

The 8-week kids' birthday party planning checklist

Keep your budget, venue and custom print orders on schedule with this one-page countdown guide.

6–8 WEEKS OUT

Budget, theme and venue

Set the budget, the look and the location first – every step that comes after depends on these three.

- [ ] Set the budget baseline – $200 to $500, split across venue, food, decor, fun and favors.
- [ ] Pick an age-appropriate theme – match party time to age. Pick 2-3 colors that unify decor and favors.
- [ ] Book the venue or park pavilion – confirm access hours, decor rules and a weather backup.
- [ ] Draft the guest list – use the age-plus-one rule and count the parents and siblings who stay.

4–5 WEEKS OUT

Invitations and decor

Print has a lead time – all invitations, banners and stickers must be shipped before the party.

- [ ] Order personalized invitations – 5" x 7" flat or folded cardstock, glossy or matte.
- [ ] Order vinyl banners and signs – 13 oz indoor or 15 oz outdoor, grommets included.
- [ ] Mail invitations – send 3-4 weeks out, with RSVPs due 10 days before.
- [ ] Book entertainment and rentals – performers, activity leaders, bouncy houses and chairs.

2–3 WEEKS OUT

Activity prep and favors

Numbers lock in now – the cake, catering and favor bags all depend on the final headcount.

- [ ] Finalize refreshments – order the cake and buy coordinated plates, napkins and cups.
- [ ] Assemble favor bags – fill bags or treat boxes and seal them with custom stickers.
- [ ] Chase pending RSVPs – confirm the final headcount for catering and activity kits.

1 WEEK TO PARTY DAY

Final checks and setup

Run the plan out loud, pack the kit, then give yourself an hour before guests arrive.

- [ ] Confirm the run-of-show – share final numbers and time the games, food and cake.
- [ ] Pack a day-of emergency kit – scissors, tape, zip ties, wipes, markers, batteries, charged devices.
- [ ] Set up the venue – arrive 1-2 hours early, with the banner behind the dessert table.

Budget split

HOW THE $200–$500 BREAKS DOWN

Venue	25%
Food and cake	35%
Decor and signage	15%
Entertainment	15%
Favors	10%

Quick reference

Start planning 8 weeks out
Mail invitations 3–4 weeks out
Close RSVPs 10 days out

PARTY LENGTH BY AGE

Ages 1–3 – 60 to 90 minutes
Ages 4–8 – about 2 hours
Ages 9–12 – semi-independent activities and free play

PRINT AND RSVP DEADLINES

Invitations – order 5 weeks out, mail 3–4 weeks out
Banners and signs – order with the invitations
RSVPs – due 10 days before the party