

Easy 2 hour Party Guide

A Parent's Guide to Enjoying An Easy Kid's Birthday Party

Inside:

- Avoid 6 Costly Misconceptions About Birthday Parties
- 4 Mistakes To Avoid With Party Entertainment
- How to Get a 100% No Risk Guarantee
- 5 Steps To Arrange Your Kids Birthday Party in Under An Hour

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Introduction

Would you like to know what works and what doesn't at children's birthday parties? Then speak to someone who has been to literally hundreds of them: a busy birthday party magician. That's me! **Magic Iain**.

You don't have to call me that - I'll answer to Iain, too 😊

I want to share my insights from the world of birthday parties with you and make your life a bit easier.

Full disclosure: I am going to recommend to you the services of professional entertainers because I truly believe it is the quickest, easiest and most cost-effective way for you to put on a brilliant birthday party that gets talked about. That said, you are going to get so much useful information here. I'd love for you to book a magician or other entertainer, but in all honesty, I'll be delighted if you take the knowledge you get here, use it to remove any 'party-stress' from your life and ultimately throw the birthday bash your little one deserves.

What you will discover here is a headache-free way to run your child's birthday party.

US homemaker guru Martha Stewart says:

"Birthday parties are like road trips: getting there is half the fun. Deciding on the theme, decorations, and activities makes the days leading up to the event seem like part of the celebration itself."

Well, that sentiment is **not** shared by 90% of the thousands of parents I have spoken to when they are planning their party. When faced with organising a birthday party, I'm certain they're thinking something like, 'I really love my child to bits, but I just need help to get this party done quickly and without any problems. I just want to send invites into school/nursery, put out some food, have the candles blown out and wave everyone off having had a great time...'

It's funny because if you add a bit of music, that's not a bad starting point for a party at all! However, there is so much noise and chatter out there about how birthday parties could/should look like, it's hard to think clearly.

Let me turn down the volume a bit and describe the world of children's parties through my eyes; the eyes of a



professional children's entertainer who's job it is to make parent's lives easier.

This surprises some people – my real job at a party isn't to entertain. My real job is making parent's lives' easier.

With that in mind, here are:

6 Common Misconceptions About Hosting Children's Birthday Parties

1. A Longer Party is a Better Party



I don't think it is. If you're someone who loves a long, lingering, all day, drop-in-when-you-like type of affair then skip this bit. The other 95% of you keep reading.

This is not about the children. They generally don't differentiate between a shorter dynamic party and a longer slower one. It's all a blur for excited little ones. Parents however, do spot the difference. From literally thousands of phone, email and in-person conversations with parents, two hours is the accepted and comfortable length for a children's party.

A 6th birthday party for a group of Year 1s normally means some children will be dropped off. Two hours is the perfect time to run a few errands.

It's a totally workable time. Parents that need to stay (most 4th and 5th birthday parties everyone stays) will be thinking one of two things if your party is over two hours:

1. They'll be wondering what makes your time more valuable than mine, or
2. They simply won't accept the invitation in the first place and politely decline because three hours out of their weekend might as well be the whole day

Two hours has in-built positives. It's a natural rhythm in school: 9-11, 11-1, 1-3. The children's clocks are set to work to this schedule.

The longer the party, the more the cost in social currency – people simply can't fit in nor appreciate a party longer than two hours these days.

2. You Can Find the Perfect Party Date and Time to Suit Everyone

You're a parent of a young child. You know you can't please everyone, so don't try. Finding a party day and time to fit around football training, dance classes and trips to grandparents' is

a stressful task. You may find the best date but it only takes one family's plans to change to send you back to square one.

Get a feel for what might work best for people and set the time that suits your child, maybe your child's best friend and how your family weekend will pan out around the party.



3. Inviting the Whole Class is More Work Than Inviting a Select Few

Ever had to decide who to drop from a list of guests? It's not a great feeling. Avoid bringing those kinds of conversations to the organising of your child's birthday party and invite the whole class or nursery room.

It may cost you a fraction more in food, but you don't need much more space, and I'm about to share with you the 2-hour party blueprint. Inviting the whole class will be SO MUCH EASIER.

4. If I Don't Have the Right Food and Decorations People Will Judge Me Poorly

There are plenty of party websites and even party planners that might imply this is true and you need to keep up with the latest trends. You don't HAVE to. I live in the same Instagram, reality TV world you do and in hundreds and hundreds of parties I've never heard the children compliment (or complain about!) the décor or food.



Some adults will, granted, but please *please* spend more time pleasing the kids more than you do the adults. In my experience, no one, child or adult, goes to a kids' party for the food. In the hundreds of venues I've been lucky enough to perform in, including parties with professional caterers, the volume of food that goes untouched and ultimately in the bin could feed a small nation.

By all means, theme the decorations. Pick your child's favourite colours or characters. Choose food you know your child will eat. But don't worry about what others will think. They'll be too busy worrying their child isn't going to behave themselves...

5. I'll Make It a Get-Together for the Grown-Ups Too

A young child's birthday party is not an ideal social occasion for adults. Nothing is sadder to watch than the birthday child during their special part in the magic show, and instead of feeling like a **Prince** or **Princess** up there, they are l-o-n-g-i-n-g-l-y hoping their parents will watch them. They cast glances to the clusters of socialising parents with finger food and drinks trays.

6. My House is Perfect for a Party

Just imagine, for a moment, 30 children are invited to the party (that's about average).

Now add at least one parent per child, and throw a few baby brothers and sisters in for good measure. Even if some parents drop and go, before you know it you have 50+ people in your home, and none of those are family!

Our homes in the UK are just not made for large-scale entertaining. Believe me, 30 energy-filled children is certainly a large-scale event. Children need a clutter-free area to run around and have fun in and our homes can be a health and safety nightmare of cables, breakables and unseen hazards.

We are fortunate in the UK to have an abundance of community centres, village halls, scout halls and preschools that rent out their halls and rooms for a nominal fee. The halls meet safety requirements, they have industrial kitchens with big urns and the toilet facilities are more than enough for a whole class party.

Community halls are extremely cost-effective and are ideal for energetic children having a super-fun party. The fee is a fraction of what you might have to pay for the clean-up of your carpet and curtains after a party!



Before I show you the simplicity of the 2 hour party blueprint – utilising the experience of true professional children's party entertainers – have a quick look at these mistakes you can try and avoid...

4 Mistakes To Avoid With Party Entertainment

“I’ll just get a bouncy castle, that’s nice and easy.”

Have you thought that through?

Bouncy castles are wonderful things at school fairs, community events and tourist spots. Children love them. I even still love a quick bounce now and then. But do they make your party easier?

You generally book them for half a day or a full day, 4 or 8 hours. Considering the ideal party length is 2 hours booking them for more than that is sort of neither here nor there. Aha, but the kids can get use of it before and after the party, you say. True. And this is where the problems can start.

They need constant supervision. Turning up to hall parties where there is a bouncy castle I’ve seen birthday children – or their best friend – all red eyed sporting dried tear stains on their cheeks. The ‘game’ they played while bouncing got out of hand, and someone’s either upset, or worse, they’ve a lump on their forehead. This is a bouncy castle reality. They need constant supervision, which is work for someone (top tip if you ever have one: supervise the castle in shifts).



If you set up the castle indoors, get your ear plugs ready because you’re in for a very noisy party. The motor noise alone is like a jet flying directly overhead and when you add in jumping children and the increase in volume everyone needs to be able to talk or hear music the party becomes a screaming match!

What about setting up the castle outside? The risks are rain and wind. Summer 2021 was extremely wet and I was asked by several party-hosting mums if I was available at short notice because their bouncy castle company had cancelled because the wind/rain forecast wasn’t suitable. They were left high and dry, despite the rain.

The beauty of the 2 hour party blueprint is you don’t need a bouncy castle. Or any other equipment. The formula ensures fun for the children, and a relaxed, stress-free party for you.

How about booking through a party agency?

Sometimes the ‘party expert’ delivered to you through an agency is a student trying to pay their way through university. Sometimes they’re an out-of-work actor satisfying their

performance itch. Nothing wrong with those. Are they a birthday party expert who can solve problems for you and offer guidance on the day? It pays for you to check exactly who you are getting, what their experience is and how they plan to run your child's birthday party. Hopefully the agency can supply specific testimonials for them.

Many kids party hosts are just brilliant and are really suited to it, but there are plenty who aren't. Please do check who you're getting, because really, you could be paying your hard-earned money for expensive, disorganised babysitting, when you could grab a couple hoops and balls and do the same.

Deal with the entertainer direct and have their personal mobile number.

The minimum to expect:

- Top quality entertainment
- Polite, good-natured interaction with your guests
- Fast, no-fuss set up and pull down
- Completely self-contained
- Own PA system
- Fully insured
- Friendly and enthusiastic service

Understand the difference between passive and active entertainment, and how it affects you

Googling for a children's entertainer gives you a whole host of services clustered around that description: magicians, fairy parties, balloon twisters, face painters, exotic animal visits...

When you hire, for example, a balloon twister or face painter, they will make themselves at home somewhere at your party and quietly go about their business. This is '*passive entertainment*' that usually requires children (and parents) to stand in line and receive the entertainment one person at a time.



Their skill and work is mostly superb and something I cannot do. In fact, I'd be happy to recommend a few face painters and balloon twisters, but just be sure of what that means once a child has a balloon. Or their face painted. Passive entertainment doesn't kick a party into action or take the pressure off you.

Ask for a 100% No Risk Guarantee. Really.

A lot of parents don't understand what they're really getting when they book a children's entertainer and what they're entitled to expect as part of the service. Some entertainers think it's enough to give a good show and their websites reflect that, "I'm an expert at this and I've won awards at that." There is no mention of what they will DO for you, how they will work for you. The children don't pay – you do. What's in it for you?

The performance is the icing on the cake. A good performer will work to lift the burden from your shoulders of keeping the young guests and their adults occupied, interested, happy and relaxed. If you really don't feel you have had that expectation met, you shouldn't have to pay. This is a guarantee a professional children's party entertainer lives by. Expect it, ask for verification of it and don't be afraid to use it if you feel let down.

5 Steps to Organising Your Child's Party in Under 1 Hour

1. Understand how the 2 Hour Party Blueprint works in your favour. Here goes:

Foundation #1: The Diplodocus principle. You deal with the skinny bits at either end of the party, like putting up the decorations and giving out party bags, and the professional entertainer takes over the big fat hard to get a handle on bit in the middle.

Foundation #2: You actually get to enjoy the party. You can take some pictures and videos, capturing the memories being made.

The 2 Hour Party Blueprint Party Schedule

Let's say your child's party starts at 1100.

30-minutes before your invitation time, your entertainer arrives at the venue. The show and PA system are setup and ready with party music playing so that your guests arrive to a party atmosphere

1100 Guests arrive and welcomed by your entertainer. The children are entertained with interactive games to keep them occupied, leaving you to welcome the adults.

1120 A different style of game by now, perhaps a play parachute with age-appropriate games, or maybe some gameshow-style games where they can sit down to watch

1145 Some party dancing to build up an appetite for food

1150 Time to sit the children down for food

1210 Blowing out the candles and singing happy birthday

1215 Perhaps another warm-up game for the main event

1225 Birthday party magic show, with your child the star of the show

1300 Magic show ends

1305 Wave goodbye and receive congratulations from the other parents on a brilliant birthday party

1310 Ask your child if they had a good time – best birthday party ever.

And it's that simple. Your home is safe, your sanity is intact and because they've been occupied throughout, any bad behaviour is postponed to the journey home.

2. Decide on the venue

Local community centres, village halls and Scout huts usually have a website you can make contact by.

3. Book your children's party entertainer. Get a personal quote.

Face painters, balloon twisters, super heroes, sports activities – there are many great professionals available. Your best option, in my opinion, is the birthday party magician (Full disclosure: I am one).

Why? Magicians are in the 'control' business. Understanding audiences and using psychology and performance to get them to do what you need them to do is at the very heart of a magician's show. Capitalise on that and hire a magician to lead your party, in an enjoyable way, towards a successful conclusion.

4. Download the free invitations

The most efficient way to get them to everyone in class is to ask a teacher very nicely. Most will show up, most of them will let you know they're coming. Some won't let you know and will still come. But that's for discussion another time. If the whole class comes, it's no problem at all. A typical party is the whole class plus a handful of cousins or family friends.

5. Your simple shopping list

- Two packets of balloons
- A handful of simple decorations
- Order a simple cake, candles and matches
- Individual packets of crisps, party rings, whatever you like to go with the sandwiches.
- Individual plastic bottles for drinks.
- Paper plates, cups and bowls (you can find places to hire and return party crockery if you're not keen on the waste)

- Paper table cloths and kitchen roll for spillages
- Large bin bags
- Coffee, tea, squash for grown ups
- That's it... you are organised

With this you can have a brilliant birthday party for your child.

Why a Birthday Party Magician?

Children love magic shows. They always have and always will. It's interactive entertainment that keeps them glued to the spot. The birthday child is made the star of the show and feels special on their special party day. A great party magician will keep the adults amused as well as the kids – the birthday party parents are freed up to attend to details, as everyone is occupied.