



## INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Is one of your child's favorite toys a Tonka® truck? Perhaps you have a budding builder in your family who loves to build all sorts of things with trucks, blocks, dirt, and more. If so, a construction party theme certainly will be a fit for your little builder and friends.

Using heavy cardstock in bright colors, make invitations in the shapes of construction tools — saw, hammer, construction hat — and place all of your party details on one side of your invitation and let your little birthday builder decorate the other side.

Alternatively, create small invitation cards with a picture of your child in construction gear on the front, and inside write the party details. Hole-punch the invitation card and attach it with a bright ribbon to plastic tools. Hand-deliver these invitations to your party guests and request that they bring their tools with them to the party.

Use Thematic Invitation Language:

*Caution!! Construction Ahead!*

*Can We Party? Yes, We Can!! Help us build some groundbreaking birthday fun by joining \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) for the best bulldozing bash!! Just tractor yourselves over!!*

*Workin' Shift: Time*

*Construction Site: Location*

*Call the Site Boss to RSVP*

*Dress to Work the Dirt (or ask the guests to come dressed in overalls, blue jeans, and flannel shirts)*

*Address each envelope to "Foreman child's first name" (ex. Foreman Zach)*

## DECORATIONS

Use a few rolls of caution tape (found at any hardware store) and decorate the party area. Barricade off areas where the kids should and shouldn't play, designate an eating zone and play zone, and show where guests shouldn't park.



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Create yellow diamond-shaped caution signs and orange traffic signs and hang them around the party area:

*Caution, Men at Work!*  
*Party at Your Own Risk!*  
*Birthday Zone Ahead!*

Rent or buy orange cones and set them around your yard. Place one orange cone at the front entrance to the party and attach black and yellow helium-filled balloons to it. Add a Construction Zone party sign to the sidewalk in front of your home or to the bottom of the driveway.

Pull out your ladders, building materials, and tools for additional party decorations.

Use sidewalk chalk to draw blueprints on the driveway and surrounding sidewalk.

Take out all the blocks, trucks, and bulldozers your kids have and scatter them around the party area. Hang plastic construction tools (or cut out tools from poster board) from the ceiling, banisters, and doors.

For your party table, use an orange tablecloth and offset it with yellow cups, black plates, and orange tableware. Throw crayons on the party table for the kids to create their own construction signs on the cups and napkins while you prepare the party menu.

For a table centerpiece, use a Tonka dump truck and tie balloons to it. In the dump part of the truck, fill it with gummy goodies that the kids can enjoy.

Use yellow, black, and orange streamers and balloons to decorate the party area and party table.

Before the guests arrive, set the stage for a construction project that all the kids can be involved in as a team. If holding the party outdoors, kids love to move dirt. This activity is not possible inside, but you can make a mock construction site indoors with paper, foam, etc. Cut off large sections of gray paper and crumple them up to make boulders of varying sizes. Place the boulders all around your construction site. Cut out pieces of brown craft foam to look like sticks.

### GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

When the kids arrive, have them **punch into the party** just like they would with a time clock, stamping a pad.

Give each child a **construction hard hat and an orange vest** (these can be made using orange plastic tablecloths and duct tape) and tell them that they have a very important



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construction project to do today.

While you wait for everyone to arrive, make **construction signs**. Provide the kids with diamond-shaped yellow poster board and black markers and have them create a sign like: *Mark's Room: Under Construction*. If you have a laminator, laminate the signs. Contact paper will also work.

Once everyone has arrived, have the little builders clear the construction site of all the boulders, sticks, trees, etc. Provide dump trucks, wheelbarrows, and other play construction equipment to help them get the job done.

Once they are done, give them large strips of paper to create roads. They can use markers to make the lines on the roads. Once they have paved the roads, you can add a cardboard house for them to work on. Have the children use markers, crayons, etc. to work together to decorate the house.

Play Hammer, Hammer, Nail like Duck, Duck, Goose.

Play Pin the Arm on the Crane.

Have a **Dress the Builder Relay Race**. Divide the kids into two teams. The teams must race to dress up in construction clothes, run to one end of the yard and back, take off the costume, and have the next kid on the teams do the same thing.

**Block Building**. Give the kids a 5-minute time frame to build a tower with blocks. Whoever builds the tallest one, wins.

**Digg'n Dirt Race**. Using a large pile of dirt, give each guest a small shovel and a bucket. The kids must fill their buckets to the rim with the dirt when you say, "Go!" Who can move that dirt fastest?

**Can We Build It? Yes, We Can!** Kids love building things, so take out your Lego® toys, building blocks, egg cartons, paper plates, paper cups, Popsicle® sticks, boxes, cotton balls, books, cushions and let them build!

**Builder's Obstacle Course**. Create an obstacle course challenging guests to push a dump truck filled with blocks under a sawhorse, around orange cones, across a 2x4 board, through the dirt pile to a construction site. As players reach the construction site, they incorporate their blocks into the construction project, while the next player takes the empty truck to the beginning of the obstacle course to collect more blocks.

### PARTY MENU

**Construction Shaped Sandwiches**. Make tuna or chicken salad sandwiches. Use a car



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or truck-shaped cookie cutter to cut out construction shapes. Pack them inside a paper bag with a bag of chips to give each child a *construction lunch*.

Have the kids *construct* their own sandwiches by putting out spreads, veggies, bread or buns, and anything else they will need to build sandwiches. Use some construction cookie cutters for the kids to cut their sandwiches into thematic shapes to match the theme.

**Dynamite Punch.** Create any kind of punch you want. After you have placed a filled glass in front of each guest, add some dynamite dust, Pop Rocks® candies, to each one. Since this candy is processed with carbon dioxide, it will crackle, pop, and spit when it comes into contact with a liquid. The kids will love it!

### Serve Construction Snacks:

- Soft hat: take a new construction hat, pour in Jell-O® and fruit, and let it set
- Logs: pretzel sticks
- Orange cones: candy corn or Bugle® chips
- Construction hats: yellow and orange gumdrops
- Nuts and bolts: nuts and chocolate chips
- Rocks: jellybeans and Nerds®
- Dynamite treats: ice cream bon-bons in red cellophane with the ends twisted and secured with a stapler. Tie string to one end so it looks like real dynamite.
- Truck tires: chocolate donuts
- Gravel: toffee chips
- Carpenter pencils: carrot sticks
- Spackle with woodchips: onion dip with Sun Chips®
- Green paint and red paint: avocado dip and salsa
- Wood putty: hummus or peanut butter
- Boulders with mortar: kebabs with mayo and mustard spread



Make an **Edible Dump Truck**. Fill a new clean Tonka truck with chunks of chocolate pound cake and scoops of ice cream. Top with whipped topping and sprinkles. Add your birthday candles.

### Construction Menu Tips:

- Ring a bell to signify a party break time and hand out the kids' lunches.
- Serve the snacks out of yellow construction hats.
- Serve lunch in brown paper sacks.
- Provide juice and water boxes for beverages.

Have a clean saw available to cut the cake with.

Put little diamond construction signs on the dishes that you serve buffet style so that the guests understand that they're going to eat construction grub.



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## PARTY FAVORS

Purchase canvas work aprons and write the guests' names on the aprons with fabric pens. These aprons can be used during the party and be a memorable favor to take home.

Make **Construction Frames**. Cut a yellow piece of poster board into a rectangular picture frame and decorate with construction stickers. Send the frames home with duct tape and a self-sticking magnetic strip for refrigerator display.

Make sure to send your thank you notes to your guests with a picture from the party that the kids can place in the frame, secured with the duct tape, and with a magnet attached for display.



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