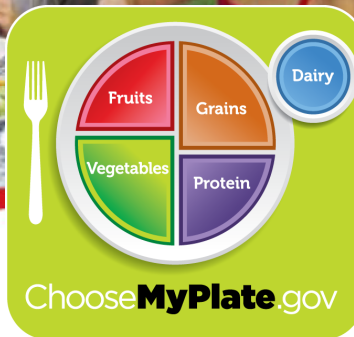


Planning Pleasing Parties



By your actions, you are showing others how to have fun and live a healthy life.

Part 2

slightly revised from

Create Healthy, Active Celebrations

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

May 2008

Planning Made Easy

When planning for an event or celebration, try to stay relaxed. Strive to create a fun, friendly, safe environment at the event. As you guide children through activities, make sure everyone has a chance to get involved.

▲ **Encourage talking and sharing.** Make sure everyone is introduced. Share an interesting or funny story or do an “ice-breaker” activity that gets everyone talking.

▲ **Be a “cheerleader.”** Add your own extra sparkle to the activities. Be friendly and encourage everyone to laugh and have fun. Share experiences. Get everyone to be part of the fun.

Plan for Fun

▲ **Plan activities, games, food, and drink** with the age of guests in mind. Gather supplies in advance.



▲ **Think through each activity** in a step-by-step way to ensure success.

▲ **Create a flow from quiet to more active** and back to calmer activities.

▲ **Use a list** to help stay organized.

Make It Happen

Tips for a successful celebration:

▲ Use calm opening activities.

▲ Stay focused on enjoying the activities and event.

▲ Be prepared with additional activities, or be able to change the location if needed.

▲ Let guests (adults and kids) choose which foods they eat and which activities they do.

▲ Arrange for others to help clean up and put things away.

Get Others Involved

Make a special dish as a group effort. Use a recipe and prepare the food together.



▲ Have family members help prepare, wash, slice, or grate food items in advance.

▲ Home-made desserts are fun to make with a little help. Making it yourself allows you to choose the ingredients. They may also cost less than store-bought cakes and treats.

Planning Events for Children

Sometimes gatherings and fun events just happen. When it's a large or special event, a little extra planning and effort makes a difference. Use this sample checklist to give you ideas on what to do to have a successful children's party or any celebration.

Sample Checklist for Children's Events

Two to four weeks in advance: Think through your plans.

- Involve children in making choices.
- Set a budget. Spend only what you planned to spend.
- Make a shopping list.
- Think about decorations, favors, costumes, hats, and music.
- Plan activities. Include physical movement time and quiet time.
- Write out a schedule. For example:

Active games	1:00-1:30
Arts and crafts or creative projects	1:30-2:00
Time to eat	2:00-2:30
Pass out party favors or play a quiet game	2:30-3:00
- Arrange for help. Identify family or friends to prepare food, set up, help with games and activities, and clean up afterwards.

One to two weeks before:

- Prepare invitations. Pass them out a week or two before the event.
- Purchase supplies: decorations, games, some foods, and materials for activities.
- Gather equipment: tables, chairs, toys, coolers, serving dishes, and other supplies.
- Check with guests who have not yet responded. Estimate number of guests.
- Be prepared. Do as much ahead of time as possible. Prepare favor bags or any foods that can be frozen. Make games or decorations as needed.

The day before:

- Clean and child-proof party area. Check the weather forecast, if you are planning to be outside. Also, have an indoor location in case the weather turns bad.
- Organize and gather any decorations, games, and favors.

- Prepare food that will hold overnight (e.g., chopped vegetables and fruits).
- Check camera and put in handy place.
- Review whether you have everything you need.

The day of event:

- Prepare last-minute food and organize serving area.
- Finish decorating. Set up games.
- Greet the guests and have fun.
- Be flexible. Do something else if a game or activity isn't a big hit.
- Have helpers assist with the activities and clean-up.

Afterwards:

- Share pictures with others and put some on the fridge.
- Thank others for their help.

Ways to Keep it Simple for Kids

Simple Foods Are Fine With Kids

Try these ideas:

- ▲ **Snacks are easier, less expensive**, and may be more popular with kids than full meals. Try to offer at least one food from each of the MyPyramid food groups: Meat and Beans, Milk, Grains, Vegetables and Fruits (for instance, beans, cheese, tortillas, salsa, and pineapple).
- ▲ **Use small cups.** Plan on one or two drinks for each child. Mark names on the cups to avoid mixed-up drinks.
- ▲ **Make your own mini sweet treats.** Offer kid-sized two-bite treats, mini cupcakes, or frozen fruit popsicles.
- ▲ **If using juice boxes,** choose small boxes of 100% fruit juice instead of sweetened fruit drinks, ades, and punches.
- ▲ **Create one “fun” food** to surprise your guests and make the event special. Make a face on a pizza, decorate sandwiches, or arrange vegetables to show off different colors.
- ▲ **Kids are more likely to accept new foods** when they are offered along with familiar food.
- ▲ **Save money** by preparing less expensive snacks that feed a lot of kids – like colorful watermelon wedges or seasoned popcorn.



Party Favor Bags

At children’s celebrations and parties, favor bags may be given to guests and often contain candy. Consider giving some of these nonfood items:

- ▲ Stickers, magnets, key chains, yo-yo’s, jacks, markers, or small balls.
- ▲ MyPlate kids coloring pages,
- ▲ *Tips for Families* mini-poster,
- ▲ MyPlate mini-poster, or the MyPlate kids food tracking worksheet at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/information-educators.html>

updated May 2012

Make Moving a Part of Every Event

Fun Activities Are Easy

Being physically active makes everyone feel good. Dancing, moving, playing active games, wiggling, and giggling add fun to any gathering. Arrange for games and activities to get everyone moving. Teens and adults can participate to help younger kids learn to build physical skills and confidence.

Join in the fun and let yourself act like a child. Try to imitate what the kids do. It's a challenge for adults to be flexible and move like children. Let kids show adults how to play these games and activities:

- ▲ Tug of War
- ▲ Play "Mirror Image"
- ▲ Dancing
- ▲ Freeze tag
- ▲ Pass the "Hot Potato"
- ▲ Simon Says
- ▲ Keep the balloon in the air
- ▲ Unravel the "human knot"
- ▲ Crack the Whip
- ▲ Indoor bowling and miniature golf
- ▲ Hopscotch
- ▲ Kick-Ball
- ▲ Table tennis
- ▲ Hide and seek
- ▲ Games using hula hoops



When children know how a game is played, it is easier for them to be part of the fun. To make it interesting, change the name of the game or rules slightly. Play Pin the Mustache on the Pirate. Match games to a party theme. Hold a Treasure Hunt for a Pirate Party instead of a scavenger hunt.

Take your cue from the kids about when it's time to make a change. Encourage them to enjoy playing actively. After an active game, plan a quieter activity. Be patient and enjoy childlike play and silliness.

For celebrations that last 2 hours, aim for about 45 minutes of physical activities.

Children need to be physically active at least 60 minutes on most or all days. Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days.