

Wunderground Magic's Party Planning Guide





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Introduction

Hello, and welcome to *Wunderground Magic's Party Planning Guide*, packed with advice, inspiration, experience, and ideas that will make your child's party a raving success and you the talk of the school social set.

We are here to take you step by step through the party planning process from the initial decision to have a party, right up to handing out goodie bags to your guests on their way out the door. The only thing we can't help you with is clean-up. (But a good way to clean up this guide is to share it with someone else who could benefit from the advice contained here.)

There are several decisions you will have to make for your child's party and the earlier you make them the easier things become. The first part of this guide is a timeline that begins four weeks before the party. If you've only got three weeks, don't panic, there's still plenty of time. However, if your child's birthday is tomorrow, and you still haven't sent out invitations, we suggest you put off the party for a few weeks. This part of the planning guide can serve as a checklist to ensure your party runs smoothly and no important aspects are overlooked.

The second part of this guide is chock full of suggestions for games, events, foods, and activities that will keep your guests engaged and entertained. The last thing you want is a bored guest who starts looking around for ways to make mischief – and you end up losing control, which results in chaos. There are more ideas here than you could ever use at your party, so go through them and select a few that pique your child's interest.

Finally, if you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the party, call Wunderground Magic at (248) 280-5925. We're the party experts, and we will be happy to work with you to make your child's party a success.

Paul Nielsen
Owner, Wunderground Magic, Inc.





Part I

Timeline Checklist





Four Weeks before the Magical Day

- Bring the birthday child in on the planning.
- Decide on the magic party date and time.
- Be certain you do not have conflicts with other important events and that friends are available to help. Change the day or the time to avoid these problems.
- Call Wunderground Magic to book your entertainer. The earlier you book the more likely you will be to get the times you want. Good magicians get booked early.
- Work with the birthday child to figure out who and how many children to invite.
 - A rule of thumb is that the maximum number of children invited should be equal to the child's age plus four. This number does not include adults.
- Decide on the magical theme. For example, a rabbit in a top hat, a Harry Potter reference, Merlin, Houdini, etc.
- Make a list of how much of everything you will need, decorations, invitations, include paper plates, napkins, plastic knives and forks.
- Plan what type of food, and finger food you want to serve.
 - Generally speaking, party food is not intended to nourish the children! So they don't require healthy foods (but avoid food allergies.) Have fun and be inventive! See the end of this guide for suggestions.
 - It is easier to provide food that comes prepackaged (e.g., chips, wrapped candies, cookies, etc.) If the children do not consume all the food you can store it for later use.
 - Ideally drinks should be in cartons, with a straw to minimize the risk of spillage.
- Plan your party favor goodie bag.
 - We recommend a magic hat, wand, a few candies, and some small magic tricks. The magician will be glad to demonstrate some of these tricks for the children at the party. (Such magic tricks may be purchased at Wunderground Magic, or we will be glad to create goodie bags for you.)
 - For the sake of your nerves do not include whistles, horns, or other noisemakers. Children can make enough noise without outside assistance!





Three Weeks before the Magical Day

- Write up and address invitations.
 - Mention on your invitation that you have booked a magical entertainer. Then no child will be late!
 - Include a simple check box with the party invitations for parents to let you know whether their child has any allergies or diet restrictions (e.g., vegetarian.) The most common allergies we experience are animals (rabbits), latex (balloons), and food (peanuts.)
 - Ask for an RSVP, but note: Many people do *not* RSVP but come anyway.
 - Give your guests multiple ways to get in touch with you - phone number, e-mail, and mailing address - in the invitation for the best RSVP results.
- Count how many accept so you can judge the amount of supplies to purchase.
- Plan the games and activities you would like to use. Have extra games ready in case you need them.
 - If there are more than 10 children, try to avoid games of an elimination nature, such as musical chairs. After awhile there will be more children out than in with these types of games. Those who are out will have nothing to do but make mischief.
 - See the second half of this guide for game suggestions.
- Prepare party goodie bags.
- Decide where to hold the party. If you plan to have a magician, do not have the show outdoors. (What might look like a great day is a disaster to a magician.) If you are worried about the mess have the games and food outside and only the show indoors.
- Arrange or get friends, other parents or relatives to volunteer to help on the day of the party. They can help in picking up last minute stuff at the store, decorating or in managing the kids while you are busy.
- Arrange seating
 - Children are used to sitting on the floor but consider renting small chairs for the children to sit on if you do not have carpeting.
 - If you intend to sit the children on a carpeted floor use a colorful but waterproof tablecloth beneath them.
 - Alternatively, get 1'x2' carpet samples from the dollar store and call them "magic carpets."
 - Tables and adult chairs make the party comfortable for adults.





One Week before the Magical Day

- Order, or buy supplies for, the cake.
- Order, or prepare and freeze, any foods you will need.
- Confirm any rental orders placed. Chairs, tables, etc.
- If appropriate, allow the birthday child's brothers or sisters to invite one special friend so they will not feel left out. (These children do not count in the Age + 4 guideline.)
- Make a final plan of activities, delegate responsibilities to volunteers.
- Pick up party supplies at your local party store.
- Create projects, such as making the party decorations, party hats etc. to get all of your children involved in the planning process.

Two or Three Days before the Magical Day

- Buy last minute food such as chips, dips, hot dogs, buns, etc.
- Order balloons and party decorations.
- Buy batteries, film, or memory chips if required.
- Get the video camera ready.
- Charge batteries in the cameras.
- Call any invited guest who hasn't responded. Remember, many people do *not* RSVP but come anyway.

The Day (or Two) before the Magical Day

- Pick up or bake the cake
- Pick up balloons and any other last minute needed items.
- Get candles for the cake.
- Decorate the party area.
- Go through area and look for things which could be broken or which could possibly hurt a child. Remove them.
- Arrange for pets to be out of the way and comfortable.





The Magical Day

Before the Party

- Set out nonperishable foods.
- Prepare foods that you planned on cooking.
- Put several balloons outside your home so your guests can find your home easily.
 - If there are some tricky turns in the road place a few more balloons along the way.
 - Small signs may help.

During the Party

- Write each child's name on the plate that is holding their cookies or pretzels!
- It is best to have the Magic Show start 20-30 minutes into your party in case any guests arrive late.
- Normally it will not matter if the children have seen the magician perform before at another party. In fact, it helps! Children like the familiar and often tell their parents afterwards that they would like the "same magic man" for their own party.
- Talk with your performer about taking photos or making videos during the show. Some performers do not allow their performances to be recorded, but others will be happy to work with you to indicate the best photo opportunities.

During the Performance

- Please do not distribute food or drink during the performance. It is discourteous to the performer and to the children. Also the children will be unable to participate while clutching food or drink
- Babies and toddlers should be in the care of adults during the performance.
- Please do not distribute squeakers, whistles, balloons, or other noisemakers during the performance. It only takes a few noisy kids to spoil the enjoyment of the majority.
- Adults are welcome to watch the performance – they will enjoy it as much as the children! However, they should be asked not to spoil the children's enjoyment with their own conversations.





Magic Party Schedule

- Often guests are late, so don't plan any shows or activities until at least 15 - 30 minutes after the party start time. This time is great for snacks, crafts, or games.
- Usually the show is the first event. It gets your guests excited and thinking about magic, but also is early enough that their attention span hasn't dwindled much.
- Games are great right after the show. Sitting still is tough, so this gives the children a chance to get the wiggles out, which will be appreciated by everyone.
- After games, a snack should be provided to keep guests going through the rest of the party. For a short party serve birthday cake now, for a longer party schedule two eating breaks with cake at the second break.
- The rest of the party depends on how long you have, and how many activities you wish to plan. Overall, keeping things moving and varied will keep your guests interested and entertained. Rotating between eating, games, crafts, etc., with each kept to about 10 minutes maximum, will ensure that your guests don't get restless or bored.
- Leave time at the end of the party for opening presents.
- Give goodie bags to your guests as they leave.

Throughout

- Feel free to contact Wunderground Magic, Inc. if you are unsure of any aspect of planning or running the party. We will be pleased to advise you or even help you book additional activities if you wish, such as a bounce house or a face painter.
- Remember to have fun.**





Part II

Party Ideas





Magical Foods

Magic Wands

- To create edible “Magic Wands” dip pretzel rods in chocolate and cover with blue M&M's.
- Alternatively, cover the end of a pretzel rod in a thin coat of honey or frosting. Cover that part completely with sprinkles or colored sugar.
- Any stick shaped food (such as chicken fingers, fish sticks, or hot dogs) can be turned into a “magic wand” with a bit of ketchup or sauce on each end.



Playing Cards

- Use white, red, and chocolate frosting to decorate graham crackers in playing card patterns.

Magic Rabbit Ice Cream Balls

- Roll a ball of ice cream in coconut flakes and set it on a flattened cupcake wrapper.
- Decorate with black jelly beans for the rabbit's eyes, and red for its nose.
- Use halved sugar cookies to make the rabbit's ears.
- Store them in the freezer until ready to serve.

Magic Cake

- Make a cake in the shape of a top hat or have a bakery decorate the top of cake with a top hat, wand, stars, or rabbit.

Magic Beans

- Take all kinds of different jelly beans and call them Magic Beans.



Magic Mix

- Mix thin pretzels, white marshmallows, and colorful M&M's





Top Hat Cupcakes

- Bake chocolate cupcakes according to package directions.
- Set each cupcake on top of an extra-large (about 5" round) chocolate cookie to form hat and brim.

Cups and Balls

- Meat balls served in small cups
- Eat them with toothpicks that you call “magic wands”

Stars of Magic

- Get cookie cutters in magical shapes such as stars, moons, hearts, clovers, diamonds, rabbits, or top hats.
- Use the cookie cutter to cut party food. For example, you could have star shaped bread, biscuits, pizza, cheese on toast, club sandwiches, or jello jigglers



Magic Potion

- Freeze Kool-Aid or brightly colored fruit juice in ice cube trays before the party.
- Serve a colorless soda at the party, such as ginger ale or lemon-lime.
- Let your guests select their ice cubes, which will “magically” change the color of their drinks.





Magic Invitations

- For magical invitations, write the party details on white cutouts of a rabbit. Cut out a black hat and make a slit in the hat into which the rabbit "disappears." Leave the rabbit's ears showing, and let the kids pull the rabbits out of the hats to read the invitations.
- Alternatively write the magic party details with white crayon on white paper to make the invitations appear blank. Include a color crayon with each invitation, and tell the guests to color over the paper to magically reveal the party details.
- Blow up a balloon, write the party info on it in permanent marker, deflate, clean the end, and send.





Magical Decorations

- Make your own magic wands using wood dowel, rolled up paper, or the cardboard tube from clothing hangers. Wrap the ends with ribbon or colored tape.
- Create signs that say "Abracadabra", "Hocus Pocus", "Shazam", "Sim Salabim" and other magic words. Then put them on the fence or trees to mark the party place.
- Cut out classic symbols of magic, such as wands, hats, and rabbits, from construction paper to decorate the walls.
- Play mystic music in the background.
- Hang posters of great magicians, such as David Copperfield or Harry Houdini.
- Cover the magic birthday party table with a theme cloth. Spread cards on the table cover.
- Create easy centerpieces! Set one top hat upside-down on each table of the party area. Place a stuffed rabbit in one. Tie brightly-colored scarves together and attach one end inside the hat and the other end to the ceiling. Fill another hat with crinkle paper.
- Make oversized playing cards by drawing hearts, spades, diamonds, clubs, and numbers with black and red markers on rectangles of white poster board.
- Scatter playing cards on tables and windowsills.
- Hang items like pencils, drinking glasses, books, or spoons from the ceiling with fishing line, as if they are levitating.
- Hang a banner over the entranceway to the party that says, "Say the Magic Words to Enter [birthday child]'s Party!" (Add the "magic words" to the invitations so your guests will know what to say. "Open Sesame" works well.)





Magic Activities

Make Magic Wands

- Instead of store bought wands, have the children paint and decorate wood dowels. Use black and white paint. Leave about 2 inches from one end to paint white. Add gold or silver glitter glue to the end of the wand after the white end has dried.
- Another way to make inexpensive wands is to use cardboard tubes from hangers designed for holding pants. Decorate the ends with colored plastic tape or electrical tape.

Decorate a Magic Box

- Decorate small gift boxes as a Magic Box. Use stars, dice or other fun stickers. Use glitter gel or markers. Your guest will now have their own box to store cards and magic tricks in.

Magic Wand Bookmark

- Using precut foam craft stars, one large black, one small yellow, a black ribbon, a paper fastener and glitter paint. Have each guest assemble their bookmark by inserting paper fastener through small yellow star, large black star and then the ribbon. Use glitter paint to decorate the star's edges and write their name on the black ribbon.

Create a Magic Trick

- Wunderground Magic can help you find a selection of magic props that are easy to create and easy for the children to perform. Call the store for more details of effects that will be age appropriate.

Decorate a Cape

- Give each child a black cape or piece of fabric and allow them to decorate the cape with self-stick stars or jewels.





Magical Games

Pin the Moustache on the Magician

- Rather than pinning the tail on a donkey, get a large picture of a dad, grandpa, or your favorite person who looks like a magician
- Cut several mustaches out of black construction paper.
- Take turns blindfolding each child, spinning them around, and have them try to stick the moustache onto the magician.
- Whoever comes closest wins a prize.

Magic Limbo

- Hold a magic wand and have your guests try to dance underneath it without touching it.
- After each round, move the wand down an inch or two to make it more difficult.

The Wizard Says

- Like the game “Simon Says.” To make it magical instead of Simon Says use “The Wizard Says.”

Follow the Top Hat

- Fill a top hat with simple instructions for the kids to do. For example, say a magic word (such as “abracadabra”), tell a joke, make a funny face etc.
- Arrange the children in a circle, and pass the hat from one child to the next while music plays.
- When the music stops have the child read (with the help of an adult if needed) and perform the instruction on a card pulled from the hat.

Pass the Top Hat

- Arrange the children into two circles, an inner one and an outer one.
- Give one player in each circle a top hat on their head.
- The object is to pass the hat round the circle.
- But the players mustn't use their hands while passing the hat from head to head.
- The team which passes the hat round the circle the first wins the game.





Spin the Wand

- Have the children sit in a circle, holding the gift they brought.
- The birthday child spins a wand and opens the gift of the party guest at whom the wand is pointing.
- If it stops at a person that has already given a gift just spin again until you find someone that hasn't had the gift they brought opened.
- A fun way to open gifts without pushing and shoving.

Throwing Cards

- Set a top hat in the middle of a large room and tell the children to form a circle around it.
- Pass out an equal number of playing cards to each guest and have them take turns trying to toss the cards into the hat. (Adjust distance to match the skill and patience level of your guests.)
- The player who tosses the most cards into the hat gets a prize.

The Floating Ball

- Give each of the kids a balloon and a large 5x8 index card or piece of cardboard.
- The object is to see who can make their balloon float the longest without touching the balloon.
- To make the game more difficult, give the children smaller and smaller cards for their fans

The Sleeping Magician and the Thief

- All the children (except one - The Magician) sit cross legged on the floor in a circle.
- The Magician sits cross legged in the middle of the circle, blind-folded, with a large bunch of (magic) keys on the floor in front of him.
- One child is nominated to creep up and steal the keys and then return to their place, without the Magician hearing them.
- The Magician has three tries to point to where he or she thinks the thief is.
- If the Magician is successful, the thief becomes the Magician.





The Three Shell Game

- Get three opaque cups and small prizes that will easily fit within them.
- Cover one of the prizes with one of the cups and mix up the cups (you may have the children close their eyes while you do this.)
- If they can guess which cup contains the prize, they get to keep it.

The Rabbit into the Hat

- Get several beanbags (or even better would be a beanbag rabbit.)
- Have the children take turns trying to throw the rabbit into the hat.
- Start with the hat close and move it a little further away each round.

Pulling a Rabbit out of a Hat

- Cut out several rabbit shapes from construction paper
- Attach a paperclip to each rabbit and write the name of a prize on each one..
- Tie a long length of fishing line to one end of a magic wand.
- Tie a magnet at the other end of the line.
- Place the rabbit cutouts into a top hat and have the children “fish” with the invisible line from the magic wand to try to pull one of the rabbits out of the hat

Hot Rabbit

- Have all the children sit in a circle and take turns passing a toy rabbit as quickly as they can while music plays.
- When the music stops, whoever is holding the rabbit is eliminated.

Card Castles

- Give each party guest a deck of cards and a flat space to work.
- Set a time limit and see who can build the tallest card castle.

Disappearing Guests

- Also known as “hide and seek”

Magical Clues Treasure Hunt

- Use riddles, invisible pens, and backward writing to pose clues.

