

Guide to party menu planning



Children's parties are lot's of fun! Community venues provide a fantastic environment for kids to celebrate special occasions.

Parents often choose recreation centres, entertainment venues and play centres to host parties as there is usually lots of space to run around and best of all - no mess to clean up at home.

Community venues also provide an opportunity for children to:

- Play and interact with other kids in a safe environment
- Try new and exciting foods; they will often try new foods that they see their friends eating.



Children are influenced by the environment around them.

For example, the food and drinks that are offered at a party can become associated with fun.

For these reasons, the party menu offered by community venues can have a huge impact on the food preferences (and the health) of party goers. This fact sheet provides some tips on how make some classic party favourites both tasty and healthy.

Party drinks

Water is the best choice. It contributes no excess energy or sugar, won't damage teeth and keeps kids hydrated, when running around playing. Other drink options include:

- Sparkling water
- Reduced fat flavoured milk
- Punch made with sparkling water, fresh fruit such as berries, watermelon or pineapple, and ice. Serve in large jugs, a water dispenser or small individual cups
- Smoothies made with reduced fat milk, yoghurt, seasonal fruit and ice. Serve in small cups with paper straws
- Juice
 - 99% fruit juice
 - fruit juice based slushies (there are a range of varieties in the Star Choice™ Buyer's Guide*)



* For more information about the Star Choice™ Buyer's Guide, please visit: www.waschoolcanteens.org.au/star-choice-program/registered-products/

Party food

Savoury platters

There are lots of healthier savoury products on the market and cooking methods that lead to the same great taste, but a lot less fat and salt.

Tips:

- Use oven-baked products (avoid deep frying)
- Use products listed in the Star Choice™ Buyer's Guide*:
 - party pies and sausage rolls
 - pizzas and spring rolls
 - chicken nuggets, strips, tenders, goujons
 - burger patties - make sliders using small dinner rolls and salad
- Add colour and variety:
 - wraps or mini sub rolls filled with ham, cheese and tomato
 - sandwiches (e.g. egg, cheese, Vegemite) cut into triangles or fingers; time permitting, use fun cookie cutters (e.g. star shape)
 - sushi and rice paper rolls
 - crackers, cubes of cheese and chopped veggies with dip.



Sweet eats

It's part and parcel for children to have a slice of birthday cake. To add some balance to their day, consider offering the following sweet options:

- Fruit 'rockets' (kebabs) with yoghurt dip
- Fruit platter, fruit salad or watermelon pizza
- Muffins or brownies (see WA School Canteen Association website for recipes)
- Plain air popped popcorn tossed with dried fruit and cereal
- Mini ice cream cones with plain reduced fat ice cream or Paddlepops*
- Icy poles (99% fruit juice).



Top tip - don't forget parents

Keep parents happy and offer a couple of 'specials'. Tea or coffee plus a fruit muffin is a great combo all year round. In the chilly winter months, a cup of soup may hit the spot. Don't forget to promote 'specials' when taking party bookings.

Party favours

At the end of the party give each child a bubble wand or yoyo. If you want to maintain the food theme try small packets of popcorn (e.g. Koala popcorn*) or save icy poles for kids to take as they leave. Parents will thank you for avoiding a post-party sugar hit from lolly bags.

Consider offering a comprehensive 'party package' to include party favours, decorations, food and drinks, and coffee combo for the hosting parent as part of the package price.



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Do you have questions?

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