

## Surviving Children's Birthday Parties

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Chocolate cakes. Colourful balloons. Cotton candy. I am sure that you have already discovered what I am talking about, have you not my dear reader? Children's birthday parties are meant to be remarkable celebrations where we honour the anniversary of our offsprings' birth. It would be hypocritical of me to deny that birthday parties are cheerful and spellbinding occasions. Nevertheless, few people perceive the dark side that lurks behind them.

Many youngsters feel awkward and stressed when celebrating their birthday parties and, as a consequence, parents get trapped in an eerie world of arguments and fierce competitions about minor issues.

Photo time: the staggering moment of the truth. A bloody combat between your kid's fearless friends where the last survivor will earn the privilege of standing by his/her side and taking the first photo of the party. It does not sound like a huge problem but, if parents are not careful enough, this adorable battle arena may end up in disaster. The truth is, as many children loathe the idea of sharing their toys, they also despise the mere thought of sharing their friends. Without even noticing, the birthday child becomes a precious prize for which the greedy guests are willing to sacrifice everything.

Birthday party or fashion show? This is one of the moral dilemmas I must deal with whenever I attend a child's birthday party. Parents of the birthday boy or birthday girl dress them in the most fashionable clothes. I presume that they do it because they truly believe that if their offspring wears trendy outfits, they will gain popularity and respect among their devoted fans. On the other hand, if the child wears casual clothes, he is bound to lose his sacred admiration forever. Which explains why wearing the proper clothes is such a serious issue: it has the power to define a child's social status, according to many parents.

I have no intention to be cruel or heartless, but some parents should think twice before organizing a birthday party if they are conscious that their child is ill. However, I have had the pleasure to meet eccentric parents whose ultimate wish seems to have a chickenpox party.

Birthday parties are thought to be memorable occasions where children can develop and strengthen their social skills. Although parents do their best when organizing their children's birthday parties, they should learn how to surf these enigmatic and turbulent waters. It is just a tiny effort and it will be worthwhile when it is reflected in the child's grateful smile.

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