

# Party Planning Tips

## CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS: Recipe For Success

(NAPSA)—The birthday party became popular in the U.S. around 1850. Today, some 700,000 Americans celebrate birthdays each day.

Although the simple birthday celebration has evolved into a full-scale production, a wonderful birthday party doesn't have to be a three-ring circus. With a simple checklist, planning your child's next party can be a piece of cake.

**Select a theme.** This sets the tone and helps determine invitations, decorations, games, food, birthday cake and goody bags. Easy theme ideas include a favorite movie, television or book character or a favorite sport or hobby.

**Choose the location and time.** At home, you'll need to plan for entertainment, games and activities, as well as food and a cake. Hosting a party at 11 a.m. or 4 p.m. means a meal is expected. Otherwise, cake and ice cream are adequate. Hosting a party where entertainment and food are provided, such as at a roller-skating rink, may be convenient; however, if you bring your own cake and paper goods, you can still incorporate the party theme.

**Entertainment.** Ask other parents what they've done. Games keep children involved before and after the entertainment. For younger children, the shorter and simpler the games are, the better, and everyone should be a winner.

**Food.** Plan a menu of "fun" food such as pizza, hot dogs and chicken fingers. Include side dishes that tie in with the theme. A beach party might include lemonade and watermelon slices.

**The cake.** What's a birthday party without the cake? "Cakes are synonymous with birthday par-



**What's a birthday without cake? Did you know more people have birthdays in August than any other month of the year?**

ties," said Michael Keller, chief brand officer at International Dairy Queen, Inc., which specializes in "Chillabratons," ice cream cakes for every occasion, including new *Blizzard*® cakes, made from *Dairy Queen*'s signature frozen treat, in flavors such as Oreo® and Reese's®. Keller advises personalizing the cake with the party's theme or with an image of the birthday child. "At Dairy Queen, you can choose from a wide variety of cake designs or, in some locations, we can decorate cakes with an image from a photograph you bring in," he added. To find a Dairy Queen, visit [www.dairyqueen.com](http://www.dairyqueen.com).

**Goody bags.** Not necessary, but a nice touch. Goody bags might include candy, pencils, crayons, bouncing balls, costume jewelry and more. Party stores typically have an assortment of fillers for goody bags.

The key to planning the perfect party is to be organized. By following a checklist like this one, you should be able to have your cake and eat it, too.