



INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

If your child is too young for a sleepover or some of their friends get a bad case of middle-of-the-night homesickness, don't fear: you can still get in on the slumber party scene by hosting a "mock" sleepover. Although not an overnight bash, this pajama party is almost the real thing. Guests can do all the stuff the big kids do—except spend the entire night.

Invite the guests over in the early evening for games and a pancake dinner before settling in for a showing of your child's favorite video. Have everyone wear their pajamas. Ideally, the party can run from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Create Sleeping Bag Invitations

You will need:

- Flannel and ribbons
- Kid-safe scissors
- Fabric markers



To make these pajama party invitations, buy a large piece of flannel or help your child cut an old baby blanket or pajamas into enough 6" x 8" "sleeping bag" squares for everyone you're inviting.

Using fabric markers, write the important facts of who, what, when and where on each sleeping bag. Make sure you include a pick-up time so parents know when the party ends. At the bottom, add: "Don't forget your pillow and blankie (or sleeping bag) and your favorite stuffed animal!" Roll up the flannel pieces like a sleeping bag and tie with a ribbon.

Alternatively, you can create a sleeping bag invitation using heavy cardstock. Double over the paper and glue one end, leaving the other side open. Take a picture of your child and slip it into the sleeping bag invitation. Have them decorate the front of the sleeping bag and fill in the party details on the back.

DECORATIONS

Prepare for your slumber party by making room in the party area for all of the sleeping bags. Make sure to have extra sleeping bags and pillows available in case a child forgets to bring their own.

Blow up lots of balloons and place them on the floor in the party area. Fill a few balloons with confetti for the kids to pop for additional décor.

To create a night effect, hang black poster board covered with glow-in-the-dark stars on the walls.

Cut out stars and moons from construction paper and suspend them from the ceiling with varying lengths of fishing line.

Make the party table look like a sleeping bag. Use a colorful sheet as your tablecloth, and place a small pillow at one end of the table. Decorate with napkins, plates, cups, etc. in your birthday child's favorite colors.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

When the kids first arrive at the party, have them lay out their sleeping bags in the living room area around the TV just as they would for a real slumber party.

Provide each guest with one fluffy slipper when they arrive. The catch? The kids must search out the other slipper to be able to wear them at the party.

Pillowcase Party Keepsake

Crafts are a great way to do something fun and give your child's friends a nice party keepsake. This is one you can do during your sleepover party.

You will need:

- White pillowcases
- Cardboard
- Fabric markers
- Rubber stamps with designs imprinted on them

Find (or buy) enough inexpensive white pillowcases to have one for each guest, and slip pieces of cardboard inside. Write your child's name and the date of the party on the pillowcases and have the kids decorate them with the stamps and fabric markers (glow-in-the-dark markers are even better if you can find them). As soon as they are done, write each child's name on their creation and put them right on their pillows!



Sleeping Bag Tag

For this game, lay out all the sleeping bags and blankets and have whoever is "it" leave the room. Then have everyone else jump into someone else's sleeping bag. When the person who is "it" enters the room, have him or her try to guess who is inside each sleeping bag. Chances are you'll have lots of giggles, so beware of talking or you may give yourself away!

Musical Sleeping Bags, like Musical Chairs

Pass The Package

Before the party, make a "package" by wrapping a special prize in many layers of paper. So that each layer is different, use lots of different kinds of wrapping paper, tissue paper or even the newspaper comics. For more fun, include a small trinket or wrapped candy in each layer so everyone wins.

Gather everyone in a circle, put on music and pass the package. Have a grownup or big brother or sister stop the music every few minutes. Whoever is holding the package at that time gets to unwrap one layer of paper. Keep going until all the paper is taken off. The person who unwraps the final layer wins the prize!

Flashlight Limbo

Have the kids pass under a light beam that you continue to lower as the game goes on.

Stuffed Animal Dress Up

Fill a box with scarves, mittens, jewelry, hats, socks, etc. and let the kids dress up the stuffed animals they brought along and free play together.

Play a Favorite Video

This will be the last activity of the evening. Put on one of your child's favorite videos or shows while the kids munch on popcorn.

PARTY MENU

Instead of the usual pizza and soda, why not have breakfast for dinner? Make a towering stack of pancakes and top them with lots of syrup, chocolate sauce, whipped cream and sliced bananas and strawberries, and use chocolate chips to make smiley faces.

Alternatively, set up a waffle bar with syrups and favorite toppings for the kids to create their own ultimate waffles.



Party Theme Planning From **BIRTHDAYS**

Serve a variety of juices: cranberry, orange, pineapple and apple.

Banana/strawberry smoothies with fresh strawberries make an additional treat.

Other breakfast foods you might want to serve include English muffins with jam, sausage links, bagels with cream cheese, and hash browns.

Serve big bowls of popcorn during the movie with a variety of toppings: salt, cinnamon sugar, parmesan cheese, etc. Serve the **popcorn** in movie tubs and bags for added fun.

For a sweet cake treat, serve a **tower of donuts** with candles placed on top.

Make **Graham Cracker Sleeping Bags**. Provide the kids with graham crackers (floor), frosting (sleeping bag), and round candies (kids in their sleeping bags) so that they can make their own candy person in a sleeping bag.

PARTY FAVORS

Send the kids home with their pillowcase and a small bag of overnight goodies: comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, eye mask, etc.

At the party, make sure to take pictures of the kids in their sleeping bags and include them in the thank you notes you send to your guests after the party.



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