25 Best Party Games for Kids

These are great games for a birthday party at home but work just as well in a park or hired party space.

Musical Chairs

Prepare the space by setting out one less chair than the number of children playing. The chairs should be arranged in a circle facing outwards.

To play, arrange the children in a circle standing outside the circle of chairs, facing the chairs. When the music starts everyone walks (or dances) around the chairs until they hear the music stop. As soon as the music stops, everyone rushes to grab a chair as quickly as possible. The person left standing is out, and another chair is removed before the next round. Then the music starts again for the next round, repeating until there is one final person – the winner – standing.

If you don't have enough chairs for your party guests, you can modify the game by;

Playing outside and marking circles on the pavement to act as chairs. Cross each 'chair' out as it is removed from the game.

Tape circles of paper to the floor for players to stand on. Remove one paper circle each round.

Play without chairs – players bob down when the music stops and the slowest person to hit the ground is out.

Pin the Tail on the Donkey

To play, pop a donkey poster up on the wall, blindfold players one at a time and spin each one in a circle a few times before letting them try to stick a paper donkey tail as close as possible to its rump!

Of course, it doesn't have to be a tail or a donkey! We've improvised to suit the themes of our birthday parties with pin the wand to the fairy, pin the beard on the dwarf and pin the tail on the mermaid. Feel free to get creative to suit your birthday party theme.

Pass the Parcel

This is one kid's party game that takes a little preparation but it's such a huge hit with younger children that I had to include it on our list. Before the party, purchase a small, inexpensive prize related to the party theme, or just something that you know your child and her friends will love, and then wrap it in lots of layers of paper – recycled wrapping paper or newspaper are great. You'll want at least one layer per child.

To play, have the children sit in a circle, passing the wrapped parcel around the circle while you play some fun music. When the music stops, the child holding the parcel removes the outer layer of paper. Start the music again and continue until one child unwraps the final layer of paper to reveal their prize.

Optional: *You might like to put a small lolly/sweet or balloon in each layer of wrap so that each of the children playing receives a prize.*

Egg Toss

Unless you are very brave, hard boil the eggs for this kids party game before the party (though I must admit, it's much funnier if your eggs aren't boiled – especially when playing with tweens and teens). You'll need one egg per pair of children and this game is best played outdoors.

To play, pair players together and have them stand facing each other a few feet apart. Then each pair of players toss their egg back and forth to each other. Each time a child catches the egg they must take a step backward and continue. Drop your egg and you're out.

The team that can catch their egg with the furthest distance between them, wins!

Egg and Spoon Race

This is another traditional party game that is best played outdoors.

To play, line players up, each with an egg balanced on a tablespoon or plastic cooking spoon. On "go," players race to a predetermined finish line. If their egg drops, they must stop and put it back on their spoon before proceeding further (or, if you're really tough, send them back to the starting point each time it drops!)

Again, hard boil the eggs before hand for a cleaner finish!

Sack Race

For a sack race you will need a hessian/burlap sack or large pillowcase for each player (you can also play in relay teams to minimize the number of sacks you need).

To race, guests must stand with their feet inside the sack and on 'go' race to the finish line (or to their teammate if you're playing relay style) by jumping or taking restricted steps.

The first player (or team) to cross the finish line is the winner.

Treasure Hunt

Treasure hunts can be super simple to set up, or as involved and detailed as you wish.

To keep things simple, hide wrapped sweets or lollies around the play space for guests to hunt for. In this version, each guest keeps what they find.

For a treasure hunt that's a little more involved, hide a series of tokens around the play space for guests to find – the child who finds the most wins a prize. The tokens can be anything – small colored gemstones, painted rocks, plastic gold coins, even picture tokens printed onto cardboard, like the ones we used for a goblin hunt at our daughter's fairy party.

For those with more time to prepare, plan a treasure hunt with a series of pre-prepared, written clues that guests must find, read and solve (as a group) in a trail around the party space to find a hidden treasure.

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Wheelbarrow Races

Played in pairs, wheelbarrow races are tons of fun.

The first person is the wheelbarrow – they start with their hands on the ground and their legs stretched out behind (tummy down) The second person is the driver, they lift and hold the legs of the wheelbarrow.

To move, the wheelbarrow 'walks' their hands across the ground while the driver follows behind, holding their legs and steering the wheelbarrow. First team across the finish line are the winners.

Duck, Duck, Goose

Duck Duck Goose is a popular classic game with preschooler and kindergarten age children. It's simple to play, too.

To play, have your partygoers sit in a circle cross-legged then select one child be the "goose." The goose stands up and walks around the circle of children, gently tapping each of the other players on the head or shoulder. Each time the "goose" taps a head, they say "duck." When they decide on the person they want to chase them, they tap that person's head, saying "goose" and then start running around the circle.

This potential new goose stands and chases their tagger around the circle. If the original goose can make it all the way around the circle, back to the seat of the person that just hopped up, and sit down in the space then they are no longer the "goose". The person who failed to catch them becomes the new goose.

However, if the original goose is caught by their pursuer, they sit in the middle of the circle until the next goose is caught, taking his or her place in the game when released from the middle of the circle.

Balloon Relay Race

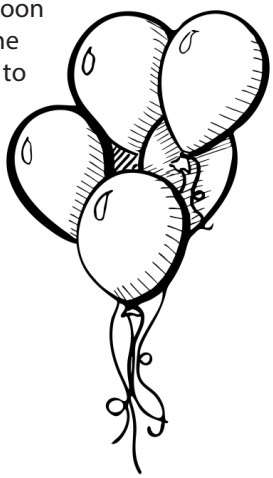
Running and balloons is always a good idea when it comes to party games for kids.

To play, divide your guests into relay teams of four to six players, with two to three on each side of the play space.

You can play a balloon relay in a number of different ways – our favorite party game version requires players to place an inflated balloon between their knees and then jump across the relay race space.

Another version of the balloon relay race requires each player to race to the other side of the yard with an inflated balloon and sit on a chair to pop their balloon before racing back and tagging the next person in line. The first team to get this completed from start to finish wins!

For more fun balloon games for your next party, check out our list of 15 Balloon Games.



Pinata

Before party day you'll need to purchase or make a piñata to match your party theme and fill it with sweet and other mini treats.

To play, hang the piñata so that it is hanging just above head height of your party guests. Invite the party guests to stand in a line a few paces away.

Traditionally, players take turns to be blindfolded and gently spun around three times before trying to hit the piñata with a wooden stick. Nowadays, players simply take turns hitting the piñata (without a blindfold) until it breaks open.

Limbo

To play this easy kids party game, two adults hold either end of a broomstick (or similar) loosely, at stomach height.

Turn on some music as the children take turns dancing under the stick, legs and tummy first without touching it, bending their knees and leaning back as necessary.

Once all of the children have filed under it for the first time the stick is lowered a little. Anyone who falls, touches the ground with their hands or touches the stick is out.

After each round the stick is lowered again and the last party guest who successfully moves under the stick without falling is the winner.

For a fun twist, Limbo is especially awesome on roller skates. A great party game for kids at a roller disco!

For more like this, check out our list of Music Party Games for Kids.

Simon Says

This easy kids party game game is perfect for parties with children aged 5+ years.

To play, with an adult giving verbal commands, players must follow all of the commands that begin with the words "Simon says". If Simon says, "Simon says touch your nose" then all players must touch their nose. However if the adult says, "jump" without starting with "Simon says" the players must not jump. Any that do jump are out until the next round. The last player in is the winner.

You can also swap out 'Simon says' for the name for birthday party child or switch it out for a character related to your party theme.

Action ideas;

Pat your head, rub your tummy, blow a kiss, stick out your tongue, touch your knees, sit down, jump up and down, touch your toes, pretend to play guitar, give a thumbs up/down, stick out your tongue, stand on one foot, hop up and down, spin around, face right/left, bob/crouch down, stand on tip toes.

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Hide and Seek

A classic game of hide and seek is sure to be a hit with preschool or kindergarten age children, and although it is not a game with one clear winner, kids love spending time playing it with their friends.

To play, one person is chosen as the seeker. He must cover his eyes and count to 20.

As the seeker counts, the other players run away to hide within an agreed playing area. Once he is done counting, the seeker opens his eyes and searches for the hidden players.

The last person found is the winner of the round and becomes the next seeker.

What's the Time, Mr Wolf?

To play, one child is chosen to be the Wolf. They stand a good distance (3+ metres) away from the other players with their back to them.

The other players stand side by side in a line, facing Mr Wolf's back. All together they call, "What's the time, Mr Wolf?" Mr Wolf responds by selecting and calling out an o'clock time (between 1 and 12). The other players take the required number of steps towards Mr Wolf. For example, "3 o'clock," would mean the players take three steps towards Mr Wolf.

These two steps are repeated, resulting in the other players moving closer and closer to Mr Wolf.

When Mr Wolf is ready (usually when the other players have moved to be quite close), he changes his response to the question, "What's the time, Mr Wolf?" to "Dinnertime!"

At this cue, all of the players turn around and race back to the starting position with Mr Wolf chasing after them as he tries and catch his dinner.

The player who is caught becomes the next Mr Wolf and the game continues.

Leapfrog Race

Divide students into pairs. Members of each pair should be similar heights/ages for this game to be fair.

To play, pairs line up behind a starting line, one team member standing in front of the other. On 'Go,' the first team member squats down or bends forward (bracing themselves with their hands on their knees), tucking their chin in to their chest so their back forms a flat base. The second player leaps over the person by placing their hands on their partner's back and spreading their legs wide as the jump forward. Once they've landed, the second player assumes the squatting position and the first player leaps over their back.

Teams continue to move forward by taking turns to leap over each other's back. First team across the finish line wins.

Penguin Race

This Penguin Race is a super simple birthday party outdoor game. Before you begin, place two markers on either side of the outdoor space.

To play, each guest places a tennis ball between their legs. On go, guests race to see how many laps they can complete in one minute.

Variation: Play with water balloons instead of balls for a Summer or pool party.

Newspaper Race

This is such a fun birthday party outdoor game! Line party guests up side by side, facing a pre-determined finish line. Each guest will need two sheets of newspaper.

On 'Go,' each guest places one sheet of newspaper onto the ground and steps onto it, they then place the second sheet of newspaper in front of the first and then step onto this second sheet before turning around and picking up the first piece and then turning again and placing this second sheet in front before stepping onto it. The guest continues stepping on the alternating sheets of newspaper all of the way to the finish line. First one over the line is the winner.

Over and Under Race

Divide party guests into even teams of 6+ members. Teams stand in a line. Each team will require a small ball.

To play, the person standing at the front of the line starts with the ball and on 'Go,' that person passes the ball over their head to the person behind, who passes it between their legs to the next person in line, who passes it over their head, and so on.

Once the team has moved the ball all the way to the person at the end of the line, then that person carries the ball as they run to the front of the line. They become the new line leader and begin the under and over passing process down the line of team members again. This is repeated until the entire team have had a turn at being the line leader and the initial leader is back in the front position. The first team to achieve this is the winning team in this variation.

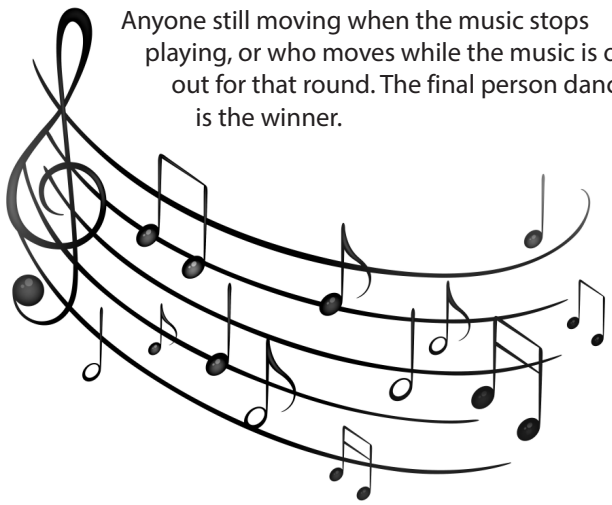
Variation: Make this a super fun a pool party game or Summer backyard party game by replacing the ball with a small toy, plastic bucket of water. Teams have to keep a minimum amount of water in their bucket or else pause their race to go and refill their bucket from a large tub of water.

Musical Statues

One of our favorite classic, children's indoor party games, you will need a phone and speaker (or some other music playing device).

To play, start playing some music, inviting party guests to dance until the music stops playing (out of view of guests, hit the pause button) – at that time they must quickly freeze on the spot.

Anyone still moving when the music stops playing, or who moves while the music is off, is out for that round. The final person dancing is the winner.



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Captain's Orders

Line players up in single file, facing an adult who acts as the Captain. Introduce each of the various commands and actions to be used in the game with a demonstration (see the list below).

When ready for play to commence, the captain calls out a command. The players do the action associated with the command. Play continues with the captain calling and the 'crew' responding. The faster the actions are called and performed, the trickier (and funnier) the game becomes.

Players who perform the wrong action are either out and the last player standing is the winner, or, step out of the game for a count of ten star jumps before re-joining the game.

Captain's Commands:

- Scrub the deck: players crouch down and make a scrubbing motion with one hand
- Hit the deck: lay on their stomach
- Clear the deck: everyone must sit with their feet off the floor
- Up periscope!: Player lie on their backs with one leg raised straight in the air. Twist the raised foot as if a scanning periscope
- Captain's coming: stand to attention and salute
- Climb the rigging: pretend to climb a rope
- To the island: run to the left boundary of the game space

Pass the Poison Apple

This is the perfect party game for kids who are ages 9+ years old and love drama or acting.

To play, have guests stand in a circle. One person holds an apple.

Start playing some music and have the guests pass the apple from person to person around the circle. When the music stops the guest holding the apple pretends to take a bite and then performs their best impression of someone being poisoned and falling to the ground, dead.

The guest who performs the best death scene is the winner.

Stack It Up!

This fun combination of balloon keepy up and cup stacking is the ultimate kids party game! You will need a set of 16 disposable cups and an inflated balloon for each group of party guests.

To play, divide party guests into small, even groups. On 'Go,' the first member of each team races forward to where the cups are stacked a few feet in front of the group, as they race forward and stack the cups into a pyramid (5, 4, 3, 2, 1 cups on each level) and then back into a single stack, they must also keep a balloon floating up in the air. If the balloon touches the floor, the team member must start again. Once that person has stacked and unstacked the cups they race back to the group (still keeping the balloon up in the air) and tag the next person to repeat the actions.

The first team to have each member of the team successfully stack and unstack the cups whilst keeping the balloon afloat is the winner.

Cupcake Wars

To conduct a cupcake war at your next kids birthday party you will need a plain, undecorated cupcake for each child plus a range of colored icing options (in piping bags or to be spread with a knife) and other cupcake decorations, such as colored sprinkles, colored sugar, crushed or mini cookies, mini candy pieces such as mini M&Ms, and tubes of food coloring gel.

To play, give each party guest a cupcake to decorate with the assorted decorating supplies and then judge the results, awarding a range of fun awards such as;

- Most colorful cupcake decoration
- Best piping skills
- Most creative candy topping
- Most creative cookie topping
- Best themed cupcake

Party guests can then eat their cupcakes, or take them home as a party favor.

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