

## Questions That Every Mom Asks

*In order to provide the perfect party, we've found that some simple rules should be followed. Below are a series of questions that have been asked by Mom's (and even some Dad's) about how to have that perfect party. After each question is our answer, which we hope will help guide you as you plan your party and try to determine if a Children's Entertainer is right for you, your young ones and your partygoers.*

*Whether on not you decide to hire a Children's Entertainer, you will still benefit from these ground rules and the children, and everyone involved in your party will be the better for it. After all, at the end of the day we all wish for the success you so desire.*

### **Section 1: Pre party planning**

#### ***Q1 - At What Age Do You Suggest I Start Involving My Child In The Organization Of Their Party?***

I would say as soon as they are able to make a decision, you can do that even with a young child. You could say to a four year old "would you like to go to the farm or perhaps you would like a Clown or a puppet party, or would you like to go to the local playground and play there?"

You must be comfortable with all that you offer, and obviously you make the choices simple and suitable for your child and let them make their own mind up. You might give them a little bit more information about what would happen at a party with a Clown or what things they will see and can play with at, say a local farm. You know your child and how they are likely to react to the options, so together you can find the right thing for them

#### ***Q2 - Is There A Maximum Age For Birthday Parties, How Do I Decide When To Stop Parties For My Children?***

There's no maximum age for a birthday party, the age to stop doing birthday parties is when your son or daughter wants them to stop... when she/he decides that they don't want a party any more.

If you say to a youngster of say 7 or 8, or wherever you decide to pitch it, that this will be their last big birthday party and that same year all their friends are going out on an adult type of trip, to the cinema or a restaurant or something, they may well want to do that too.

Your child may perceive a party as being babyish when they really want to be enjoying a grown up treat and vice versa...

If you say, to your son or daughter, we're going out on a grown up trip and all their friends are having a birthday party she/he may feel that they'll be missing out on 20+ presents and a traditional party, which they may want.

So my advice is to sit your youngster down, say, "it's your birthday coming up, what would you like to do?" You may wish to give them some options, by saying "you could go to the cinema or a restaurant or have a party", and all of the options you offer them you must of course be comfortable with. So maybe don't offer the trip to Disneyland if this is not acceptable to you, because Murphy's Law says, she/he will choose the one that you don't want them to choose!

Give them two, three or four choices and let them pick the one they want. It might be a party, it might be a trip, but they'll find their own level.

### *Q3 - Is It Important To Have The Party On The Day Of The Birthday? I Am Interested In Your Thoughts?*

Obviously this is a matter of personal choice, but as always I come at this question from the point of view of the children. Children either understand the calendar or they don't.

If your child is having a 6th birthday or younger then it is unlikely that they really understand the calendar and if that is the case for you, then from your child's point of view their birthday is when Mom and Dad tell them it is, so you could have their party on any day and they would not know the difference.

If, however, they are a bit older and do understand the calendar, then they are old enough to explain honestly that their birthday is on that day, but their party is on this day.

A great way to explain this is by the number of days until their party day. It is much more important to ensure your child has a great time at their party, than having it on the right day. Children usually don't care about time, date or place, they only care about how much fun they have, how special they are made to feel and how many and what presents they get.

### *Q4 – What About Themed Parties, What Do You Advise About These?*

Well, this is a big subject actually. If your son or daughter wants a themed party and your comfortable with it go for it, there are loads of themes out there but there are some pitfalls.

Don't ask your Entertainer to change his show to fit your theme; it usually looks exactly what it is. If an Entertainer can do something within your theme, then he will suggest it, so if you are talking to the Entertainer on the phone and you say "We're considering a Spiderman theme" and the Entertainer has got a Spiderman

trick, game or story that he can perform in his show, he will tell you and be very proud of it.

However, if you say look I want this to be a Spiderman Party and I want everything in the party, including your show to be Spiderman orientated, the Entertainer will either turn down the show (most professional response to a show he can't do) or he will be scratching his head wondering what he is going to do. If he then tries to change his shows to fit your theme, it will end up being less than you or the Entertainer wants.

What you can do is have your invitations, plates, cups, tablecloths, cake, decorations and party bags; all these you can organize to fit the theme. Your Entertainer may even be able to organize a game or two that fits your party theme.

You could also ask your Entertainer if they have any themes that they do already and then choose your theme to fit their show (much better than the other way around).

- If you need assistance finding shops that can help you with items for your Themed Party, call our Party Advisors at (203) 647-0322 and they will steer you in the right direction (this service is free and without obligation).

#### *Q5 - There Are 30 Children In My Child's Class, Do I Have To Invite Them All? If Not, How Do I Get Over The Problem That I Will Leave Some Youngsters Out?*

You only invite the children that your son or daughter wants at their party, there is simply no reason, obligation or compulsion to invite everyone unless you or your child wants them there.

First, think about the space, how many children will fit in (see question 20 for how best to do this). For purposes of demonstration lets say that is 20. Include the birthday child and any siblings, then add in any family friends cousins for instance that you wish to invite and take the answer from 20 (in our example). So now we might have 16 other people that we can invite.

Then help your child pick the friends that she/he wants. They might be friends that have played together or people that she/he talks about most often.

The only exception to this is if you are inviting all but two children, if that is the case I suggest you invite them all, unless you know a particular child is VERY disruptive, then you have every right to leave them out.

Also remember that if you have 30 children in your class and invite them all, chances are you will receive 29 reciprocal invitations. Each one will require time and fuel and a present and this might not be your wish. So 29 weeks out of the next 52 your child is going to have a party to go to!

If anyone questions why you have not invited the whole class (or their child) simply say that you sat down (your child's name) and agreed with them who they wanted at the party. We have limited space and the people invited were the ones that your child chose.

#### *Q6 - I Am Way Out In The Sticks What Help Can I Give My Party Guests To Find Us?*

There are very good web sites (Google/Yahoo Maps, etc.) that can help pin point your party venue; you can go to these sites and print off copies of the map to give to all the guests.

Next you can make sure all the guests has the venue zip code, with modern day Satellite Navigation Systems your zip code will make finding the right area very easy.

Next I would put balloons every 50 to 100 yards from the nearby major road to the party venue. Place them so as the guest gets closer to the venue the balloons get closer together. I would also make those balloons all the same color and you can tell the guests before hand what color. You say once you come off of the main road at whatever junction you simply follow the red balloons all the way.

Tie the balloons up securely especially on a windy day and make sure you use a few balloons at every point just in case one breaks loose or pops.

You can also put your home phone number or your mobile number on the invitations so that if anyone should get lost they can phone you and you can guide them in.

If you do all the above and your guests still can't find the venue, perhaps you could pick the guest up and take them home afterwards or send a stretched limousine (okay only joking!).

#### *Q7 - Some Parents Like To Stick Around During The Party, What Do You Advise?*

If your party guest is three years or less then parents will stay, it is right for them to stay and they are more than welcome at most parties.

If your party guest is five years old or above most parents should be encouraged to leave and collect later at the end of the party. We call this dump and run! They should leave their child, go shopping or do something for themselves...

Why is this?

Parents that want to stay usually do so because their child is a bit shy and nervous on arrival and Mom thinks that if she leaves then the little one would cause us Entertainers and you a problem. Actually the reverse is true, if Mom leaves a shy nervous youngster, there are usually some tears for a few seconds after Mom makes her exit and after that they integrate into the party very well. However, if Mom stays then the shy nervous child won't leave Mom's side and will not take part in the party.

The reason for this is that Mom represents a security blanket and everything else is a risk. If you are a bit nervous and you have the security of Mom, why would you take a risk? However, if Mom disappears, now the security blanket has gone, hence the tears but a cuddle and re-assurance from the Entertainer or the party giver and all is soon okay.

All professional people that work with young children know this...

Example: will the teacher allow you to stay at school if your child is a bit nervous on arrival? Of course not, they will kick you out the door at a rate of knots, for the very same reason. If they can get rid of Mom, they get rid of the problem, if Mom stays, so does the problem.

The uncertain age is four years of age, at this age some Moms will leave happily, others will insist on staying. Some Moms with children of this age have very limited experience of leaving their children and so my advice is to go with the flow, if Mom wants to stay, so be it.

If Moms do stay they must understand that your party is 100% about the children and nothing about them. All Entertainers will have a problem with parents staying at the back of the room and having a mini party of their own. They are effectively saying, an Entertainer, good, right you entertain the children over there and leave us to have a social gathering over here. I bet they are the same people that complain in cinemas and theatres that people are talking around them and they can't hear the performance.

For many young children, your party could be their first theatrical experience and we should be showing them the right way to behave right from the start and what is expected of an audience.

Parents should be invited to watch the show, take part in the party and understand that your party is children's time and the adults should respect that. If parents are talking behind the children then it creates a conflict in the children's minds between the Entertainer in front and the parents behind and distractions distract.

If parents don't want to watch the show then they should leave the room completely. One exception to this rule is when an Entertainer has interest/need in Mom's assistance. When we use a parachute, for example, all party guests are encouraged to participate (as this enhances the experience for the children).

### *Q8 - Why Is Timing A Children's Party So Important And How Do I Get It Right?*

The way to time a children's party is to start with the food break, what time would the children normally be eating and make that the middle point of your party. So for instance if your children would normally have lunch at 1.00 p.m. then time your 2 hour party 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. If snack would normally be 4.30 p.m. for your child, then time the party 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

A poorly timed party will either have the children distracted in the first part of your party because they are looking for something to eat or they will not be hungry when you serve your party banquet. Lots of food is then wasted and you join a group of party givers that say that children don't eat much at birthday parties. I wonder why?

The other thing that may be going on is your Entertainer (if you are booking one) will probably want to perform at two parties in a day (especially on weekends). If you book your party 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. you would be cutting across the two parties. This may make your chosen Entertainer unavailable or it may raise the price, as you would be stopping the Entertainer from booking a second show that day. A rule of thumb is to either schedule your party early, or late. This will give you the best chance of getting just the Entertainer you want and what you want.

With a weekend party your child may well be very excited about the party and as a result may wake up earlier than normal. If they wake at say 6.00 a.m. (many report much earlier than this) and the party starts at say 3.00 p.m. then your youngster would have been awake for nine hours and that is a long time to wait for anyone but especially an excited child.

If your child is of this type, you may consider a lunchtime party. Setting your party at this time your child will only have about half as much time to wait for the action to start.

Also lunchtime parties allow your child all the afternoon to get their feet back on the ground and open the presents after the party is over.

I certainly recommend lunchtime parties for younger or very excitable children, unless there is a very good reason why this is not a good time for you. Two words of warning here though... If you are thinking of booking a church hall these are usually not good on Sunday lunchtime. Also lunchtime parties do need Mom to get her act together with the food a little earlier, but all in all it is worth it.

### *Q9 - What About General Decorations At A Child's Party?*

If you are decorating for yourself, well that is fine, you are a grown up person and you can make your own mind up about these things, however, if you are decorating for the children, then my advice is leave the decorations in the shop and money in the bank.

Why?

Children don't notice the decorations and care even less. They are much more interested as to what is going to be happening, how much fun they are going to have and what they are going to win. If the children are interested in the decorations then the Entertainer can't be up to much!

More information is given about balloons in questions numbered 30 and 38. Balloons in the right place are fine, on the door to show people where to come in and firmly stuck to the wall out of reach of the children, if you want to, but please don't leave them loose on the floor.

On the floor they are a dangerous distraction and should be avoided at all costs. The same goes for inflatable toys, or other toys, for party guests. Remember, any distraction will take away from what an Entertainer is able to do. These should be left for the end of the party.

### *Q10 - My Child Wants A Bouncy Castle, What Are The Pros and Cons?*

A Bouncy Castle at a child's party needs careful thought if it is going to work for you; there are some challenges and some benefits.

The benefits fall into three areas...

Most children love a bounce on the castle; in fact a Bouncy Castle can be like a magnet for children. They are not very expensive when compared to other forms of children's party entertainment. Usually easy to arrange as the castle people will often deliver to your party venue, set you up, show you what you have to do and then come back later and pack it away again.

However, there are some serious downsides to a Bouncy Castle party...

While they are very attractive to children to start with, that enthusiasm is only for a limited time. After around 15 to 30 minutes of bouncing most children are ready to move on to the next activity. So if you thought, by arranging a Bouncy Castle, all your party planning and entertainment questions were over, I am afraid to say, it is time to think again. Children don't participate in any activity for very long. They like and need a variety of things to do. The best way to explain this is to think about what your children's teachers do in school, they do little and often,

they change the activity at frequent intervals and they have lots of different things going on. That way they keep the children's interest, attention and imagination. A Bouncy Castle is the same thing, followed by the same thing, followed by the same thing. Usually you carry the risk of the weather, so if planning a Bouncy Castle in the yard and your party day turns out to be a rainy day, you still have to pay for your castle and you have all the party guests inside your house wanting to be entertained. Basically you need a plan 'B.' If you hire a local hall you must make sure the ceiling is high enough, the hall allows a Bouncy Castle and the door is big enough to get the castle in. There is a risk, that with lots of children on the Bouncy Castle at the same time, that one youngster will land on top of another with resulting injury and tears. It is also possible that children can fall off and land on the surrounding area and for this reason I suggest that you make sure that the Bouncy Castle people also supply mats that give a softer landing. I am pleased to say serious injury is rare but certainly not unheard of.

You need proper adult supervision ALL the time children are on the Bouncy Castle. If a Bouncy Castle is one item amongst many at your party, that's great but make sure it is turned off when the next activity is taking place. This, I think is crucial, as you will have more success with your Entertainer if they don't have to compete with the Castle.

If you are booking an Entertainer in addition to your Bouncy Castle I suggest you mention this to the Entertainer before you book both. The chances are the Entertainer will have some advice for you that might save you money, stress or both. It will also mean that your Entertainer is prepared for what is going to happen and can take your instructions before hand. You can agree, if, where, when and how up front so you don't get any surprises on the day. One other small point, it doesn't happen often but I have heard of it...If the children are bouncing after the food break, with lots of fizzy drinks in their tummies, okay enough said.

A great place for a Bouncy Castle is at a school fair or similar event where lots of things are going on. You can then regulate the number and age on the Bouncy Castle at any one time and also limit the amount of time children spend on it.

## **Section 2: Party Venue**

### ***Q11 - Should I Party At Home Or Hire A Venue, What Are The Pros And Cons?***

Well actually this is fairly easy, have the party at home if you possibly can.

Why?

Well, there are actually 11 reasons why you should have your party at home; here is a list of them for you...

1. You can't leave anything at home – if you go to a hall then you might forget the coffee or the milk or something, it can be a real pain in the bottom.
2. You know the toilets are clean; there's nothing worse than turning up a hall and finding that the toilets are not all they might be.
3. Emergency change of clothes, sometimes children have accidents at both ends of their bodies and when spillages happen and they need an emergency change of clothes, you'll have some clothes around at your home, which you probably wouldn't have if you were in the local hall.
4. There are no hall costs;
5. It's always available when you want it, when you go to a hall, the hall may say you can have it this day, but not that day as it's already fully booked and you really wanted the party on the day the hall can't do. You know your home is always going to be available when you want it.
6. No petty rules to obey; some halls won't let you stick things like decorations on the wall or whatever; at home there are no such rules to obey. You make up your own rules.
7. No time constraints, you can have your party whenever you want it, although I've given you some advice about timing parties in a different question.
8. No paperwork to fill in, some halls want to go into great detail about what you want the hall for, how many, what age, who's looking after them etc. not all of them, but some will ask everything but your blood group.
9. There's no tracking down the right one – you know your home is going to be suitable. Usually it's perfectly adequate, the vast majority of homes that parents feel will be okay, are. And, as an Entertainer, I've never found a home too big or too small to perform in.
10. You are your own boss, you can do what you want without anyone looking over your shoulder and telling you what you can do and not do.
11. And you can easily give directions to your home, you know where it is and you know all the local landmarks, people will usually be able to find your home very easily, it's not always the case with halls.

So there are the main reasons I would have your party at home, however, the bottom line is of course what you want. Entertainers will be equally happy at home or in a local hall.

### *Q12 - Some People Are Organising Little Arts And Crafts Activity Parties For Their Children Any Tips On Halls For This Kind Of Party?*

A nice small hall will keep things compact and much easier to handle, if you do find yourself in a big hall, I suggest you put a row of chairs across the middle of the hall and tell the children that the party's on this side and they're not allowed over on that side and be quite firm if they do start moving chairs and getting onto the wrong side, bring them back and say "the party's over here, we're not allowed

over on that side, there might be crocodiles or scary monsters on that side,” all with a big smile and a friendly face of course.

*Q13 - If I Party At Home, How Can I Tell How Many Children Will Fit In My Space?*

You obviously need to have enough space for the number of guests that you'll be inviting, so here is a handy way of calculating how many will fit in your space....

Make your party room as rectangular as you sensibly can, so do push back the TV and take the coffee table out, but I wouldn't get into a major three-piece suite removal or anything like that unless you really want to.

Go to the opposite end of the room to the door, because that's where most Entertainers will set themselves up, for many families that will be by the bay window or the patio door. Give your Entertainer two full paces, it will be about four feet, that's the space most Entertainers are going to need to work in. Then plop your children on the floor in front of that imaginary set up and you will be able to guesstimate how many children will fit across and how many children will fit back, so you might say I could fit four children across and I can fit five children back, 4 times 5 equals 20.

If you're happy with 20 then go for it, if you've got 21 then it's no problem you'll squeeze them in there somewhere. But if you want 30 children at the party then your house is not going to be big enough and then it is Plan B, the local hall.

*Q14 - I Want To Party At Home, But I Am Worried The Children Will Wreck My Home And Generally Not Treat It With The Respect I Want, Can You Put My Mind At Rest?*

Now the big fear that many people have about having their party at home, is that the children will be running all over their house, in their bedroom, tipping toys out of the little one's bedroom, but this is a risk you can easily manage.

If you are not employing an Entertainer then set the ground rules for the children right away. Say the party is going to be down here today and we are not allowed upstairs except to go to the toilet in which case you must come straight back downstairs or you will be missing out on all the fun things we are doing and I don't want you to miss them.

If an Entertainer is planned, ask them how they would avoid the situation you most fear (what you are looking for is something that you can picture happening in the real world).

If you hire a really good Entertainer for the whole party your fears are ungrounded, it will not happen. The children will be involved with what the

Entertainer's doing immediately they walk through the door and they won't want to be doing anything else. They will be hanging on the Entertainers every word; they will be having so much fun, the desire to do anything else will not enter their heads. In addition a good Entertainer will set the ground rules as to what is acceptable and what is not, in much the same way as a teacher would. However, unlike a teacher, a good Entertainer will do it in a fun way.

Big tip... Don't plan for a party in the yard – it's a big risk, if you're planning to have your party in the yard you need to have a back up of what you do if it starts to rain or the grass is wet on the day. Wherever you think the back up is going to be, that's where most Entertainers will want to do their show.

In addition Entertainers would not want to be outside if your yard has lots of outside toys. These will be big distractions for the children and make life difficult for the Entertainer. Plan on your party being inside and you'll be planning a good party.

### **Section 3: Entertainers and What to Expect**

*Q15 - Can I Ask Something Interesting Here About Your Last Answer, About The Entertainer Being Able To Capture The Imagination And Control The Children All The Way Throughout The Party. I've Been To Lots Of Where The Entertainer Seem Ill-prepared, Is Unable To Hold The Children's Interest And Then Wants To Pack Up And Go As Quickly As They Can. That's Been My Experience, And I Know With You It's Different, But Can You Explain This And How On Earth I Tell The Difference Between An Entertainer That's Going To Do What I've Just Described Versus You?*

The fundamental difference is whether you book an Entertainer to run the whole party for you or just a 1-hour show.

If you like playing games with your children and have time to do the necessary research to plan enough games, then this could well be the right option for you. It could mean less of a budget is required (but not always – I will explain in a minute).

If you do book a 1-hour party, then I would try and book it for the later part of your party time, after the meal (if you have this) and before the cake is cut and gifts opened. If you do that then the Entertainer has the best chance of having the children's undivided attention. Personally, I like to come in and immediately gather the attention of the children, even if this begins in the front yard, or as I enter the house.

A good solution is to book the Entertainer to run the whole party for you. It takes all the hassle away and gives the children a great time, assuming you pick a good one.

A good Entertainer, booked for a 1-hour party, will try and advise the client how best to use him. If the client is willing to have the Entertainer help with the party planning they will usually advise that the food break happen before they show up and that the gifts and cake be left for after.

It is a popular misconception that booking a one hour show is considerably cheaper than booking the Entertainer for the whole party, this is often not the case, let me explain...

The fixed costs of travel etc. are the same whether your Entertainer is with you for one hour or three hours, so the first hour you book will always be the most expensive. If your Entertainer is providing things like Party Bags, Invitations, Thank You Notes etc., then by the time you have added the cost of buying all those things yourself, then your Entertainers whole party package becomes much more attractive. It is worth costing these things out. You may well find that having the Entertainer run the whole event for you is only a few dollars more than a 1-hour party, when you factor in all other costs. Additionally, all the hassle and worry disappears AND the children have more fun.

*Q16 - My Friend Had A Great Entertainer But I'm Not Sure I Want The Same Person For My Sons Party, What Are The Pros And Cons Of Having That Same Person?*

If your friend had a great Entertainer then that would be a good place to start. By talking to that Entertainer you can see if they have a different option for the show or for the games or both. The personality of course will be the same (and that's no bad thing if you enjoyed it), but if they come up with a completely different show, so that the children won't be seeing the same thing and a completely different games set, then it will be very similar to having a completely different Entertainer.

The most important thing about any children's entertainment is the relationship between the Entertainer and the children. If they like the Entertainer and they enjoy being with him, then it doesn't really matter what the material is and long as it is suitable and relevant to them, they will enjoy it.

Always remember that most children like seeing the same things, unlike an adult. Here are a couple of examples: when I'm with my nephews and do a funny magic trick for them, they tell me to do it again, and again, and again. Likewise, when I'm at a party and pull out a can of candy where a snake pops out, I'm asked to reload and do it again, and again, and again! This is just like when children ask to watch the same DVD over and over again. They jump at it because they liked it

and will enjoy watching it again. However, if you say to an adult we're going to see the same James Bond film that we saw last week, they will probably say that they've seen that. They wouldn't necessarily want to go and watch it again. So the same Entertainer can work very well for you.

Think of this from the child's perspective, they usually don't mind seeing the same things again. But, also if the Entertainer can produce a slightly different party, it will broaden the children's horizons. Showing them new and different things will be for their benefit as well, while still being the same friendly person they have already become familiar with from your friend's party

*Q17 - Choosing An Entertainer, I Want My Child And All The Guests To Have The Time Of Their Lives, How Can I Make Sure The Entertainer Will Deliver, Especially When I Have Not Had Any Experience Of Him Before, How Do I do This?*

Research is important....

You could start by asking friends, but remember your friends are unlikely to have had a lot of experience and will have little to compare their Entertainer with. Let me share with you a story about a disco, not necessarily a children's disco but any disco. Our DJ turns up at every gig and plays the same records, he plays these because he likes those records, but unfortunately 90% of the time his audience does not enjoy his selection, they do not dance and the DJ has not performed well.

The party is less than it might have been.

However, at the other one show in ten he goes across like the Beatles, everyone loves him, they dance all night and they go home thinking what a great DJ. The booker may well write thanking him for putting on a great show. If your friend was one of the guests at that last show, they may well recommend the act to you. They do so in good faith, but they don't realize that nine shows out of 10 the DJ is unsatisfactory.

Can you see how important a lot of experience is? However, because you know and trust them, your friends are a good place to start.

Make a list of any questions you want answered, that will help you collect all the information you require. Next either read on a website what the Entertainer can do for you or talk to them on the phone. What you are trying to do is picture your child taking part in and enjoying their show; does the entertainment sound right for you and more importantly for your child?

Know what you want, do you want a 1-hour party or someone to run the whole party for you (The whole party choice is often the cheaper option overall).

Talk to lots of Entertainers, that way you will get a feel for what is out there and you will often find one or two that feel right to you...

Check price, if the quote is way too low then you have an Entertainer that has a low opinion of themselves; rarely will this type of act be the best, they may find getting bookings difficult or be very inexperienced. Obviously nobody wants to pay too much, by checking lots of Entertainers you will get a feel for what the prices are and will be in a good position to decide what is best for you.

Remember that it is better to pay too much than too little. If you pay too much all you waste is a little money, but the chances are you will have great memories and the little extra you would have paid is soon forgotten because your child and all the guests had a great time. Paying too much is not ideal but much better than having a bad experience that the children don't enjoy and you feel you have wasted your money. The party for your child is over forever and the money wasted is often remembered for a long time.

For many clients paying a little extra for all these things is well worthwhile as it saves a small fortune when compared with doing it all yourself. As you only pay for what you use it will stop the wasteful feeling many have when faced with a few leftover party bags.

Doing all the invitations and party bags your self, for many, is an expensive pain in the bottom, but for others is a labor of love.

Ask the Entertainer how they would look after your children and look after your home. Can you see their answer working in the real world?

Next take references...

Most good Entertainers will offer previous client references, but if they don't, ask the Entertainer for three references. Preferably, you want two from recent parties with the same age children and one taken totally at random from a day you choose, say...Can I have the party you did last Sunday afternoon, irrespective of the age of the children. The one taken at random is to make sure you aren't just given the last parties that went all right.

#### TAKE THEM UP

Make a list of what you want to ask the reference, but basically you want to know about the following...

The relationship between the children and the Entertainer, if that works most other things will fall nicely into place and visa versa. Was the show suitable for the children, in terms of the material, jokes and presentation? Did the Entertainer

live up to the promise, i.e. what was said on the phone did actually happen on the day, did he walk the talk? If you could go back and do it all again, would you still book the same act? Don't listen to only what they say, but also how they say it. Was it an enthusiastic "yes" or a "he was okay I suppose"?

You must agree that the show is right for your children, the games are novel and different, the persona with the children is fun but in control and everything goes to your complete satisfaction otherwise you don't book.

I'll be honest here and say that not many offer such a guarantee, but if you find one that does you will be booking someone that has a huge amount of confidence in their own ability.

If budget is a challenge for you, then ask if the Entertainer can offer special rates on slower days, or give a break on a shortened party, or specialty act.

Finally, trust your instincts. If you feel it is right for you, then chances are it will be right on the day. So go for it.

### *Q18 - What Is The Right Time To Book An Entertainer, I Mean How Far In Advance Of Our Party Should I Be Looking To Book?*

The time to book is when you are 100% sure you have the right person and you (and your children) are not going to change your minds.

Never be talked into booking an act, if they put pressure on you. Take all the time you need to find the right person. Once you have made up your mind, the minute you are 100% sure that you have the right person and the right package, then that is the time to book. The earlier you book the more chance your Entertainer will be free on the day you want. Obviously if you are flexible over dates and times or you are happy to party during the week (after school party) then you could leave it a little later.

In principle good Entertainers will be booking about one to two months in advance (although this primarily applies to good times, when the economy is good and people are able to spend money on such things as parties).

Again, the time to book it is when it is right for you. It is never too late to call, but the earlier the better for you and the Entertainer.

### *Q19 - Should I Expect A Confirmation Letter From My Entertainer? What Else Should I Receive From Them?*

You should absolutely expect a confirmation letter from your Entertainer, if they do not say on the phone that you will get one, insist that they send you one.

You want to make sure that the Entertainer has understood ALL the details of your booking. The confirmation needs to set out the time, date, place, your child's name, age and gender and the agreed fee, also the payment terms. There should also be terms and conditions under which the party will take place, these are the legal 'E's' of what you are signing up to, you should read them to make sure you are happy with them.

You should check the confirmation and if any mistakes have been made you should contact the Entertainer and have them corrected as soon as possible. Check any special requirements your Entertainer may have, for example many will ask for a parking space as close as possible to the performing area. Much better to arrange this than have the Entertainer make long trips to his car, instead of organizing things at your party.

You need a receipt for any money you have paid as a deposit or a booking fee. Some Entertainers will want you to sign and return a contract and you want to do this as soon as you can, as it may be that your booking is not confirmed until they have that signed contract back.

A good Entertainer might also supply you with some other things that will help you, something that will help you organize things before the day, a sheet of hints and tips. All these things help you get it right for your child and it helps the Entertainer deliver a great show for you.

### **Q20 - Is Paying A Deposit Or A Booking Fee Essential? What Are Benefits And Pitfalls To The Client?**

Most top Entertainers will ask for some kind of commitment from the client. The Entertainer is committed to be at the agreed time, date and place and many ask for a small commitment in return, typically that would be 25% or 50% of agreed charge, which is paid at the time of booking. It is important to point out this is NOT an additional fee but part of the agreed fee.

Some acts will ask for a deposit check and I am comfortable with that, however some will ask for the full fee and that in my opinion is not right, you should never be in a situation where you have paid all the money before the party. Actually, we like to be paid after the job is done. Like in any other business you get paid after you perform your job. This way you can see how happy you are with your Entertainer/s and if you are, you may give them gratuity.

The upside of making a small payment is many clients often feel their booking is more secure having made a payment and if they feel better that cannot be a bad thing. You will be amazed what kind of people are out there. For example we've had situations where a deposit was not collected and when the Entertainer arrived, the address was not valid. Remember, for many Entertainers this is a full time job.

*Q21 - I Am Thinking About People With A Very Small Budget For Entertainment, Do You Have Any Suggestions Of What They Can Do?*

Yes of course...

First you can arrange all the entertainment yourself, if you think this is right for you, then make the party a bit shorter and keep the number of guests down. The next option is to employ an Entertainer for a 1-hour show. This will cost less money than a 2-hour or two and half hour party and help you fill some of the time. You may need to have some games to play for some of the time, but a lot of the hassle will disappear. If you were to party during the week, i.e. Monday to Thursday, perhaps after school you will have more Entertainers to choose from and you could well benefit from a midweek discount that some Entertainers offer. If you find a really good Entertainer, one that really does have your best interests at heart then the chances are they will offer you a way to spread payments out. Basically, you pay what you can afford when you can afford to pay it. Of course, booking early allows you more time to get this paid prior to your event (as almost all Entertainers will require).

If this sounds like a good idea to you, then when you book your Entertainer ask if he is willing to let you to pay with a series of post dated checks, or with a debit or credit card. Chances are a very busy Entertainer will not be desperate for your money and would be happy to help you. The worst thing they can say is "no". Then you can put that into the melting pot of whether that particular Entertainer is right for you.

Also look out for our periodic special deals; this could save you quite a sum.

*Q22 - Why Has My Entertainer Asked For Me To Clear A Room, What Is The Problem With A Few Toys And Presents Being In The Same Room That The Entertainment Is Going To Be Held In?*

Well, no matter how focused your child is there's always going to be some children that will be distracted, and "distractions distract."

If you've got toys, balloons, or presents around the place, some children will be distracted and want to play with them. So your Entertainer is giving you some very sound advice here, clear the room of all distractions (or at least as many as you sensibly can) and there'll be nothing for the children to concentrate on other than the show. That's where you'll get the most enjoyment and the best involvement from the children and the best show from the Entertainer. Your Entertainer is the expert in his field and you want the best you can get from him, so it is sensible to follow his advice, it almost certainly comes with your best interest at heart.

*Q23 - My Spouse Wants To Videotape The Entertainment, Is That Usually Acceptable By The Entertainer?*

It can be, but if it were very important to you, I would ask your Entertainer before you book. Most Entertainers would not have a problem with you recording parts of the show and they will tell you which parts, usually when the children are helping the Entertainer. For most Entertainers recording other parts of the party, the games, warm up and food etc. should not be a problem, but the golden rule is ask if it is important to you.

*Q24 - Can I Ask Why Magicians Have To Protect Magical Secrets?*

Magicians (even silly Clown magicians) have to protect magical secrets because the entertainment and the wonder are all in the secrets. Without the secrets, magic loses all its fun. If your magician/Clown is a member of The Magic Circle he has vowed to keep magic secrets. If he were to allow himself to be videoed where the material he is actually using could be slowed down frame by frame to find out how a trick is done, then the magician/Clown is potentially in serious trouble with The Magic Circle. The footage might wind up on You Tube or the Internet somewhere. Yes he could be in serious hot water.

Now as Entertainers we have to balance that with the desire for parents to record their children's birthday parties and of course we want you to do that. The balance that I draw (and I think this would apply to most Entertainers) is when the children are up helping, they're on the stage area, they're helping me in the show, then I don't mind being videotaped. If there is space, I don't mind people coming behind me and to one side and videotaping the children's faces. It is appreciated, however, that taping from either behind or from the side be confined to the children and their reactions.

In all my shows there are lots of opportunities for children to be helping, taking part in the show, and in those parts I have no problem in being videotaped. In addition you can use your video camera for the...

- Music and games
- Parachute/limbo
- Face painting
- Prize giving

All these areas will be fine with most Entertainers.

Of course your video should be for private viewing only. You would breach your Entertainer's copyright if you were to show his show for any commercial reason or put it on the Internet.

One other thing, if your Entertainer allows you to video the children and use that footage on the Internet you have to be very careful. You will need to get ALL the

parents to sign their permission for their children to appear on your video, even if they are only for your personal site, with no commercial intent. If you need help with such a form give us a call we will explain the rules and give you a sample form.

As always if it is important to you, ask your Entertainer before you book.

### *Q25 - And Presumably Still Shots Are Fine, Just The Normal Photography?*

Most Entertainer will not have a problem with still shots, however, just one small point, don't make the photographs into the main event i.e. let your Entertainer perform and don't get in his way too much, work with him and not against him and all will be well.

You could ask him to tip you with a wink when a special bit is coming up so you can get yourself ready and not to miss the moment. And think that s/he may want some pictures to update his web. You might talk to other parents and get their approval in advance so you can email these to your Entertainer, especially if s/he wants that.

### *Q26 – Presumably Entertainers Are Protective Because It Is Copyright Material?*

There are no rules on that just because there is a copyright. Most Entertainers probably wouldn't be too worried if little bits of his show appeared on the Internet. He wouldn't like the whole show there and if you went that far you would indeed be breaching the Entertainer's copyright.

However, it is very different with the guest children, if you put a child's face online even for a second; you need to have that signed off by that child's parents. What I mean by that is you need written permission from the child's parents that they don't mind their child appearing. This applies even in a non-commercial environment.

Sometimes it is enough just to get email permission from the parents.

### *Q27 - Face Painting Has Been Suggested As An Activity At A Party, Do You Advise It, What Are The Challenges?*

Yes, nothing wrong with face painting if your child likes it, but there are some challenges. The main challenge is that your Face Painter, at any given point, is going to be spending 100% of their time on one child and no attention will be given to the other children that you have at your party. So face painting works if it is part of any overall entertainment package and you have other things going on. Those other things do not have to be professionally arranged so long as you can picture what the other children will be doing when one child is having their face painted. We usually suggest a Face Painter for either the first or last hour of your

party (unless you want both a Face Painter and another Entertainer there at the same time). If you have one Entertainer to both face paint and provide the other entertainment, you cannot expect big fancy painting, especially if this is only a 1-hour party and you have more than 15 kids.

### *Q28 - Are You Talking About A Face Painter As A Main Entertainer Or Activity?*

No - it's secondary, if you've arranged a Clown for instance or some other major activity going on, the Face Painter is an extra add on to the main entertainment, where during the main show, the Face Painter can tap a child on the shoulder and ask if they'd like their face painted.

If the child accepts the invitation to be painted, then they are lead into a corner and positioned so they can still see the magic show (or whatever you have arranged) while they are having their face painted. Children being painted like this is fine and works well, but if your Face Painter is the only activity going on, you absolutely must have something else prepared otherwise you're going to have all the other children doing absolutely nothing while one child is having their face painted.

### *Q29 My Entertainer Wants To Start The Party With A Warm Up? What Is This And Why Is It Important?*

The warm up sets the tone for the party, it lets the children know where they stand and they discover that your Entertainer is a nice, fun person, but also the boss. He is going to be a bit like the teacher at school and is going to be the person running the show. He is however, a little different, in so much as he is great fun.

The warm up is THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ANY CHILDREN'S PARTY. Do not underestimate its importance. It is the one element that professional Entertainers usually understand fully but the occasional party giver misses out on, as they don't understand what it is, how to do it and why it is important. There are more warm ups than there are Entertainers as most Entertainers have more than one. They can last from 5 to 20 minutes, they have the children doing fun things, it makes them laugh and it could well give them an opportunity to stray slightly from the straight and narrow; just so that the Entertainer can bring them back and demonstrate very gently as to what is or is not allowed. It helps the children discover where the boundaries are, and once they know, the party is usually plain sailing from there on.

When a child enters the party room for the first time, they are not quite sure what is going to be happening next, and it is that very small window of opportunity (it might only be a few seconds) that the Entertainer/party organizer needs to grab that child's attention and integrate them into the party.

The warm up will also ease away any shyness (at the youngsters own pace – don't force the issue, it will usually make it worse.)

Also the parents that might stay at the party will discover what is expected of them, remember this is a children's party and is NOT a social event for parents with a baby sitter looking after the children. Your Entertainer should agree with you before hand what will happen with parents to make sure the children have a great time.

If you are thinking of hiring an Entertainer for your party, ask if they do a warm up and what form it would take. Remember the objectives of the warm up. Can you see your Entertainers warm up achieving these objectives?

*Q30 - I Don't Know Any Child That Does Not Like Playing With Balloons, But My Entertainer Has Warnings About This, Why Is That?*

Any balloons are going to be a distraction; they are fine in the right place, on the door to show people where to come in, as decorations (see question 13 about decorations), as gifts twisted into characters for the children, but if you leave them loose on the floor, the children will play with them, some may pop, many children and even some adults don't like sudden unexpected loud bangs and then you have little bits of balloon on the floor and they become a serious choking hazard especially for young children who tend to put just about everything in their mouths.

I would advise you don't leave any balloons loose on the floor. Some inexperienced party givers tie Helium filled balloons to the backs of the chairs at food time; another mistake, children turn around and play with them, some pop, some end up on the ceiling (which in many halls is a high ceiling, often causing distress to the child who has lost his balloon) and while they are turning round the children could well be pulling on the table cloth and spilling the drinks and of course the whole thing is wasting time that could be used having fun with your Entertainer.

I am sure your Entertainer would not want you to rule out balloons completely. I guess he just wants you to think carefully how you are going to use the balloons and where you are going to put them. A good idea might be to put them in a separate room and give them to the children as they go home (whether these be something you provide for the children, or twisted gifts from your Entertainer).

If your Entertainer is any good he will not need any help filling the time and when he sees time being wasted that he could fill with super fun things for the children, he could well feel a little frustrated. Your Entertainer would also want the children focused on him and not distracted by anything else and balloons are a big distraction.

My advice is go with what your Entertainer has suggested, after all he is the expert

### **Section 4: Party Games**

#### ***Q31 – Party Games – How Do I Choose Which One's Are The Most Effective, How Many Should I Have And What Type?***

To start with you need more games than you think. You may think that a particular game will last for 10 minutes and you may well be right, but ONLY if it is a fun game, with lots of prizes AND you put it across in a highly entertaining way. More usually a game won't last for more than three or four minute. So you are going to need a lot more games than most people think.

Secondly, never play elimination type of games, games like the traditional form of musical chairs will have half the children for half the game sitting in the corner doing nothing and the devil makes work for idle hands.

*"I saw this exact scenario with a party a year ago that we went to with musical chairs and it ended up with fights and crying, it was a horrible mess and your dead right you just can't do it can you."*

Elimination games are fraught with danger... do you want me to let you into a secret? You can change those games, keep the good bits, eliminate the bad bits and you're left with a great game on your hands. Here's an example to show you what I mean...

Set musical chairs up as a competition between the children and you (the Entertainer); say you are the best player in the whole world at musical chairs and you (the children) will never beat me, but they always do, and if you can fain being very cross with them for beating you (in a fun way of course) it becomes a fun game but you can only play it 3 or 4 times before the joke starts to wear a bit thin and then it's on to the next game.

You can use this game at the end of your party if you've got one or two children that haven't won a prize. (As I say in question 43, you should have prizes for each and every game so that children are more motivated to play every game.) Try and arrange lots of helpers, brief every adult before the party so that during the actual event every adult knows their job and what they're supposed to do, if you want someone to switch the music on and off for instance while you're doing whatever is necessary for the game.

#### ***Q32 - Are Traditional Games Still Fun For Today's Children And Where Can I Find The Best Games?***

Traditional games still work to a point; however, I wouldn't have my whole party stuffed full of pass the parcel and musical chairs. You should arrange some games the children haven't played before.

So long as the children have not played a particular game before, i.e. a game that is new to them, it will carry the novelty factor even if it is actually a very old game. It's new if you have never heard of it or played it before.

The best place to look for those games is in the library; they will have lots of books on party games that you can borrow. Also on the internet, there are many sites out there which are just for party games...put party games or children's party games into Google and you will get a host of sites and of course Entertainers.

If an Entertainer is performing for part of your party, perhaps a one hour show, you could ask them for a couple of games, a decent Entertainer would gift you two or three games. Remember if you are doing the games yourself you are going to need to allocate some time to prepare your games, but importantly you are going to need more games than you think, so make sure you have lots and lots of games to help you fill the time and make it a fun occasion for all the children.

### *Q33 - Prizes For Games, What Should I Be Arranging?*

Well if you're doing the party yourself you're going to need to arrange lots of games, I talk about games in questions 41 and 42 but for now let's concentrate on the prizes. To help encourage the children to play, the best way is to offer a reward in the form of a prize for the winners of each of the games. When you organize lots of games you may think that you need lots of prizes, well actually and interestingly you don't, but you do need markers of some description for the children to collect.

At the end of each game you want to be able to hand out something to indicate who has won the game, often there will be more than one winner of course, depending on the game. The three best markers are...

1. Counters that the children can collect and put into little piles on the window sill next to their name, this system works best for the occasional party giver, they are cheap to buy and can be re-used at another party later. I suggest that you have lots so that you can be generous with your prize giving. You could have a bigger counter that is worth say five or perhaps 10 small counters.
2. Badges that are pinned on the children. I like the badge system as it is easy to see who has won what and how many, but is harder for the occasional party giver to arrange.
3. Scorer, have someone with a clipboard and a pen and record who has won and how many times. This is my least favorite as it is harder for the

children to see what they have won. It also removes the competition element that keeps children interested in playing the next game, unless your scorer has a big personality that is constantly calling the scores in a fun and exciting way.

I suggest you don't give out actual prizes for each individual game because it creates the "he's got one I want one too" syndrome and it also creates the situation where a child has a prize and does not know what to do with it or where to put it. They are frightened that if they put it down someone else will pick it up, eat it or play with it. It ends up being collected by an adult and if that is the case, why give it out in the first place?

Some games will have a clear winner and other games the game organizer will decide the winners and by mixing the two you can make sure that every child has won a prize and if you wish that the birthday child can be the overall winner. It's important with a child's party (especially young children) to make sure that everybody wins a prize at some point during the party; you want everyone going home a winner.

So when do the children actually receive their prizes? The answer is simple, at the end of the party just before they go home. The prize could be their party bags or any other gift you wish to give. As a general rule I would suggest that all the children's prizes are the same i.e. all the children win everything so as not to differentiate too much between children. The only exception to this general rule is in which order they collect their prize. It is impossible to hand out 20 party bags simultaneously, so you could start with the winner, the child that collected the most counters or badges and then the next best overall player and so on.

### **Section 5: On The Day Problems**

#### ***Q34 - What Happens If My Child Goes Sick On The Day When I've Booked An Entertainer?***

Well it is very important to contact your Entertainer right away and tell him what the situation is, but the most important thing is to do what's best for your child, so take them to the doctor and let the doctor say's what the doctor believes is in the patient's best interest.

Now, take a situation like Chicken Pox, if your youngster comes down with chicken pox, some doctor's take the view that "I'd rather Chicken Pox be had by young children when they can get over it quickly, when it doesn't really affect them, rather than get it as an adult where it's much more serious."

So they would take the view, have your party if your little one wants to, spread the Chicken Pox around, tell other parents that their children could well get Chicken Pox and that's no bad thing for them as it gets it out their system. Other doctors would say "isolate them, keep them in bed, don't let anyone near them, I don't want an outbreak of Chicken Pox on my watch, thank you very much" and the doctors word is final.

Next thing is what you're comfortable with, do you want to postpone the party or do you want it to go ahead, is your youngster up for a party and go with your gut feelings.

As far as the Entertainer is concerned it's an occupational hazard, it happens from time to time, they will ask you to reschedule the party, usually for a mid week day. Most really good Entertainers will fill the weekends very quickly and very easily, and if you postpone out of one weekend slot and you go into another weekend slot that would cost them a party. Whereas if you postpone to a mid week day that's less likely to cost them. It might still cost them, but it's less likely to.

Most Entertainers are pretty cool about this kind of situation, so the most important thing is to do what's best for your child and then talk to the Entertainer. Do what the doctor says and then, when you reschedule the party you'll probably need another set of invitations, if your Entertainer is providing them they may well gift them to you, we certainly would.

You may be asked to pay a higher deposit or booking fee, perhaps up to 50% of the fee, but what you mustn't do of course is to cancel the party, because if you cancel it then the Entertainer would have lost out completely and a cancellation fee may well become payable. This could be very high (up to the full fee) for a late cancellation.

The other thing is, you'd be depriving your little one of a party they've been looking forward to for weeks or months and just because they happen to get sick on the day or the day before, then that wouldn't be very nice for them, so reschedule it. It shouldn't cost you any extra but expect the party to be on a midweek day.

*Q35 - We Have To Cancel And There Is Just No Way That We Can Reschedule The Party, What Would Your Response Be To That And What Would You Advise Parents?*

If you are concerned about that or you think it may affect you ask before you book.

A cancellation is very bad news for most Entertainers, who rely on performance fees to pay the mortgage and feed their wife and children. Cancellations,

especially last minute cancellations very much go against the grain. You may well find yourself paying for a party that you haven't had.

In the case of a cancellation the terms and conditions of your booking should be included in the Entertainer's confirmation letter and if they are not, contact your Entertainer and ask them what their conditions are.

If it concerns you, ask what you are signing up to before you book so that you know. If it happens, look at the confirmation letter and that will tell you what the Entertainer is expecting to happen. But, expect a cancellation fee, possibly up to the full fee.

Postponement is much better than cancellation, if at all possible.

### *Q36 - What Happens If The Entertainer Calls In Sick The Night Before Or On The Day He's Expected To Turn Up At My Party?*

Really good Entertainers will be working in a group; there'll be more than one, so the chances are you will get a last minute replacement, not ideal but better than nothing.

Now your Entertainer is only going to be paid when he's doing the party himself, so he's looking to be there by hook or by crook. But, if he is totally incapacitated, his legs fall off on the day of your party or the day before your party, he's not going to be of much use to you.

Good Entertainers will be working with friends and colleagues somebody would step into the breach and the unwritten rule amongst Entertainers is that it is done at the same fee, so whatever fee was quoted to the client, whatever the client was expecting to pay, that is exactly what they would pay.

Although your Entertainer would not want a change at the last minute any more than you would, if that is happening you would probably have the replacement Entertainer call you with both the problem and the solution, i.e. the Entertainer you have booked is not able to come himself because blah, blah, blah, but I will be coming along instead.

If you are in any way concerned about this ask your Entertainer before you book, what would happen if they were unable to appear. Ask them if they work with other Entertainers and also ask how many times they haven't appeared for a party through sickness or whatever in the last year or two years. Throw that into your melting pot of decision making before you book your party Entertainer. I am pleased to say the only time I have ever failed to appear as booked, was due to snow and being stuck on a highway that had been shut down. In this instance a full refund was given and a rain (snow) date offered.

In conclusion, this is a very minor problem that almost never happens.

## **Section 6: The Party Banquet**

### *Q37 - How Do I Decide Which Is The Best Food To Serve At Our Children's Party?*

To start with decide whether it is to be catered, fast food take away (MacDonald's, Pizza, KFC, etc.), home prepared food and whether it is to be hot or cold food. Of course your birthday child can usually take an active part in this. You could give them some options; by asking if they want such and such. And then give him TWO options. Ask him, would you like Chicken Nuggets or would you like Hamburgers or whatever. Remember it is their special day so as a treat let them have their favorite food, but just as importantly you must be comfortable with whichever they choose.

If it is to be hot food, allow lots of extra cooking time, it always takes longer than you think. You are not cooking for one or two now you are cooking for perhaps 20 or maybe more so allow plenty of extra time. This is even more important if you are in a local hall as their oven will probably not be as powerful as your own one at home and this will mean food will take even longer to cook. Drinks? There are lots of ways of doing drinks. The solution I like best is the juice carton where the straw goes in the top of the carton. Juice is a healthier option and the design means spillages are kept to a minimum. If you know that some of your guests are vegetarians or you are not sure, then perhaps some veggie burgers would be a good idea.

Carrots, Cucumber, etc. and dips are also nice especially if you expect some parents to stay at the party. I am not suggesting you have to feed all the adults (unless you wish to) but having a small nibble and a cup of coffee or a soda would be a nice touch.

Big tip...when feeding children it is important to only make savory food available to start with and once that is finished, then and only then, do the sweet things make an appearance. For most children if there is a sweet option to start with, that is what they will go for.

In addition, when the sweet things are served make sure that the children only take a reasonable amount. Some children try and load their plates with far too much sweet stuff, much more than they could possibly eat, leaving others with none.

Some children suffer from "Eyes Bigger Than Belly" Syndrome.

### *Q38 - What About Accessories on The Table, Is This A Good Idea, What Do You Suggest?*

Absolutely No! Don't be tempted

The things some inexperienced party givers are tempted to do, is place noisy blowers on the table at snack time, these...

- Waste time
- Create a lot of unnecessary noise
- Waste money

If you really want to buy these things, then add them to your party bags, but please don't put them on the food table. Children can't eat and blow at the same time, so while they are blowing their food is getting cold and it is stretching out the length of your food break. You could well have an Entertainer standing around doing nothing, while the children are all giving the adults a headache. My suggestion is leave all those toys in the shop and the money in your bank account. If you must buy them, don't give them out until the very end of your party and then the parents will have the fun and noise on the way home!

*Q39 - What About If I Am Limited For Space At Home, I Have Enough Room For The Guests And The Show, But I Have To Feed The Children In The Same Room, Is This Going To Be A Problem?*

You can have the food in the same room as the entertainment.

I suggest you stand the children up and move them to one side while you put a ground sheet on the floor. The ground sheet could be a sheet from your double bed or a camping ground sheet.

The ground sheet does a number of things for you...

- It shows the children where to sit.
- It collects most or perhaps all the spillages.

You can stand the children up at the end of the meal, brush the crumbs off their tummies and then throw the waste food out for the birds.

Happy children, happy parents and happy birds!

*Q40 - When is the Best Time to Cut the Cake and Sing Happy Birthday Etc? Any Suggestions?*

I suggest you follow the tried and trusted formula of entertainment, food and then more entertainment. Professional Entertainers use this party plan because it works well and if it is not broken, don't fix it.

The simple answer is right after the food. This does a number of things for you...

All the children are in one place and don't need organizing. Slow eaters can finish their food while the majority is taking part in the ceremony. If you wish to

take away the cake, cut it up and pop it in the party bags, then you have all the time the entertainment is going on to do so. However, if you are booking a professional act, talk to them as they may have a different idea. You are now aware of the benefits of doing it right after the food break and you will be able to balance that against any advice your Entertainer gives you and make a decision as to which is best for you and your party.

*Q41- I Want The Birthday Cake To Be Really Special, I Don't Mind Investing In It A Little, But I Want To Blow My Child's Mind Away With A Truly Spectacular Cake, And Provide Something Healthy And Not Too Full Of Sugar. Can You Help Find The Right People To Make It For Me?*

Yes we can, in fact we have three truly wonderful bakers and cake decorators that are not only superbly talented but also incredibly dedicated to the task. One of the three has always been able to say, "Yes I can do that, no problem." They make a cake low in sugar (organic available upon request) AND deliver it to you. And, prices are very reasonable. Sure, you can pop into any grocer's bakery and pay less, but if you are after a memory of a lifetime for your special occasion, then we can put you in touch.

If you would like to talk more about cakes, call our party advisors at 203-647-0322, they will be glad to help you. As you would expect this service is free of charge and without obligation.

*Q42 - I Am A Very Busy Mom And To Be Honest I don't Have The Time To Prepare The Party Food, Is There Any Way To Arrange An Outside Person To Do This For Me At Moderate Cost?*

Yes of course there is.

We offer children's party catering that specializes in birthday parties. Call our party advisors at 203-647-0322 and we will put you in touch. You discuss with them what menu you want, who's going to do the shopping, time, date, place, price, etc.

This is a wonderful service, they are all great, they will leave the kitchen better than they found it and take away all the rubbish, simple, straight forward and easy, but obviously a little bit more expensive than doing it yourself (but not outrageously pricey).

*Q43 - I Notice That Some Entertainers Give Balloon Animals etc Out At The End Of Some Parties, And While They Are Sometime Impressive, Is It Possible To Have Some Monster Big Balloons That Are Truly Spectacular?*

It depends on the Entertainer; a few are very talented when it comes to making big balloons models, but far from all.

The big thing of course is to ask your Entertainer, they will be able to tell you if it is possible and how much your investment would be.

Some entertains make these giant balloons part of a spectacular package and if this is available you can find out the details direct from your Entertainer. Bottom line is yes it is possible but you might have to search a bit for it.

*Q44 - I Have Not Had My Question Answered Here, What Can I Do?*

Simply call 203-647-0322 and ask our party advisors, they will be more than happy to help you; it is entirely free of charge and without any obligation.

We hope you will call, as others visitors to this site have. Your questions could well benefit others, as we can add them to this list and make it even better! So, thank you in advance for calling.