



INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

How quickly does the first year of your child's life go by? In the blink of an eye, it seems that people are starting to ask about the first birthday bash for your special one. Often it is the first time that parents set out to plan a child's party.

Here are a few top tips to keep in mind when planning the party:

Your child will never remember this party; the celebration is more about the parents and the party they would like to have for their child.

Often multiple ages of children will attend this party, due to it being family-related and people bringing all of their kids.

A short time frame for this party is ideal so as to not overwhelm the birthday child.

Plan it around your child's nap time, so he or she will be in top form during the actual party.

Since your child is turning one, and cannot tell you what he or she is interested in as far as theme, take thematic inspiration from looking around your child's room and seeing what are his or her favorite toys, books, and activities to create a theme. Alternatively, building a theme around your child's initials or the number one are also great themes.



For an *I'm One!* party invitation, cut out a large number one from heavy cardstock in your favorite colors, or the colors that you used in your baby's room, and provide the party details on one side. On the other side of the invitation, write out different facts that surround your baby's first year — first step, first smile, first tooth, etc. The facts of your child's first year will be fun for the party guests to read.

Alternatively, a very popular invitation idea for the first birthday is to take a picture or several pictures and place on the front of heavy cardstock. Inside of the card, write all of your party details. Guests will love to see a picture of your child, all set to turn one.

Invitation Tip:

Given this party revolves around the parents more than the birthday child, make sure to do an activity that revolves around him or her too. In your invitation, ask your guests to bring something of the day, such as a newspaper article, sports page, weather report, or something else current from the day, that you place in a time capsule for your child to open on a future birthday. What a great way to capture a memory for your child!

DECORATIONS

Place balloons and streamers all over the party area in your favorite colors. Young children are fascinated by balloons so have them free floating around the area.

To welcome your guests, place balloons at your front door and place a large number one on the front door.

In the party area, cut out the number one in different sizes and colors and place on the party walls.

For the party table, use your favorite colors for tableware or use number one thematic supplies to keep with your theme. Set up as a buffet for adults to enjoy snacks along with the kids.

Your birthday child will most likely blow out his or her candle sitting in a highchair. Decorate it with streamers and balloons for festive pictures.

Hang a birthday banner behind the highchair that says, *Happy Birthday, _____!*

In one area of the party, place photo albums that you created during baby's first year, or single photos laid out in a collage format for the guests to look at and enjoy.

For a buffet or table centerpiece, take clear vases and fill with bouncy balls for the kids to play with.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Remember to consider the different ages of the children who will be attending your party and organize games and activities that are appropriate.

For babies, place picnic blankets out in the party area and place books, small toys, and stuffed animals in the area for the children to play with.

For toddler children and pre-school kids, classic party games will work very well, like:



Party Theme Planning From **BIRTHDAYS**

Pin the Candle on the Cake
 Duck, Duck, Goose
 Ring Around the Rosy
 Musical Chairs
 Cake Walk
 Piñata
 Follow the Leader
 Simon Says, but use birthday child's name
 Create handprints with paint and white butcher paper
 Beanbag Toss

For grade school children, set up different **Creative Stations** for the kids to enjoy. Examples of stations include: making foam frames, coloring, Play-Doh®, frosting and decorating cupcakes.

Older kids will also appreciate the opportunity to **play photographer** at the party. Place disposable cameras around the party area for the kids to use to capture the memories from the party. You will appreciate developing the pictures and seeing the party through their eyes.

PARTY MENU

Given both adults and children will be attending this party, you may want to set up two different buffet tables of food for your guests.

For the children, serve:

Small sandwiches filled with favorites, cut out into favorite shapes
 Jell-O® Jigglers®
 Carrot sticks
 Celery filled with peanut butter and cream cheese with raisins
 Pretzel sticks
 Cupcakes that they frost, decorate, and enjoy
 Juice and water bottles



For the adults, given many will be carrying around children in their arms, appetizer/finger food would be easiest. Cheese and crackers, veggies and dips, meatballs and dipping sauces, and small quiches are good choices.

Make a sheet cake, and cut it into the shape of the number one, and frost and decorate with your favorite flavor of icing.

For the birthday child, prepare a special small Smash Cake just for him or her to smash into when everyone sings *Happy Birthday* to them.



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PARTY FAVORS

Given the children attending will be different ages, keep this in mind when you are planning to prepare your goody items.

For babies, provide a plastic cup filled with a healthy snack like Cheerios®.
For toddlers, soft bath toys would be fun for bath time after the kids depart.
For older kids, bubbles, bouncy balls, and crayons and coloring books would be fun and useful.

If the kids make foam crafts as one of the activities, they can take these home with them too. When you develop the pictures that the kids took at the party, send the best ones to your guests with your thank you notes so they can place them in the frames as a perfect party memory.



For more great birthday party planning tips and advice online, visit www.birthdaysrus.com. For the best party supplies and gifts go to www.toysrus.com, or shop at a Toys"R"Us store near you.

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