

BYE-BYE Buzzkill

*Don't bring stress and anxiety to the party!
If you're unsure about saying yes to your
child's invitation, this one's for you*



For more
on how to
manage the
little ones

**Scan
here!**

Dear parents, we understand... Parties can seem like a scary space for your kids, no matter their age. But it can also be a great form of social development – for both of you. We've consulted parental coach Susan Gregor-Harlen of Purposeful Parenting for some expert insight to put your mind at ease.

For the tots

(AGES 2–5)

Toddlers should not be going to any party or gathering without one of their primary caregivers. They are too young to understand social etiquette and manage themselves. As Susan says, 'Toddler parties are really gatherings to grow the social interactions between parents.' While your toddler is introduced to different environments and children their age, you have the opportunity to build your own mom/dad network.

How to prep for or host a toddler party:

- Get the contact details of all adults involved.
- Parties should be two hours or less, or include a nap time.
- Activities should be sensory – a sandbox, play dough, face painting; no water activities.
- Keep the party small.
- Call ahead to discuss allergies or concerns.

For the kiddies

(AGES 6–9)

This is a 'tricky yet fun' stage for children to engage in social interaction, says Susan. They begin to test boundaries, attempting to find a small semblance of independence as they blossom into little social butterflies (more so now we're in the age of TikTok and feeling left out if you're not at or hosting parties). However, adult supervision and chaperones are still necessary at this stage.

How to prep for or host a kiddies' party:

- Themed parties work well in this age group (and it also helps with the guest list).
- Parties should be a maximum of four hours.
- Activities should be based on the shared interests of the children attending, but age-appropriate.
- Check ahead of time with parents for allergies before ordering catering or arranging anything to do with animals.



For the tweens

(AGES 10–13)

Tweens are at an age where they are starting to create and strengthen their independent connections with others. Their social lives are now no longer fully in your control and this can be difficult for you as a parent. Susan says: 'Open communication with your kids is vital. Never project your own anxieties on your child, and always encourage enjoyment.'

How to prep for a tween party:

- Always know the host of the party.
- Allow daytime or early-evening parties only.
- They should engage in age-appropriate activities with constant adult supervision.
- Know the duration of the party – be the one to drop and fetch your child.
- Encourage your child to text you, if they're feeling okay or not, during the party.

For the teenagers

(AGES 14–18)

'I liken this age group to a butterfly who has just emerged from its cocoon, wanting to spread its wings and see if it sparkles. Teen parties are about testing their social world,' says Susan. Communication is key to how your relationship with your teen pans out – especially as they reach adulthood.

Be real and honest and allow them to openly speak about themselves and their concerns. No topic should be barred.

'When we appeal to the adult brain that our teenagers are developing, that's what they want to live up to. When we try to control this side of them is when they revert to the child brain and rebel,' Susan explains.

Don't shy away from stepping in to ensure your child's safety, if there is something that concerns you about their party plans. They will appreciate a caring parent looking out for them more than a 'cool' parent.

How to prep your teen for a party:

- Appeal to their maturity and prove that you trust their ability to handle themselves.
- Set a mindful curfew.
- Ask permission to know who the host is.
- Encourage them to go with a friend, preferably one that you know and trust.
- Ensure that your teen knows you have their back whatever happens.
- Create a safe space for them to share their experiences or curiosities with you so that you can guide them.

Kids don't stay kids forever, but you also want to be the best parent you can. Be mindful of your relationship while also having fun. It's hard work – and we salute you! ■