

Captain Kid's Birthday Survival Guide! v. 18

(919) 342-6509 ~ (888) 447-2789 ~ <http://CaptainKidMagic.com>

Success Starts With Planning

Print this schedule - it will help get and keep you organized!

SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE PARTY

- 1) Determine the location of your party (if not at home). The early bird gets the worm, er, prime location / prime time.
- 2) Hire Captain Kid. To get the best entertainer possible, it is best to book early. Yes, the best MAY be available if you call the day before-- if you are lucky!

FOUR TO SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE PARTY

- 1) Decide on a guest list
- 2) Schedule party activities
- 3) Decide which decorations and favors to make and which to buy
- 4) List supplies needed
- 5) Plan the menu

TWO TO THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE PARTY

- 1) Confirm the location (if not at your home).
- 2) Make/buy invitations. Check out the free invitations at:
<http://CaptainKidMagic.com/Invitations.html>
- 3) Mail the invitations, or drop them off, or send to school.
- 4) Buy party supplies. See local vendors at:
<http://CaptainKidMagic.com/RaleighTreasure.html>
- 5) Make party decorations and favors. Check out the free decorations and ideas at:
<http://CaptainKidMagic.com/Decor.html>
- 6) Order cake from bakery (if you are not making it). Check out the food ideas at:
<http://CaptainKidMagic.com/Grub.html>
- 7) Arrange for extra help.

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE PARTY

- 1) Finish the decorations and favors.
- 2) Confirm the order for the cake and/or party supplies.
- 3) Bake cake and freeze it (if you are making it yourself.)
- 4) Make any other foods that can be made ahead of time and store in the freezer.
- 5) Write out a final schedule of activities for the party.

TWO TO THREE DAYS BEFORE THE PARTY

- 1) Buy remaining food for the party.
- 2) Get film, batteries and/or videotape - plenty.
- 3) Check batteries for cameras, flash units, and/or camcorders.
- 4) Get an exact guest count. Tally responses and call those who haven't responded.

THE DAY BEFORE THE PARTY

- 1) Finish decorating cake or pick up cake from bakery. (Keep cake fresh by inserting toothpicks along rim and in middle section of the cake, 1/2" deep. Cover loosely with foil or plastic wrap. Place in refrigerator.)
- 2) Childproof party area. Pick up any toys that could be a distraction.
- 3) Decorate any indoor areas of party. Weather can damage decorations, so wait for any outside decor.
- 4) Prepare all the food you can prepare in advance.
- 5) Print out signs to help guide your guests to your party at:

<http://CaptainKidMagic.com/Signs.html>

THE PARTY DAY

- 1) Prepare the last of the food.
- 2) Decorate outside, including placing direction signs.
- 3) Mark the outside of the house or the party area with balloons and/or a signs.
- 4) Keep your schedule of party activities available.

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Organize the Party!

Part of the secret of a well-organized party is a well-organized party area. Here are some suggestions to help you get and keep the party area organized.

Materials

Have all the materials for games and activities set up and ready to distribute. Place them out in the order that they will be used for less confusion.

Furnishings

The height of furniture is generally designed for adults. For kids under 5 making crafts, it is best to place folding tables (or plywood) directly on the floor. You can raise them up by placing it on milk crates. Kid size plastic chairs are also inexpensive buy (or borrow) and will make the party more "kid friendly".

Trash

Don't forget trash cans. At least two or three in the party area will help keep things neat!

Presents

A card table near the entry door will help keep things organized!

Picture Time

Have your camera ready with plenty of film/video tape/batteries. Make sure batteries are charged and have extra batteries available for the camera/flash. Think of the background for any pictures - is there anything you may not want to cherish forever in a photo?

Is the Party Area Child Proof?

Survey the area and make sure anything that is a hazard or that can become a hazard is removed. (Remember the bathroom, too.)

Party Supply Checklist!

Envelopes: Quantity & Size:

Postage Stamps: Quantity:

Candles: Quantity & Color:

Plates: Quantity, Color, & Size:

Forks/Knives/Spoons: Quantity & Color:

Napkins: Quantity, Color, & Size:

Cups: Quantity, Color, & Size:

Tablecloth: Quantity, Color, & Size:

Place mats: Quantity & Color:

Batteries: Quantity & Size:

Film/Video: Quantity & Type:

Trash bags Glue Transparent Tape Crayons/Markers

Decorations:

Favors:

Groceries:

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Keeping Your Party Stress-Free!

- 1) Turn party preparations into a family project! You have less work to do AND your children will feel they helped make the party a success!
- 2) Make a realistic estimate of how much preparation time is involved and how much time you can devote to party preparation. Things always take longer than you plan.
- 3) Start early. It is much easier to find 15-30 minutes per evening than to do it all the day before the party.
- 4) Shop smart. Make a list of things you need and where you can get them.
- 5) It is best to have the good Captain Kid arrive after the party has been going on about a half hour. This gives the children plenty of time to meet and greet. Then the magic starts and gives them structure, getting the party off to a great start! Some children will ALWAYS arrive late, and disrupt the party as everyone rushes over to greet them and tell them what has happened.
- 6) Parents are VERY welcome at the show! Parents are sometimes needed (even if the children think not!), but in the past, the adult conversations have created MAJOR distractions for the children. We all are disturbed when children talk at the theater. Well, this is the children's theater!
- 7) Your friends and their toddlers are welcome to enjoy the show, so long as the toddlers can sit with them and won't go walking around the older children! The kids get very excited and can easily not see a baby in their midst. Toddlers often like to come and visit with me during the performance, and that can slow down the party, too.
- 8) Eating and drinking before or during the show can cause stains! The show is very interactive, and the food will slow everyone down. What happens to the food in a child's mouth when they start laughing?? There is also a concern for spills. Not only can spills damage your floorboards, but it stops the show until it is cleaned up. Considering the good Captain is paid by the hour, that is also expensive! Be prepared for spills. Have towels handy, and carpet cleaner & spot remover (just in case).
- 9) Noisemakers and other distractions like TVs and radio can split the children's attention. To maximize the magical effect, it is best to keep distractions to a minimum during the party!
- 10) Often a child that wants attention will start playing with your child's toys if they are available. These "new" toys will always be a distraction to the children anyway, and if you wish, there will be plenty of time to play with them later!
- 11) The presents are the least entertaining, and once opened can be very distracting! Opening presents can be very boring to many younger children - especially if there are a lot of children. Bored children can be problem-causing children!
- 12) You will wish you had plenty of film and batteries for your video and still cameras if you forget them! Many clients want lots of action shots and poses with the Captain, parrot Jax, and the ball-and-chain. This will only happen once, so be ready! Think of the background of your photos, is there something you do not want to remember forever in a photo?
- 13) Children LOVE pirates and Parrots! Getting into the pirate theme is not hard! Buy and/or make pirate decorations (see the decoration page). Use pirate food (see the grub page). Use the pirate invitations, jokes, and instructions on how to speak like a Pirate. All of them will garner excitement and help make your party unforgettable! Really, this works wonders!
- 14) Birthday parties can be very stressful for younger birthday children in particular. They really love it, but sometimes they do not want to interact due to all the fuss being made over them. Relax; this is normal. They are having a good time just watching all the excitement! Normally, the good Captain turns birthday children into "ventriloquism puppets" for the end - and they are the stars. They are generally receptive to attention then, because they are acclimated to the party.
- 15) Your pets will be fine, but keeping everything but the fish locked in a bedroom will lessen the chance of a disruption! Remember Jax is a big parrot; she is used to dogs, but they are rarely use to her! Dogs also can get overly excited by the party and accidentally knock down children and lamps!
- 16) This is a loud, rambunctious party. People who cannot tolerate kids yelling probably should be elsewhere. Really. You may want a separate room for adults who would rather talk than watch the children have fun.

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- 17) Outdoor parties are never as good as indoor parties when it comes to this type of entertainment. Outside it can be too hot, too cold, too windy, or it can rain. Insects can factor in. If you want to have an outdoor party, please try to have the magic indoors and the rest outside. The good Captain DOES NOT have kids running around breaking and spilling things at his parties -- he keeps them occupied! The Captain has found that having a party outside in the yard can actually cause more problems inside the house than having the whole party inside. Children track in mud and other things. If a child has to use the bathroom, he or she can end up wandering all over the house unsupervised. Children often bring outside behavior inside and can accidentally break, stain, or otherwise hurt your home by running and playing roughly. At an inside party the kids are closely supervised and that red Kool-Aid never gets into the living room to be spilled on the rug or furniture. The good Captain, in thousands of parties, has seen very little of this if a party is just indoors. REALLY!
 - 18) Children like simple food. Children aren't fussy; they just want something quick and easy so they can get back to enjoying the party as soon as they can. Fancier foods can be a smash with the adults.
 - 19) Name badges/stickers for the children help keeps the order, and then every adult can address a child with the child's proper name. It also can make things more personal to your guests when the Captain calls them by their first name.
 - 20) The good Captain believes it is best for parties to end on a high note - two hours to two and a half hours is ideal time for a successful children's party.
 - 21) Children that are not within a year or two of your child will often feel out of place at your child's party. Your friend's seven year old Jimmy may play with his three year old sister at home, but neither he nor his friends will probably play with younger children at your child's party.
 - 22) It is tempting to invite more children to your party than your house can handle. The good Captain will keep all the kids entertained, but you will have to manage them during the meal. 12 to 20 is a good number for a house party, and 20 to 30 is a good number for a hall.
 - 23) Girls LOVE a Pirate party! If they don't wish to dress as pirates, they can be mermaids or princess', too! Always give the guests opportunity to dress up - they will love it! Give the adults a chance to dress-up, too - it can be a lot of fun!
 - 24) The most popular time to have a children's birthday party is at 2:00 pm on a Saturday. This is because people are often free, and it is not close to lunch or dinner, so a meal is not necessary. This also makes it a bad time to have a party because other parties will be competing with yours for that time slot. I personally think 2:00 on a SUNDAY or after school/work on a Friday are good because there is less competition for your guests. Some schools & preschools allow parties at school. This cuts out competition completely and makes the party much easier for you.
 - 25) Some children are often shy around strangers, and with so many people over for the party, a child can become even more shy. Please let your children, and their invited guests, explore this web site. This will get them ready to fully participate in the party because they will "know" Captain Kid, and he will be less of a stranger. Surprising younger children with ANY entertainer is courting disaster - many children do not take well to big surprises.
 - 26) AIR CONDITIONING! This is an active party. With kids jumping up and down for an hour, things can get HOT. Crank up the air conditioner BEFORE the party starts. It should be a little too cool . . . Don't worry, the kids will warm things up!
- Mums and Dads check your cabin boy's or girl's day of birth then ring the good Captain up:

(919) 342-6509

or

(888) 447-2789

(888) 4-4-PARTY

<http://CaptainKidMagic.com>

Some of the ideas provided are from Children's performer Mike Maione, the Silly Magician
<http://www.silymagician.com/>