

A month or so before the party

- Pick a date and time for the party. Keep in mind baby's nap schedule.
- Create a guest list, keeping it small if possible.
- Pick a theme.
- Purchase or make invitations to match the theme. Purchase matching party supplies as well.
- If you plan to have live entertainment (e.g., a clown, a balloon artist), book it now. Such entertainment isn't necessary for a one-year-old, but it might be worth it if you are hosting a lot of older kids.
- If you're planning to hire a professional photographer, do that now as well.
- Start thinking about your gift to the birthday boy or girl.
- Purchase a birthday outfit.

Two to three weeks before party

- Write and mail your invitations; include a phone number or e-mail address so guests can RSVP.
- Plan any games or activities. Again, this is primarily for any older kids.
- Order the birthday cake. If you're making your own, decide what kind. (Also consider getting baby a "smash cake.")
- Plan the menu.
- Make a list of all the items you'll need from the store, including foods, drinks, birthday candles and items for goody bags.

The week before the party

- Put together a "schedule" for the party.
- Purchase all the items from your list.
- Put together goody bags.
- Get your present for baby and wrap it. Don't forget a card – and write a special message in it. Baby might not appreciate it now, but when she's older, she'll love reading your birthday message.
- Confirm the entertainer or photographer, if you scheduled one.
- Take baby for professional photos to document the special occasion.

The day before (or day of) the party

- Decorate.
- Pick up (or bake) the birthday cake and "smash cake."
- Prepare any foods you can ahead of time.
- Check that the camera and camcorder are charged and ready to go.
- Make sure you have matches or a lighter for the candle.

The day of the party

- Place balloons outside the home to help guests find the party.
- Prepare any last-minute foods.
- Buy extra ice if you'll need it.
- Ask a friend/family member to record gifts so you can send thank you cards.
- Enjoy the party and take lots of pictures!