

The
Children's
Mutual

A Foresters Company

Parents' Guide to Children's Birthday Parties



Introduction

At The Children's Mutual we talk to parents regularly and always want to share their knowledge and experiences to help other parents. From the feedback we've received, we know that although birthday parties are supposed to be great fun, hosting one fills many of us with dread – so if you thought you were the only parent feeling overwhelmed you're certainly not. Many families operate on a tight budget and a very busy schedule, we hope this guide will give you some time-saving, budget friendly tips, which will keep the children happy and you sane!

If money is no object and you can afford a Party Planner, they will organise everything on your wish list, but at a cost. Alternatively, you could rise to the challenge, engage family and friends and save money along the way.

Whatever you decide keep it **S i m p l e**

Set a budget before you do anything!

involve the birthday child (if old enough!), discuss ideas together

modify all elements of the party, adapt to suit the event

plan ahead get organised in advance so there are no (or very few) last minute hiccups

look at the checklist to make sure things aren't forgotten

enlist helpers and delegate tasks

[Planning Tips](#)

[Birthday Cake](#)

[Home or Away](#)

[Party Bags](#)

[Invitations](#)

[Budgeting Tips](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Age Related Tips](#)

[Decorations](#)

[Checklists](#)

[Party Food](#)

Planning Tips

Organising excited children (and adults), food, games, decorations; the list can be never ending – take a look at our tips and make it **S i m p l e**!

- 1. Budget** – set one immediately because it will determine what type of event you hold.
- 2. Home or away** – now that you know how much is in the ‘kitty’, decide whether to have the party at home or another venue – why not involve the birthday person, after all they sometimes know best!
- 3. Book early** – if you’re booking a venue or entertainer, do it early because the best ones will get booked well in advance.
- 4. Guests** – when you’re considering ‘how many’, think about your budget and the chosen location – don’t forget that when holding a party for younger children it may be handy to have the parents there too.
- 5. Invitations** – send out invites three to four weeks before the event.
- 6. Shopping** – shop online – they deliver and will save you valuable time.
- 7. Helpers** – ask friends and family to help, give older siblings some responsibility they’ll thrive on it!
- 8. Order of play** – it may be difficult to stick to it rigidly on the day but use it as a guide.
- 9. ‘Plan B’** – always have a contingency plan, especially if you intend having an outside event – as we all know, you can’t rely on our weather!
- 10. Presents** – when opening, make a note of who gave what for the Thank You letters. Relatives could contribute towards the party rather than adding to an overfull toy box.

Print off a copy of our Home or Away Checklist and tick off the tasks when completed – that way you won’t forget anything!



Home or Away

Once you've made the decision to have a party you will then need to decide quite early on where. Consider the practicalities and cost before you discuss the options with the party person.

Home

Costs can be kept down considerably if you hold the party at home. Obviously there will be no outlay for a venue, numbers can be kept small and everything from decorations to catering can be made or bought for a modest price. Many children, particularly younger ones, feel more comfortable in familiar surroundings. You may think the downside is you have to clear up afterwards – enlist those helpers now!

Home Top Tips

- Make sure you put away precious/breakable items and childproof the area.
- Pets can feel as overwhelmed as children – put them somewhere safe and peaceful.
- Have plenty of wipes for faces, hands and spills.
- Restock the first aid kit.
- Out of bounds rooms/areas – tape a length of party ribbon across if you can't lock doors.





Away

On the other hand, home is probably not the first place that springs to mind if you intend inviting 30 guests (even if they're angels), some themes work well in a venue, or the age of the children would better suit an activity centre. You may think it's money well spent to hire a venue with catering, entertainment and a party leader and then you can sit back and relax!

Choosing a venue

When choosing take into account the cost, age, location, size, catering, theme and safety. Once you have a favourite arrange to visit the venue when it's in full swing – you can then gauge whether it would suit your requirements.

Have a list of questions ready to ask including:

- **Availability?**
- **Cost** – what it includes – numbers (off peak times maybe cheaper), party leader, food/drink/cake, entertainment, music, activities, supervisors, party bags, decorations?
- **Private or shared use?**
- **DIY** – can you hire the venue but provide your own catering (check facilities), entertainment, music, decorations, bouncy castle etc?
- **Timings** – party times and possibility of going in early to prepare?
- **Parking** – allocated to your group, is it free, is there a drop-off zone for guests' parents?
- **Staff** – how many/which staff will be available on the day?
- **Safety/First Aid** – Lifeguards (pool party), First Aiders/kit, equipment checks?
- **Emergency procedures** – evacuation, exits etc?
- **Insurance** – what does it cover?
- **Contingencies** – do they have a 'Plan B' in case of weather (outdoor venues), staff sickness etc?

When booking, get a contact name, number (in/out of office hours) and written confirmation.

Away Top Tips

- Book early – the best ones go quickly.
- Check off the guests on arrival.
- If there isn't a cloakroom take a large container for coats and shoes.
- Don't forget the cake knife and candles.
- Blu-Tack, tape and scissors may come in handy.
- Take refuse sacks for presents and rubbish.
- Have a table for presents and cards.
- Check out where the toilets are before the guests arrive.
- Make sure you have an adult at all the 'escape routes'.
- Run through emergency procedures with your helpers.



Invitations

When planning a date you will need to consider what else is going on around that time. Your child will be very disappointed that their friends can't attend if the party clashes with other events.

- School holidays – check with your child's 'best friends' parents of their plans.
- Other parties on that day – obviously avoid these (unless you have a joint party which could save valuable cash!).
- Events in the calendar e.g. Easter, Bank holidays.

Invitations should be sent out three to four weeks before the event and should include the following information:



You really don't have to spend a fortune – the DIY variations could even give you a few hours peace whilst the party person and siblings get creative or if you don't have the time check out our ready-made ideas.

DIY

- Children love to be creative and the invitations don't have to be master pieces – let them help.
- Gather together craft materials i.e. card, stickers, pencils, fabric, glue, coloured paper, glitter, markers, scissors and craft knife (used with adult supervision).
- Baby or toddler handprints are brilliant fun (although a little messy) – handprints should be done on one large sheet and then cut to the desired size – a lovely keepsake.
- Details of the event should be made clear – print them off and stick them inside or on the back of the card.
- Buy extra large balloons, blow up, write party details with fine permanent marker, deflate balloon and put in an envelope.

Templates

- These can be personalised by the child and are great fun.
- Download 'free' templates and off you go!
- If you run out of enthusiasm or time, personalise one copy and photocopy the required amount.

Ready-made

- Shop around – you can pick up great reductions in the sales.
- Go online and order customised to suit your style.
- Pads can be an inexpensive option – they don't normally come with envelopes.
- Photo cards – upload your photo online or DIY by printing off photos and attach card.
- Single or packs of the card and envelope version are available at stationers and card retailers.



Don't forget, chase up replies for final number, children may still have the reply in their school bag!



Entertainment

A group of excited guests waiting for the fun to begin and it's all on your shoulders – you may be getting that panicky feeling again!

Keeping children occupied can be challenging (and expensive) so you'll need to be organised. Look at the budget, ask the birthday person what they would like and plan ahead – **Simple**.

Most children up to the age of eight will enjoy the traditional party – games, activities, tea and cake.

Under threes

They have a short attention span so keep activities short and sweet. Your little guests may be nervous of costumes and strangers so themes and entertainers are probably not such a good idea.

Three to five year olds

They'll enjoy classic games and activities but try not to make them too long or competitive and explain the rules slowly and carefully. These little ones love to dress up – superheroes, fairies, animals – anything goes. At this age an entertainer may be a wasted expense – your guests are still prone to becoming restless and bored quickly.

Six to eight year olds

They will need to be occupied – they'll have a lot of energy and will want to let off steam. Try and get a mix of lively and calming activities and games. Themed parties are popular at this age – children love to play the part of a character and will really get involved. If you're worried about managing a group of this age (and the budget allows it) you could hire an entertainer – take a look at our top tips below.

Top Tips

Entertainers

- If you're holding the party at a venue, check that it is ok to have an entertainer.
- Ask what the package includes – prizes, party bags, activities etc.
- Is there a DVD of the act you can see before you make a decision?
- Check that they carry public liability insurance and are CRB checked.
- Book early – the best ones will go.
- Is there a contingency plan in case of sickness, travel problems etc.
- Ask the entertainer if you need to provide anything for their act.
- The booking should be confirmed in writing.

Games and activities

- When choosing games, think about how much space you have.
- Make them easy to understand so they are fun.
- If an activity is 'messy', make sure the guests have aprons, but have some spares.
- Plan extra games and activities in case they finish sooner than you expected.
- Research party games online – there are loads of ideas!

Themes

- A theme can tie the whole event together but don't complicate it – keep it **Simple**.
- Try and choose a theme that the guests will not have to spend too much money or time on costumes.
- Re-name classic games to match the theme.
- Give the food themed names e.g. pirate cupcakes.
- Little ones love to bring something from home – why not have a teddy bears' picnic.



Decorations

Decorating the party scene for the big day will set the mood and make the birthday person feel very special.

Home

The party room can be transformed instantly with balloons, streamers and bunting. These can be bought at party shops but watch the budget because the themed brand particularly can work out very costly.

On the other hand if you've got a spare afternoon, making your own can add that personal touch and save the budget. Gather together a few volunteers including the birthday child and get creative.

- Balloons look more effective if hung in bunches.
- Streamers can be easily made by twisting long lengths of colourful crepe paper and hung from corner to corner around the room.
- To make bunting cut out and decorate pieces of card, punch a hole and thread through string or ribbon.
- Using a large sheet of paper, paints, felt tips make a birthday banner.



Table

If you are laying out the food for guests to help themselves there may not be too much room for decorations. Sprinklings of confetti glitter and paper streamers on the table add a fun element. Place names can be made from small pieces of card and decorated.

It may be worth investing in a plastic picnic set and table cloth that can be washed and put away for the next event rather than the disposable kind. If you want napkins and straws you'll need to buy these but as usual shop around.

Outside

Decorations outside the house will direct people to the party. Balloons or a banner (waterproof) will stand out. Make sure they're secure or your guests may turn up at the wrong house!

Venues

If you are holding the event at a venue ask if they provide decorations, if its not part of the package have a look some of the ideas above.



Top Tips

- Adapt your decorations to tie in with the theme.
- To brighten up plain white paper table cloths, decorate with felt tip pens.
- If you're using paper table cloths, place another layer underneath to protect your table.
- Buy white paper plates and get the children to make and decorate doilies.
- Buy a roll of cheap plain wallpaper for banners.
- Instead of buying printed balloons, personalise them with stickers and felt tip pens.

Party Food

Food at any party is an important element but at a children's party it is not the highlight. Feeding other people's children can be worrying but there is no need to lay on a lavish spread at huge expense, because it will not be appreciated or even eaten!

When putting the menu together consider the following:

- Ages of your guests – soft options for the babies without teeth.
- Children can be picky eaters so keep it small and **Simple**.
- Include savoury, sweet and healthy options.
- Discuss with guests' parents, allergies or special dietary requirements.
- If you're serving the tea outside, keep everything cool and covered.
- Tie the theme in where you can – shaped sandwiches, decorated biscuits.
- Try to provide food that will suit both adults and children.

If you're going to DIY, prepare as much as you can in advance and freeze, because on the day there will be last minute foods to make e.g. sandwiches. Enrol young budding chefs and have a baking/cooking day – their reward could be tasting the produce. Pastries, pasta sauces, pizzas, biscuits and cakes can all be frozen.

Food ideas

- Bread, muffins, bagels, rolls and pita bread can be shaped and topped or filled with a variety of tasty ingredients.
- Dips are a fun food and can be a healthy option. Try a dip with raw vegetables, breadsticks or fruit dippers with yogurt.
- Pizzas are popular with children and easy to decorate to match the theme.
- Shaped pasta with sauce in small portions is an easy hot option.
- Homemade cakes and biscuits can also be tied in with the theme.
- Fruit kebabs – pieces of fruit threaded onto a plastic straw (not for the babies and toddlers).
- Jellies are bright, colourful and easy to make (add small pieces of fruit).





Drinks

- Offer water, milk or diluted fruit juice.
- Suggest to parents of babies and toddlers to bring their own.

Top Tips

- Shop online and make use of the delivery service.
- Don't try out new recipes on the day, have a re-run beforehand.
- If you need to transport food and drink make sure its stored in secure containers.
- Have tea mid-way through the party to allow for a bit of calm time!
- Use small plates because children tend to pile them high
- Food boxes are popular with younger children – five items per box.
- Use an activity as part of the spread – allow the children to add toppings of their choice to pizzas bases and serve as part of the tea.
- Offer savoury options before bringing out the sweet.
- Have helpers to keep an eye on the younger ones and to serve drinks.
- Don't worry if an excited child doesn't eat – they won't starve!!
- Place a plastic mat underneath the 'eating area' to protect your flooring from spillages and discarded food.
- Try not to over cater or you'll be eating party food for weeks!

Children remember what they did at a party not what they ate, so keep it **S i m p l e!**

Birthday Cake

The lights are dimmed, the magnificent cake is paraded while friends and family sing their best wishes and the candles are blown out to loud claps, cheers and admiring glances – no pressure!

Although, no party is complete without a birthday cake be kind to yourself and keep it **Simple**. Take a look at the four options and go for the one that suits you best within your budget, your confidence and time scale.

Tailor-made – specialist shops will make one to order – at a price.

Ready-made can be bought at supermarkets – you may find one that matches your theme.

Buy a sponge cake – ice and decorate it with lots of input from the birthday person.

Bake your own – little hands will take great delight in helping and licking the spoon!



Top Tips

- **Tailor-made**
 - Give your order in plenty of time and make sure the spelling on your child's name is correct on the order.
 - Ask locally if anybody bakes party cakes, you may find them less expensive than a specialist shop.
- **Shop bought sponge** – buy sponges in different shapes then make your own design.
- **Bake your own** – make the cake in advance and freeze then decorate two to three days before – you can buy different shaped bakeware such as trains and flowers.
- **Cupcakes** – make or buy a batch of cupcakes, decorate to taste. Why not follow the simple recipe on the next page.
- **Don't forget candles!**
- **Portions** – make sure there is enough cake for everybody – just a tiny slice each.
- **Cake to go** – have napkins to wrap up cake to go home.

Have the camera at the ready!

Cupcakes recipe

The beauty of making cupcakes is that you can bake them a week in advance and freeze them. Defrost them at room temperature when you're ready to ice and decorate and then display on a cupcake stand or tiered cake server.

Shopping list

Makes 12 cupcakes

- 125g (4½oz) softened butter
- 125g (4½oz) caster sugar
- 125g (4½oz) self-raising flour, sieved
- 2 medium eggs beaten
- Paper cases

Butter cream icing

- 100g (4oz) softened butter
- 200g (7oz) icing sugar, sieved
- 10ml-20ml (2-4 tsp) milk
- Food colouring

Toppings • Hundreds and thousands sprinkles • Edible silver balls • Mini jellies

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5.
2. Cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Slowly add the beaten eggs and fold in the flour until well blended.
4. Divide the mixture into the paper cases and bake on a tray in the centre of oven for 12 to 15 minutes until well risen and firm to touch.
5. Leave to cool on a wire rack.
6. For the butter icing, cream the butter until very soft, add the icing sugar a little at a time, then add the milk and beat until the texture is light and smooth. Finally, add the food colouring.
7. Once the cupcakes have cooled thoroughly spread a heaped teaspoon of butter icing on each and decorate.

This basic recipe can be flavoured with grated rind of orange or lemon, ½ teaspoon of vanilla essence, 100g (4oz) dried mixed fruit or whatever you fancy.

When decorating add toppings to match the party theme but really, anything goes!



Made by the team



Party Bags

Party bags can be a 'costly headache' for parents and often the last thing on their list. It has always been customary to give a **Simple** token 'thank you' to the guests for celebrating a special day. Have a look at our ideas below.

The bag does not have to be overflowing. Look at your budget and set an amount for each bag.

Lucky Dips

Fill a container with saw dust or shredded paper and pop in wrapped gifts and allow each child to 'dip' as they leave. If you have girls and boys you could get unisex gifts or have two containers. This job could be delegated to the older children.

Take Home Treats

Lay out a selection of cookies, cupcakes, balls, dried fruit, theme matching toppings and icing. Allow each guest to decorate a treat to take home.

Pop Me

Put tiny wrapped sweets in a balloon, blow it up, tie a knot in it and write the guests name on it using a permanent marker – they will love having to pop the balloon for the goodies – suitable for the older children.

Arty Bag

Have a craft activity and each guest can take home his piece of 'art' – jewellery, badges. Make sure each piece has the guests name on it or there could be tears when they leave!

Choc-o-Treat

Make homemade treats by pouring melted chocolate into small moulds – stars, animal shapes – leave to set in the fridge then put in cellophane bags tied with ribbon.

Colour Rolls

Print off 'free' theme or character colour sheets, roll up and tie with coloured string and give with pencils or markers.

Bracelets

Make bracelets for girls (beads) and boys (leather laces) – the birthday person will love personalising these for their friends.

Green Fingers

Buy a selection of seeds, small pots and soil, put each guests name on one – children are fascinated by growing their own.

Prize bags

When playing party games ensure every child wins a prize – most enthusiastic, caring, funniest, best effort – and give the prizes to the winners (every guest) when they leave. It's probably a good idea to explain this before the games begin so the children understand that they will be getting their 'prize' later.

Pre-filled bags

If you prefer to use a supplier you can order online. Pre-filled bags with the contents of your choice are delivered direct to your home. Shop around because contents and prices vary greatly.



Budgeting Tips

Children's parties can become a huge expense if you let them – here are a few tips that could save you money.

Home

- If you don't have the room, ask a relative if you can hold the party at their house with the promise of clearing up afterwards!

Guests

- Don't feel under pressure to invite huge numbers – limit the guest list to suit your budget.

Invitations

- Make or print off your own or email them.

Party food

- Keep it small and **Simple** – make your own and downsize on the portions.

Adults

- Just provide drink and nibbles after all it's a 'children's' party.

Share a party

- If a classmate is planning a party around the same time have a joint one and split the planning, preparation and the cost.

Birthday cake

- If you're not confident in baking one buy a sponge and decorate it yourself, children will really enjoy helping with this!!

Decorations

- Make your own, the children will love it.

Entertainer

- Check with family and friends whether they have any undiscovered talents, this could cause great amusement and be FREE.
- Explore the possibility of a shorter act at a reduced price.
- Some offer craft activities or balloon modelling – which can save on party bags.

Themes

- If you see a store or cinema display that matches your theme ask if you can have it when they've finished with it – if you don't ask you don't get!

Party bags

- Each guest can make something and pop it in their party bag e.g. iced biscuit, party hat.
- Buy large economy packets of pens, erasers, stickers and put one in each bag.

Thank you

- Put thank you letters in the party bags – save on postage.

Venues

- Check all options available such as Church Halls, self catering and compare prices for off-peak times.
- Local parks are free. Organise a Teddy Bears picnic or for the older ones a Sports Day. Have a 'Plan B', our summers can be unpredictable!

If you've got a budget stick to it!



Age Related Tips

When planning your child's party age will determine a lot of factors. Take a look at our age related tips – you may find they cross over depending on the stage your child is at.

One year old top tips

- 1 hour is probably long enough for the birthday child and their young guests but the adults may want to stay a little longer!
- Child proof the party area – sharp edges can be a hazard.
- Try and organise the start time for after your one year old has had their routine nap, so they are feeling refreshed. This will also give you an opportunity to finish last minute things and freshen yourself up.
- If you're running around being the perfect host, ask an adult to keep an eye on the special birthday person.
- Set up a travel cot for other babies to have a nap, and a nappy changing area.
- Ask parents to bring high-chairs with them – having young ones seated together for tea will make it much easier and fun.

Two year old top tips

- 1-1½ hours of excitement will be enough for this group.
- Ask parents to stay with their toddler if possible.
- Put out a mixture of playthings, two of each if possible, to avoid squabbles.
- Ask parents to bring spill-proof cups if you don't have enough.
- If a toddler wants to sit on a parents lap – that's ok, they'll still enjoy watching.
- Some of your child's guests may have started potty training – be prepared for accidents and have a couple of potties on standby.
- You will probably still need a baby changing area.
- Put the food out at the last minute and then clear away immediately when finished – serve savoury options before sweet.

Three to five year old top tips

- 1½-2 hours of fun will wear them out (and you).
- Make sure you have a contact number for parents.
- Put name badges on your guests (no safety pins), they will respond better if you address them by name.
- When playing games, have a lively one, then a more sedate one.
- Have water available throughout the party for the thirsty, lively ones.
- Toilet trips – delegate a helper to lend a hand with buttons, zips and hand washing.
- Have some spare clothes in case of accidents.
- Have a party bag ready for the birthday child – they may not understand the concept of who gets one and why.

Six to eight year old top tips

- They will easily manage 2-2½ hours.
- If you would like to invite a large group and a classmate/friend is having a party, check whether they would be interested in a joint event.
- Give every guest a name badge (no safety pins).
- This age group will need to be kept busy and challenged but they can be quite co-operative, understand rules, and enjoy organised team games. They have also developed craft skills which you could incorporate in an activity.
- If when playing team games one team is stronger than the others, mix the teams up a bit.
- Put a sign on the toilet door so they know where to go.



Checklists

As we've already mentioned there is always so much to do for the big day that things can quite easily get forgotten – the secret is in the planning.

Why not print off our checklist (Home or Away), keep it somewhere in your sight and tick off the tasks when completed – this way you've got a good chance of everything running smoothly!

Home

We have included in the checklist some sections where you may be using an outside supplier.

5 weeks before	✓
Set a budget	
Discuss with the birthday child what they would like to do	
Decide on numbers and draw up a guest list with the birthday child	
Choose a date and time (check it doesn't clash with other events)	
Research and book entertainer/equipment/caterers/video	
4 weeks before	✓
Plan menu – any special requests from birthday child?	
Plan games/activities, prizes, party bags, props	
Make/buy invitations – if you're making them, all hands on deck!	
Order birthday cake if having one made – check order has correct spelling of birthday child	
3 weeks before	✓
Send invitations	
Enrol helpers – make sure they put the date in their diary	
Shop for non-perishable food/tableware/prizes/party bags/first aid/candles	
Prepare food items that can be frozen/stored (including birthday cake) – with budding chefs	
10 days before	✓
Chase up RSVPs not received – have a final guest count	
Music – decide on music/nursery rhymes, have a run through	
Decide with the birthday child the outfit for the big day	
Wrap birthday presents	
Make up party bags, prizes, props, decorations – have a craft day!	

7 days before	✓
Make or buy birthday sponge and freeze	
Create an 'order of play' include games/activities/tea/birthday cake	
Confirm booking/order with other outside suppliers	
4 days before	✓
Defrost the birthday sponge, ice and decorate – store in airtight container	
Collect Birthday cake if having made	
Charge camera/video – check batteries	
1 day before	✓
Shop for fresh food/ingredients for your menu	
Defrost/prepare party food	
The big day	✓
Prepare last minute food and drink	
Give a copy of 'order of play' to helpers and agree on specific roles	
Childproof party area, lock or tape out of bounds area, put sign on toilet and table for presents	
Decorate party area, secure outside decorations	
Set table – put mat under table to protect flooring from spillages	
Put pets in a safe and peaceful place	
Get the birthday child and yourself ready	
Greet your guests and ENJOY – Simple	

Away

We have included in the checklist sections that may be part of your venue/entertainers package.

6-8 weeks before	✓
Set a budget	
Discuss with the birthday child what they would like to do	
Decide on numbers and draw up a guest list with the birthday child	
Choose a date and time (check it doesn't clash with other events)	
Research, visit and book venue	
Research and book entertainer/equipment/caterers/video	
4 weeks before	✓
Plan menu – any special requests from birthday child?	
Plan games/activities, prizes, party bags, props	
Make/buy invitations – if you're making them, all hands on deck!	
Order birthday cake if having one made – check order has correct spelling of birthday child	
3 weeks before	✓
Send invitations	
Enrol helpers – make sure they put the date in their diary	
Shop for non-perishable food/tableware/prizes/party bags/candles	
Prepare food items that can be frozen/stored (including birthday cake) – with budding chefs	
10 days before	✓
Chase up RSVPs not received – have a final guest count	
Music – decide on music/nursery rhymes, have a run through	
Decide with the birthday child the outfit for the big day	
Wrap birthday presents	
Make up party bags, prizes, props, decorations – have a craft day!	

7 days before	✓
Make or buy birthday sponge and freeze	
Discuss with venue/entertainer the 'order of play'	
Confirm booking/order with other outside suppliers	
4 days before	✓
Defrost the birthday sponge, ice and decorate – store in airtight container	
Collect Birthday cake if having made	
Charge camera/video – check batteries	
1 day before	✓
Shop for fresh food/ingredients for your menu	
Defrost/prepare party food	
The big day	✓
Prepare last minute food and drink	
Get the birthday child and yourself ready	
Make your way to the venue with plenty of time to spare!	
Check equipment e.g. bouncy castle	
Decorate venue, secure outside decorations, set area for presents	
Check all helpers know 'order of play', specific roles, toilets, emergency exits, escape routes	
Greet your guests and ENJOY – Simple	

The Children's Mutual, PO Box 1137, CHELTENHAM GL50 9QS
Tel: 0330 024 1210 Email: mail@thechildrensmutual.co.uk Website: thechildrensmutual.co.uk

The Children's Mutual is a trading name of Forester Fund Management Ltd. Registered Office: Forester Fund Management Ltd, Foresters House, 2 Cromwell Avenue, Bromley BR2 9BF. Registered in England number 4315370. Forester Fund Management Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

**The
Children's
Mutual**

A Foresters Company

HSE-GD-0081-0214