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MONTANA WITHERS

# PLAN A CHILD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY LIKE A PRO

Everything from A-Z on Party  
Planning for Children.

+Printable Guest List

+Printable Budget Calculator

+Printable Party Checklist

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Have you struggled with knowing where to start planning a party?

Need help deciding what to do, where to have it, and how much to spend?

44 Pages including everything you need to know about planning a child's birthday party

Ages 2-10

+ FREE Printables

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*Montana Withers* 

**FORMER OWNER/STYLIST @ SOUTHERN ROOTS SALON  
CREATOR/OWNER OF DOMESTICMAVEN.COM**

I am a hardworking mom of three dedicated to making necessary things fun and easy. DIY has always been a passion of mine. I am a creative at heart. I LOVE the freedom and joy in creating things. Party Planning has always been one of my favorite things to do. From the brainstorming of themes to DIYing the decor, I feel the process should be enjoyable from beginning to end!

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# CHAPTER 1

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

# WHERE DO I BEGIN?

The first thing you should ask yourself after you decide on having a party- What is my budget!?! We are going to start off strong and dive right into this topic! Staying within your budget is the Key to unlocking your Party Planning success. To stay within your budget, you need to be as detailed as possible as you consider all of the expenses. Keeping a budget will also help you stay organized. Make a List with all the main Expenses and determine what you will spend on each. On the next page, you will find a free printable I've included to help you stay on track.



*Budget  
Total*

Cake

Food  
Beverage

Venue

Party  
Favors

Photo

Decor

Entertain

The background of the entire page is a collage of various US dollar bills, including \$100, \$50, and \$20 bills, scattered and overlapping. The bills are in shades of green and white, with some showing the portrait of George Washington.

# THE BUDGET

A party budget all depends on YOU! This is your party and you should plan accordingly. If you want to make it work with a total of 150\$, then make it a personal challenge to get everything done for that amount. This is your game and you make the rules! On average, Birthday parties are usually around 300\$. Do NOT let that scare you in any way thinking you have to spend anywhere near that amount! We will walk thru all the details step by step, so you can be as informed as possible on each aspect of the party planning process and hopefully by the end of this E-book, you will have the confidence you need to plan a party like a Professional.



Let's dive into the Budget as it relates to the Venue, Food/Beverages, Cake, the Invitations, Entertainment/activities, Photography, Decorations, and last but NOT least, Party Favors

The Venue: When establishing a Budget for a party you will first want to consider your venue. When trying to keep a tight or low budget you can always, if space allows, have the party at home or at a family member's house in order to save any extra expense.



Food/beverages: A good thing to consider is whether you will have your event catered or if you will DIY your food and drink. If you choose to DIY, you may save money but you will sacrifice time! If you have it catered, you can use the time you save to really make another element of your event better but you will have to budget for it! If you decide to have your party catered, consider all food and beverage charges, including tips and gratuities, which can account for up to 30 percent.

Cake: Cupcakes can be a cheaper substitution for a whole cake, but You will want to make sure you order enough for all the guests. Depending on how many guests you are inviting and planning for, your Baker can help you determine what you will need! Keep in mind that custom cakes can cost you between 3-5\$. You can always make the cake yourself. You may consider recruiting a family member or friend for help as well. \*\*When we were children, we always had a family member make our cakes! I actually miss this! Most people these days order cakes, but with YouTube and Pinterest at everyone's fingertips, there's not much you can't DIY!

Invites: You always want your invites to be cute and creative, after all, they are the "first impression" of your party. They give off the Vibes for your event long before the party starts. The options here are endless. When we were children, you had two ways of inviting someone to your party, You could see the in person/call or you could send an invitation in the mail. One was free and one would cost money. These days there are so many options for you to choose from, free and paid. While the invites are essentially the "commercial" for your Birthday Party, they will not add any Value to it as far as the Experience of the actual party goes. Impressions can go a long way but remember, your small party guests will not care about the invitations themselves, just so long as they know they are invited.



Entertainment/Activities- When and where you decide to have your party will determine the amount you will need to budget for entertainment. Some Venues will have entertainment provided, while an at home party will require more effort and expense. Party Games are one way to really get the party started and will more than likely be one of the more expensive on the list, depending on the supplies needed! Any hired outside Entertainment can require deposits or certain equipment in which they may bring with them or they may expect you to provide. Make sure that you get a contract with any entertainment in writing before you pay any deposits.

Photography- This will be something you will want to consider very early in your party planning. Photographers are expensive but you do NOT want to miss your child's Birthday trying to get photos. I once went thru one of my kid's entire parties without a single picture and didn't realize it until it was all over. If you choose to hire a photographer, make sure you have them for the duration of the party and be very clear on what you expect and desire and just like everything else, it's best if you get everything in writing before you pay deposits. You do NOT have to hire someone! If budget is an issue, designate a trusted friend or family member to take photos.

Decorations - Consider your Venue, Theme while Budgeting for decorations. If your having an at home party, more than likely there will be more wiggle room for decorating. In most cases, a paid venue will provide some decorations already, with you only having to provide some themed elements here and there.

Always make sure to check with any venue to see what they provide or allow.

Party Favors - You can always incorporate party favors into the Entertainment or Activities portion of the Party! Whatever gift or gifts you provide, track the cost for them separately; you'd be amazed at how much these items can cost.

If an expense doesn't fall into any of the above categories, list them as a miscellaneous expense item. Give yourself a contingency fund category. Depending on the size or complexity of an event, you may want to give yourself as much as up to 20% of the event budget here. Despite the best planning, charges are going to exceed projected plans with expenses that you never consider. This will keep you from going over budget every time. Summarize projected expenses

# INSIDER FACTS

A. Some venues/vendors will discount their services on dates and times they aren't usually busy.

B. The two things that will cost you the most are the venue and the food.

C. Out of the number of people you invite on about 50-70% will show

D. Limiting the number of people you invite and DIY are the best ways to cut costs.



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**CHAPTER**

**2**

THE GUEST LIST

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Setting the budget first, gives you an excellent idea of how many people you will be able to comfortably entertain. Since we went over budget inside and out first thing, you are now prepared to sit down and make your Guest List. It's best to include the Birthday kid, if they are old enough and able, and let them help you make a list of people they would like to be present for their party! The type of party, as well as budget, will dictate how many you can host. I would consider being inclusive if you choose to invite school aged children to attend. It can be very hurtful to be one of few, in a classroom, who weren't invited to a birthday party.

One VERY important thing we should mention before we go any further is something we like to call Essential Guests. While we would love to invite everyone, and for everyone invited to show up, these would be the guests that the child would absolutely want in attendance under any and all circumstances.

It's always beneficial to check with Essential guests before you move on to Date and Venue, just to make sure they're available. We do this so that we can ensure they will mark their calendars ahead of time. Essential Guests help make any party much more memorable for your child.



# Guest List

Check boxes for confirmed Guests

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# 3

**CHAPTER**

## THE DETAILS

Choosing a Date, Venue, Theme and  
Decorations



# Date & Time

Now that we've determined our guest list and checked with essential guest, its time to sort thru the details! Let's start with nailing down our date. Typically the weekends are the most popular time to have parties due to work schedules. It's also very common to plan your party the weekend before or after your actual birthday, if you birthday doesn't fall on an actual weekend day. When the party is planned is completely up to you but within a couple of weeks of the actual date is ideal.

It's very important, if you choose a Venue party, to check with them on available dates and times! Some Venues will also want a deposit to hold your date and time, so be prepared to pay at the time of scheduling. While determining what time you will have your party, there are a few things to consider. If they are preschool aged children, you will want to plan around nap times. Ask yourself, how much time will I need to prepare for the party? A mid-morning party can be great for small kids, but if you are cooking or having to pick up anything, you will want to make sure to leave yourself plenty of time to run the errands, without getting stressed.



# At Home VS A Venue

Your Budget, Party theme, as well as how many guests you will invite, will have a lot to do with where you choose to have your party. Some people choose to have their parties at home, while others choose to have the party at an actual venue.

Home parties really can be an excellent option for someone who is running on a tight budget OR wants to DIY most of the food or decorations. Transporting cake, food, kids and decorations, can be very stressful.

I would consider having a larger trash bin than you might typically use. You will need more room for the cleanup.

Also Consider an outdoor activity to get party guests up and moving towards their cars when the party is over. Small children tend to do better when they aren't confined together in small spaces. Arts and crafts activities seem to work really well outside, as you aren't as concerned with messes and accidents.

Venue parties are awesome if you want to keep the mess out of your house. You may be limited on the amount of creativeness with your activities here, but you will be less responsible for mess and cleanup, as most venues will do most of the cleanup for you. Often times, they will provide some necessities such as table covers and utensils as well.

If you would like Entertainment provided, lean towards a Venue like Chuck-E-Cheese. Anytime there will be any expense to the parents themselves for their children to participate in any activities such as tokens, It's best to include this information in the Invite! Please allow room in your budget for a child who may show up with nothing to spend for activities, if that is required. Hopefully this never happens but it never hurts to be prepared. Depending on the event type, you should look into the venue at least a couple of months ahead of time. This will help you secure the date you want and get the deposit paid in time to secure your date, if that is required. Also, be flexible with your dates and times if the venue is important!

## **Things to ask yourself when choosing a venue:**

**Will my party be private or shared?**

**Do you want to celebrate the birthday with a close circle of friends in a private setting? Would you mind having lots of other children jumping around? While both options can be equally fun, you need to know what to expect before you book to avoid any unpleasant surprises.**

**Does the venue provide a variety of activities to keep children entertained?**

**If not, you will be the one having to purchase supplies for the activities as well as finding help to coordinate. Hired entertainment can come in real handy if the budget will allow.**

**Do they offer food & drink options?**

**Some birthday party venues offer packages with food and drinks included. However, not all of them will offer the same quality and amount of food, so it's best to check this before making the decision to book. Also, consider having some variety in case party guests have dietary restrictions. You want to be certain that the venue will accommodate that. If not, you need to know if you can bring some other food options to the venue.**

**Where will I host everyone?**

**Life can get busy, especially for working parents. That's why you need to make sure that the location of the venue is convenient for Party guests. The further away a party venue is, the less likely people will show up. Look for a venue that's not too far away from the city center and make sure there are enough parking options around.**

**Safety should be your #1 priority when hosting children for a party! Make sure there will be plenty of people to help keep an eye on kids as they play, especially if there are scattered activities for children to get into.**

# Themes

Now that we have determined where we will have our party, it's time to choose our party theme. Begin brainstorming how to incorporate the theme into the decorations, cake, favors, and other party details. Here are some things to consider while choosing a theme:

Age

Gender

Location

Time of day

Favorite things

Decorations

Budget

Popular Themes

Your Kid's personality

The season

# Popular Themes

## For Girls

1. Unicorns
2. Mermaids
3. Llamas
4. Princesses
5. Favorite movie or TV show

## For Boys

1. Video Games
2. Superheroes
3. Dinosaurs
4. Pirates
5. Favorite movie or TV show

When choosing a theme for children, I often look to Pinterest and Google to help me, as well as my Child's specific interests and hobbies. You could literally go on for hundreds of pages with themes for different ages and genders. This list will give you a general idea of what's popular now.



Consider your theme when looking into your invitations. If you want to go the free route, There are now apps on your phone where you can send invites via Text or Email. You can find Punchbowl in the Apple App Store and they offer a free trial. Using this App, You can text or e-mail a link to an invitation that you create! It's the Cutest thing! Facebook's "events" is also one way to send out invites for free. You can also make posts there, if someone requests gift ideas, or if there is a last minute change of plans. Keep in Mind that there will be some people who don't do social media at all (think of sweet great grandma, and 90 year old auntie Edna) so a call or visit may work best for those. You can also set aside a little of the budget to send an invitation in the mail but don't forget to factor in postage! If going the traditional route is more your speed, consider looking at Etsy.com for custom and themed invitations and thank you cards. You can even find downloads that can be printed at home or sent to your local print shop! We love to use Walgreens and Shutterfly for our Etsy purchases. If you will be ordering custom or using someone to print, make sure you give yourself plenty of time to get your order in so they can be sent out to your guests in plenty of time.

# YOU'RE INVITED

## Some things that should be included in your Invitations:

- Your Name as well as Your child's name and Age
- Time and Location of the Party
- Any RSVP details and deadlines
- Should include the Child's Party theme
- Any gift registry information
- Any specific needs for a child to participate in any and all party activities
- Any and all parking instructions
- Any dress code- if you are doing any arts and crafts such as using Paint/Glue, you will want to include this information
- Any Entertainment or Refreshment details







# Cake/Refreshments

Your budget, and what time of the day you have your party, will determine what you need to do here. There will be Exceptions to my suggestions but If you have a party from 11-2, People usually eat lunch in between those times, so it would be fitting to have a Food option for everyone! You don't have to feed them a 5 course meal, but something to have before the cake, would be appropriate. If you choose a time between 2-5 this is the Cake or Dessert Only appropriate time. Anything after 5 is considered more on the Formal side in my opinion and Most people will expect more than just cake. You can have your party catered or you can have the party at a restaurant and have everyone eat on their own tab if they are hungry and you just provide the dessert. It always nice to include this type of information on the invitation.

As far as the cake goes, If you're going to order your cake, your baker can help you choose what size and type of cake to go with, just make sure you have an estimate of how many people will be there. If you're like me, you will want to DIY everything and this would be an awesome opportunity to showcase some creativity. I LOVE to get ideas from Pinterest! Make sure to consider flavors that the Birthday child would prefer. The cake decoration should also reflect the theme of the party. Need a good strawberry cake recipe? Click [Here](#)

# Entertainment/Activities

There's so many options for entertainment these days. The type of party you are planning will determine what you do here. While planning a party for young kids, Keep in mind that they have very short attention spans. About an hour of the party is typically dedicated to the Entertainment and activities. It's safe to say at some point you will need help directing and keeping their attention. It's a good idea to have some type of hired entertainment or activity to occupy the kids but this isn't a requirement. Usually hired entertainment will charge per hour so make sure you include time in your party agenda and room in your Budget. Party Games are one way to occupy kids but be sure you designate overseeing this to someone you trust, because more than likely you will not have the time to do this. So much goes into a Party and you will need free hands the whole time. On the next page, you will find some of my favorite ideas for Entertainment and activities.



# Entertainment/ Activity Ideas

Here are just a few of my favorites

- A party Dj for Dancing or karaoke
- Bouncy house rental
- Spa Services
- Carnival Games
- Hire a caricature artist
- Hire a pop culture character or cartoon character
- A party magician
- A balloon artist
- Arts and crafts station
- Face Painting
- Scavenger Hunt
- Petting Zoo or Pony rides
- Outdoor slip and slide
- Painting on Canvas



Some of these party activities can include the party favors once the activity is over, such as Painting. Have the child paint something that they can take home with them once its dry or have them decorate a cookie to take.



Let me be the first to say you will want to have someone who is there, just to take pictures! When we are concerned too much with missing pictures, we forget to be in the moment. You miss the connection trying to have your phone or camera out and after all is said and done, it can be frustrating to look back and not remember every little detail. Take it from someone who has been there. You don't have to hire out, if you know someone in your family or circle of friends that will be willing to capture all the moments. Don't forget to get a picture of the cake and decorations before they're destroyed!!! Let me reiterate, If you choose to hire a photographer, it's best if you get everything in writing before you pay deposits. If you are not offered a written contract or receipt then make your own and have them sign it. Another cool thing you can do is hire a videographer. In some cases, Photographers can offer both services. While you are considering photos, you should consider a photo area, or photo booth. This can be rented or you can DIY. Its a newer concept but always goes over really well! Make sure you have a Personal Hashtag, so you can easily find all the Selfies and Pictures from the day on Instagram. Try a cute and creative way to display your Hashtag where it can be seen easily, maybe even close enough to the photo area so it can be captured in the photos! Be Creative Here and have Fun with it!

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# Decorations

Next thing you will need to start on will be Decorations. Consider your Venue, Theme and Budget when deciding on decorations. Balloons are always a good place to start and can always fill in dead spaces. You will need centerpieces for tables that go with your theme. You can find all sorts of examples on pinterest. In some situations, You can incorporate the Party Favors into your decor. For my daughter's First Birthday we made Candy Bouquets as centerpieces. While we didn't have enough to give out to all the guests as party favors, We did have a candy bar to go with their theme. Guests were allowed to take a small bag and fill with candy and take home with them! So the Candy bar served as Decor AND the party Favor. You can visit my Blog for the how to's for making [candy bouquet centerpieces](#).



# Decoration Idea Checklist

## Tables

- Centerpieces
- Confetti/table scatter

## Walls

- Birthday Banner
- Cutouts/Clings
- Fringe Curtain
- Photo Booth Background

## Ceilings

- Garland
- Crepe Streamers
- Paper Fans
- Lanterns
- Tissue Pom Poms
- Hanging Decorations
- String Decorations

## Outdoor

- Lights
- Banners/Streamers
- Yard signs
- Balloons

## Partyware

- Table covers
- Plates
- Napkins
- Cutlery
- Cups/Straws
- Serving Utensils
- Serving Bowls or Platters

## Sweets & Treats

- Candy Containers
- Bulk Candy
- Candy Serving Utensils
- Candy Favor bags/ Boxes
- Bubbles
- Glow Sticks
- Jewelry
- Small toys
- Stickers
- Blowouts/Noisemakers

## Miscellaneous

- Costumes
- Party hats
- Tiaras/Crowns
- Masks



# Party Favors



If you aren't able to incorporate your Party Favors into the decor, You can always incorporate it into the Entertainment or Activities portion of the Party! In some instances, I have combined the entertainment and party favors together, such as painting a small canvas with something from the party theme penciled on it. Guests could take it home as a "Party Favor". Of course you should always include this detail on the party invitation!

It's always a good idea to include activity or entertainment information on the invitation when applicable . Whatever Party Favors you provide, be sure to track the cost for them separately; you'd be amazed at how much these items can cost.



# CHAPTER 4

## PARTY PLANNING TIMELINES

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## 6-8 Weeks until Party



- Set a date
- Choose a Venue
- Choose a party theme. Begin brainstorming how to incorporate the theme into the decorations, cake, favors, and other party details.
- Order invitations or purchase the supplies needed for homemade cards.
- Set a budget.
- Write up a guest list.
- Begin shopping for gifts for the birthday

# 3-6 Weeks until Party

- Buy stock invitations from a retail store for those who didn't pre-order some.
- Put together, write, and send out the invitations. Be sure to include the party's start and end time, your phone number, directions to the party location, and the party's theme.
- Be sure to order Thank you cards as well! Instead of Sending out thank you cards after the fact, you can attach thank you cards to Party Favors
- If the child still naps, set the party time with that in mind. Toddlers, for example, often nap between 1 and 3 p.m., so hold a party for that age group either in the morning or late afternoon.
- Shop for party supplies, such as decorations and items needed to make the favors. Shopping early gives the shopper time to order items online if he or she can't find them locally. Consider Etsy for printables that can be sent to a print shop locally!
- Schedule entertainment for the Party and pay any deposits needed
- Schedule a Photographer and pay deposits needed.
- A videographer is something new and awesome you can look into if the budget allows. Sometimes photographers have a team and can do both!
- Decide what kind of party games or activities you will have and gather supplies.

# 2 Weeks until Party

- Make or buy party favors.
- Settle on Food and/or making a menu
- Order the cake or choose a recipe and design to make! (allow more lead time for this if ordering from a busy bakery).
- For those who have a young child, consider asking a friend/relative to watch the child on the morning of the party to give you time to focus on decorating and preparing the final details of the day.
- Confirm the Venue
- Plan and make a Party Music Playlist.
- Try to designate a friend or family member to help with planned party activities and taking Photos of the party with your camera.





# 1 Week until Party

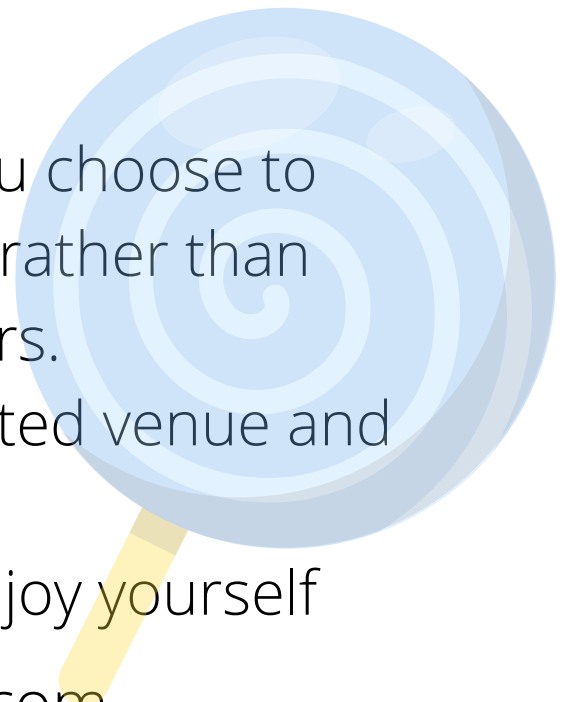
- Call anyone who hasn't rsvp'd
- Write out an agenda for the party! 60-90 minutes approx.
- Confirm the venue
- Go thru old toys and clothes and donate to make room for new stuff that is coming!
- Shop for groceries and do any prep work that can be done ahead of time, like party favors or party games
- Wrap Birthday Gifts
- For those ordering food and beverages ahead of time such as pizza go ahead and place your order!
- Arrange for pets to be taken care of IF you need to get them out of the house.
- Buy any Party essentials such as plates or napkins that you haven't purchased already and DO NOT forget the candles and a lighter or matches.
- If you are going to have balloons, make sure to place an order for those so they can be picked up or delivered.

# Day before the Party

- Charge Camera Batteries
- If you are having the party at home or where you have access, you can go ahead and decorate things that won't be disturbed before party time.
- Make the cake or confirm pick up time or delivery for cake.
- Confirm delivery or pickup for food/ beverages for the party where applicable
- Check with Photographer
- Check with Entertainment
- Finish any food prep or party favors.
- Remember parties are supposed to be memorable and fun!

# Day of the Party

- Set up or decorate for the Party!
- Get out Camera and or any other electronics you plan to use
- Pick up Cake, Balloons, Food or Beverages
- Set out wrapped birthday toys.
- Set up a Gifts Area
- Set up A Photo booth area
- Set up entertainment area
- Set up the Tables and Food
- Arrange for the child to be pick up or dropped off to the party.
- Turn on Party Music
- Set out paper and pen if you choose to send out Thank you's later, rather than print at attach to party favors.
- Take Pictures of the decorated venue and cake!
- Don't forget to relax and enjoy yourself



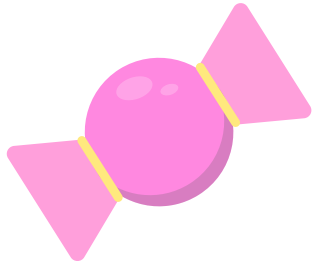


# After the Party

- Clean up the area Party Area.
- Pay any vendors, entertainment, photographer, venue, or anyone that may be waiting for full payment for services.
- Return anything rented
- Write and send thank you cards
- Inform guests of ways they can share Party pictures with you



# Party Agenda- 2 Hour Example



2:00-4:00

2 -2:10

Guests arrive and get settled

2:10- 2:30

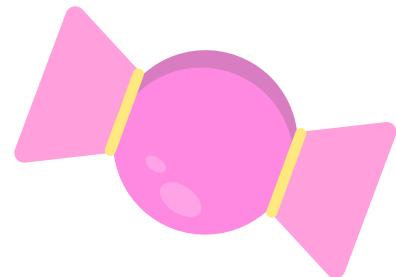
Sing Happy Birthday and have Guests enjoy  
Food, drink and/or cake

2:30-3:30

Entertainment or Party Activities

3:30-3:50

Open Gifts



3:50-4:00

Pass out party Favors and say goodbyes

# Party Checklist

The Date



Budget



Guest List



The Venue



Theme



Invites



Cake



Food



Beverage



Photography



Decorations



Party  
Favors



Photo Area



Clever  
Hashtag



Notes



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## THANK YOU

I hope you feel more Confident in planning your child's next birthday party. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your purchase of this E-book and I wish you all the best in all your Party planning Endeavors! God Bless!

If you would like to be notified of new Books in the future you can click [HERE](#)

V I S I T M E A T  
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