style invitation locally, online or you can make your own. Computers make custom invitations easy and fun. Here are some ideas:

Have the birthday child draw a picture, scan it, fill in the appropriate information, (who, what, when, where, why and RSVP information), print it, and send them out.

Design your own card around the party theme. There are many wonderful programs out there that can easily help you design your own unique invitation. Your computer probably already has such a program. Don't forget about evite.com.

To encourage promptness use the suggestions in the guide that was emailed to you- *How to Get Your Guests to Arrive on Time!*

Step 5- The Amazing Ivan's 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. Since you requested additional information from www.IvansInsane.com one the free gifts was *The Amazing Ivan's Party Checklist*. That thing 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.



NOTHING TO IT!

Step 6- Party Setup



If you followed the *The Amazing Ivan's Party Checklist* 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 as well. You don't want to miss any picture perfect moments.

Setup 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 checklist 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 you planned to let attendees know the location of the party.

Make it stand out!

THIS IS THE
EASIEST BIRTHDAY
PARTY EVER!

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. Was at a party at a local pool recently and they couldn't find a lighter anywhere. Bottom line- the kid got to blow out an imaginary candle.

In regards to clean up...GET HELP! Who better to ask then the kids at the party? Make a game out of it. Give prizes for the child who picks up the most trash.

One 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!



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