Birthday Party Checklist for a 3-Year-Old Boy

Three is the age of big imagination and very little patience. He can join in a song, love a theme and still need a cuddle halfway through. This guide is for the parent planning a short, happy party that fits a three-year-old's day.

👦 Age 3 | 📍 Woking | ⏱️ 90 minutes | ✅ Tick-off checklist

Updated October 2026. Prices and details were read from each business's own website on 24 October 2026. Always confirm before you book.

PICTURE THIS

A Saturday afternoon at a farm near Woking. Four little boys in party hats, one goat that won't stop staring, and a birthday boy who has said “tractor” forty times since lunch. In the party room, a parent is cutting grapes into quarters. Somebody needs the toilet urgently. Somebody else is crying because his balloon floated away. None of it matters. At three, the best bit of the party is being the one everyone sings to.

START HERE

What's different about a 3-year-old's party

A three-year-old is a small person with big feelings and a short supply of patience. Build the party to his size.

Three is a great age for a first party with friends. Three-year-olds love a theme and a song, can join in simple games, and still need a grown-up close by. Here's what we'd want another parent to tell us.

- **Keep it short.** HealthyChildren.org, from the American Academy of Pediatrics, suggests keeping parties for toddlers under 90 minutes, with about 10 to 15 minutes per game or activity.
- **Keep it small.** Its rule of thumb is the child's age plus one, so about four guests for a three-year-old. It's fine to invite fewer than you think you “should”. Some venues set higher minimums (Chobham Adventure Farm's packages start at 10 children), so choose the venue first.

- **Parents stay.** Most three-year-olds want a familiar grown-up nearby, so you'll be hosting the adults too.
- **Choose games without winners.** At three, losing a game can feel like the end of the world. Pick games where everyone gets something.
- **Toilet trips are frequent.** Some guests may still be toilet training, so know where the toilets are and pack spare clothes.
- **Plan around nap and meal times.** A tired or hungry three-year-old is the biggest risk to any party. Late morning or early afternoon usually works best.

THE PLAN

Countdown checklist

Good parties are made quietly, weeks before, by people who write things down.

Start about eight weeks before the party. Weekend slots and popular entertainers go first, and booking calmly beats scrambling. Work through these in order and tick them off as you go. Your ticks are saved on this device.

8 weeks before

- [ ] Set a budget covering the venue or entertainer, food, cake, party bags and decorations. Write the total down before you start looking.
- [ ] Ask him to choose a theme, offering two options (ideas below).
- [ ] Draft the guest list, then check it against venue minimums and maximums.
- [ ] Choose the type: a venue, an entertainer at home or in a hall, or a party at home.
- [ ] Pick two or three possible dates. Weekends book up first.

6-8 weeks before

- [ ] Shortlist 2-3 options and ask each the questions below.
- [ ] Book any entertainer early. My Little Princess Parties, for example, advises booking at least two months ahead.
- [ ] Pay any deposit and save the confirmation email.
- [ ] Send the **Save the Date** (text in the invitation section below).
- [ ] Check the age limit on every activity.

4-6 weeks before

- [ ] Send the invitations, including the **dietary question**.
- [ ] Set an RSVP date about two weeks before the party.
- [ ] Order or plan the cake. Our directory lists local cake makers under Cakes & bakers.
- [ ] Book any extras: a face painter, balloon artist or bouncy castle.

- [ ] Plan the schedule (samples below).

2-3 weeks before

- [ ] Chase RSVPs with a friendly text. Most parents are relieved to be asked.
- [ ] Collect allergies and dietary needs, and pass them on to the venue, caterer or entertainer.
- [ ] Confirm numbers and the food order.
- [ ] Plan party bags, or skip them if the venue includes them.
- [ ] Buy decorations, candles and a lighter.
- [ ] Line up helpers: one for food, one for photos and one for toilet trips. You can't do all three yourself.

Party week

- [ ] Confirm the time, address and arrival time with the venue or entertainer.
- [ ] Check the weather and have a wet-weather plan.
- [ ] Pack the party kit.
- [ ] Tell him what to expect and who is coming, so he feels excited rather than overwhelmed.
- [ ] Print the guest list with parent phone numbers and allergies.
- [ ] Charge your phone and power bank.

Questions to ask every venue or entertainer

These are the questions that tend to matter once you're in the room with a group of excited children.

- [ ] Is it suitable for 3-year-olds? Are there age limits on any activity?
- [ ] What are the minimum and maximum numbers of children?
- [ ] Is the space exclusive to you, or shared with other parties or the public?
- [ ] How long are the play time and the food time?
- [ ] What's included: food, drinks, party bags, a host, invitations?
- [ ] Do adults pay, and how many can stay?
- [ ] Can you bring your own cake or food, and where can you light the candles?
- [ ] How do they handle allergies and dietary needs?
- [ ] What are the deposit and cancellation terms?
- [ ] Is there parking, and is it free?

IDEAS

Themes and party ideas he might love

The best theme is the one he's still talking about at bedtime.

Popular choices at three include dinosaurs, diggers, superheroes, farm animals, space and trains. Offer two options ("dinosaurs or diggers?") and be ready for a change of mind. A simple theme (a colour scheme, one activity and a matching cake) costs less than theming everything.

Shop by theme: Dinosaur · Diggers · Superhero · Farm · Space · Trains. Our shop pages link to Amazon UK, and we may earn a small commission if you buy.

Party ideas near Woking

Each name links to its Playtrail listing, with contact details and a map.

- **Soft play and farms.** Munchkins Play Cafe's soft play parties are for under-5s, Mazzy Bees has a Party Corner, and Chobham Adventure Farm's weekday package is for ages 1+ (all prices below). Oasis Play Woking is another local soft play.
- **Coach-led games.** Sporty Kidz runs an Animal Adventure party for 3-4 year olds, with running and parachute games, at your venue (prices below).
- **Role play.** Little Street in West Byfleet and Little Street Frimley are miniature role-play towns, and Imagination Children's Role Play is in Camberley.
- **Ponies.** My Little Unicorn at Ash Green runs rescue-pony meet and greets, popular with under-5s, and says it can bring a "real life unicorn" to your party. Call for a quote.
- **Dance.** Boogie Pumps Woking runs pre-school dance classes and dance parties.
- **Cake.** Our directory lists local cake makers under Cakes & bakers.

THEME PLAYBOOK

4 themes with games, food and a cake for a three-year-old boy

Pick one and you have the games, the menu and the cake sorted. Each idea has three games you can run without a host, plus local people who can run it for you where we have found them.

Superhero Training Academy

Three is the age of capes. Hand each guest a cape and a mask at the door and the party half-runs itself: a training course, a rescue mission and a certificate to finish.

- Training course: lay out cushion stepping stones, a play tunnel and a line of cones to weave round. Nobody is timed, because every hero passes.
- Freeze, villain! Play music while the heroes run on the spot, then call 'villain!' and everyone freezes. An adult 'villain' tiptoes past, and the heroes catch them on the next round.

- Rescue the toys: hide soft toys round the room and let the heroes carry them back to a 'safe zone' (a blanket on the floor).

Food and cake: Hero fuel: cheese sandwiches cut into stars, banana slices and mini muffins. For cake, a plain sponge with the birthday hero's initial piped on in bold icing, like a badge.

Party bag: A felt mask and a 'hero certificate' with each child's name on it.

Tip: Make capes with Velcro or a loose ribbon at the neck, not a tight tie, so they pop open if someone tugs.

Local help: Magic Star Parties.

Browse superhero training academy supplies in the shop

Rocket Mission

A cardboard-box rocket, silver foil and a countdown are all a three-year-old needs. The whole room becomes the spaceship, and most of the props come from the recycling bin.

- Blast off: everyone crouches for a countdown from ten and leaps up on 'blast off'. You'll be doing this one for a while.
- Moon rocks: scrunch foil into balls bigger than a golf ball, scatter them across the floor and let the astronauts collect them with a spoon and a bucket.
- Planet hop: put paper plates on the floor as planets and hop between them while the music plays. The planet you stand on when it stops gets a sticker.

Food and cake: Astronaut snacks: cheese cubes, cucumber stars cut with a cutter and breadstick 'rockets'. For cake, a round chocolate 'planet' with a ring of icing for Saturn.

Party bag: A star sticker sheet, or a glow-in-the-dark star for the bedroom ceiling.

Tip: Hang a few paper stars on string and dim one corner with a string of fairy lights: a 'night sky' corner makes a good quiet space.

Browse rocket mission supplies in the shop

Little Football Stars

A football party at three is about kicking, chasing and cheering, not matches. A mini goal, a few soft balls and a bib for the birthday boy are enough.

- Penalty shoot-out: line up and take turns kicking a soft ball at a small goal. Everyone gets a cheer, goal or not.
- Coach says: Simon Says with football moves, such as 'dribble', 'stop the ball' and 'celebrate'.
- Cone dribble: weave a soft ball through a line of cones and run back to tag the next player.

Food and cake: Orange segments at half-time, sandwiches and a pitch of fruit. For cake, a green-iced sponge with a toy goal.

Party bag: A sticker medal for everyone.

Tip: Use soft or foam balls and check the hall's rules. Some venues ban hard footballs.

Local help: Little Footy Stars, Sporty Kidz.

Browse little football stars supplies in the shop

Dino Dig

Dinosaurs are loud, a bit scary and endlessly interesting at three. A green and brown colour scheme and a few toy dinosaurs make a good start.

- Dig for bones: bury large plastic bones or toy dinosaurs in a tray of shredded paper, or a washing-up bowl of dry oats, and give each child a big spoon.
- Stomp and freeze: stomp to dinosaur music and freeze when it stops. Anyone who wobbles becomes a 'baby dino' and joins the next round.
- Egg hunt: hide large plastic eggs round the room, big enough that they can't be swallowed, for the hatchlings to find.

Food and cake: Dino nuggets, potato wedges and fruit. For cake, a green sponge with a toy dinosaur and a few crushed biscuit 'rocks'.

Party bag: A small dinosaur toy. Check the age label on any multipack, because some contain small parts.

Tip: Cut footprints from paper and tape them from the door to the party table, so arrivals follow the trail.

Browse dino dig supplies in the shop

> Planning for a girl instead? See the 3-year-old girls' party checklist, which has different themes.

THE AFTERNOON

Schedules, games and party bags

Short games, clear rules and a prize for everyone.

The best way to calm party nerves is to have a plan for the time. Venues and entertainers will set their own timings, so fit the rest around them.

A 90-minute party

Two or three short activities and a sit-down tea fill 90 minutes nicely. Venue parties set their own timings: Chobham Adventure Farm's is 1 hour 15 minutes of play, then 45 minutes in the party room.

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00	Guests arrive: free play or a sticker and colouring table
0:10	Welcome and an action song or musical statues
0:25	Main activity: entertainer, soft play or a treasure hunt for toy animals (10-15 minutes each)
0:55	Wash hands and sit down for food

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
1:15	Cake and singing
1:25	Party bags, goodbyes and hand-over to parents

- [ ] Have at least two helpers, so one adult can take a child to the toilet without stopping the party.
- [ ] Keep a spare activity (bubbles, colouring sheets) in case a game flops.
- [ ] Set up a quiet corner before the party starts.
- [ ] Check how long your venue slot is before you plan the rest.

Easy games for 3-year-olds

You don't need clever games. Simple and silly works best, and nobody should be “out”.

- [ ] Musical statues or musical bumps, where nobody is out.
- [ ] Pass the parcel with a small gift in every layer, so everyone wins.
- [ ] Bubbles or a bubble machine.
- [ ] Follow the leader or a cushion obstacle course.
- [ ] A treasure hunt for toy animals.
- [ ] Parachute games.
- [ ] Stickers and colouring as a calm break.

Party bags

Keep them small: bubbles, stickers, crayons, a mini animal figure or a slice of cake in a napkin. Check the age labels on toys, because small parts aren't suitable for under-3s, and younger siblings may be there. There are more ideas in the party shop.

LOOK AFTER THEM

Food, drink and safety

At a party, love mostly looks like paying attention.

Food and drink

- [ ] Keep it simple: sandwiches, mini pizzas, wraps, fruit, vegetable sticks, crisps or breadsticks.
- [ ] Label food clearly and plan for the allergies and dietary needs on your RSVPs.
- [ ] Cut grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes into quarters (NHS).
- [ ] Don't give whole nuts or popcorn to children under 5 (NHS), and keep raw jelly cubes away from little ones (NHS).

- [ ] Seat children to eat and keep an eye on them while they do. The NHS advises always supervising young children while they eat.
- [ ] Offer water or diluted squash, in cups with lids if you can.
- [ ] The NHS advises avoiding food and drink with added sugar or sweeteners for children aged 4 and under (NHS), so keep sweets small and let the cake be the treat.
- [ ] Have food and drink for the adults too. You'll be glad of a cup of tea.

Safety

- [ ] Be careful with balloons. St. Louis Children's Hospital advises that latex balloons aren't recommended for children under 8, and that broken pieces should be collected immediately and kept out of reach.
- [ ] Face paint and glitter: ask on the RSVP about eczema or sensitive skin, book a face painter who uses paints made for skin, and use cosmetic glitter, not craft glitter.
- [ ] Never leave children unsupervised around inflatables, water, animals or outdoor areas.
- [ ] Ask parents before you share photos of their children, and say on the invitation that you'll be taking some.
- [ ] Keep a list of parents' phone numbers, allergies and medications.
- [ ] Note where the first-aid kit and emergency exits are.

THE DAY ITSELF

Party kit, the day itself and afterwards

Pack the night before. The morning belongs to the birthday boy.

The day goes better when the bag is already by the door. Here's what's worth having with you.

Party kit to pack

- [ ] Cake, candles, lighter, knife, plates and napkins (if you're bringing your own).
- [ ] Decorations and tape.
- [ ] Party bags.
- [ ] Craft table supplies: masks or medals to decorate, stickers and crayons.
- [ ] Spare clothes for the birthday boy (cake happens), plus a few spares for accidents.
- [ ] Grip socks if you're at a soft play venue.
- [ ] Wet wipes, tissues and a small first-aid kit.
- [ ] Printed guest list with parent phone numbers and allergies.
- [ ] Camera or phone, and a power bank.
- [ ] Bin bags for the tidy-up.
- [ ] Small prizes for pass the parcel.

On the day

Try to enjoy it. The children won't remember whether the napkins matched.

- [ ] Arrive 15-30 minutes early to set up, and ask what the venue allows.
- [ ] Meet the party host and confirm the timings.
- [ ] Tick every child off the guest list as they arrive.
- [ ] Keep a calm corner for any child who needs a break.
- [ ] Put one adult on photos, so you're in some of them too.
- [ ] Check food against allergies before serving.
- [ ] Hand each child to a parent with their party bag.

After the party

When the last guest has gone, the room will look as if a small storm passed through. That's how you'll know it went well.

- [ ] Pay any balance and check for unexpected charges.
- [ ] Open presents calmly at home, and keep a note of who gave what.
- [ ] Send a quick thank-you to parents and guests.
- [ ] Back up the photos.
- [ ] Write down what worked for next year.

📍 NEAR YOU

Four Woking-area options compared

A price is only the beginning of the sentence.

The headline price is only part of the story. What matters is what's included and what you'll still have to organise. As a rough guide for about 10 children: a 2-hour party room at Munchkins is £200 at a weekend, plus food from £5 a head; Chobham Adventure Farm's weekday package is £290; and Mazzy Bees' Party Corner is £195-£225. Details below were read on the dates at the top of this page. They change, so confirm before you book.

OPTION	AGE FIT	PRICE AND WHAT'S INCLUDED
Munchkins Play Cafe, Byfleet	Soft play parties for under-5s. Party rooms for ages 1-8	**Party room:** 2 hours' private hire for up to 15 children, £100 midweek or £200 at weekends (£90 or £160 with an entertainer, whose fee is extra). Food from £5 per head. **Soft play (under-5s):** £295 for 2 hours' exclusive use for up to 25 children at weekends, with a £100 deposit, or £18 per child on weekdays for 5-10 children during a normal session, including a lunchbox and drink each and one free adult per child. No outside food except the birthday cake.
Chobham Adventure Farm, Chobham	Bronze package from age 1 (term-time weekdays only). Weekend packages are for ages 4+	Minimum 10 children. **£29 per child** (Bronze, term-time weekdays 3pm-5.30pm), £35 (Silver, weekends) or £39 (Gold, weekends, with a 30-minute Animal Barn meet and greet). Includes 1 hour 15 minutes of indoor and outdoor play, 45 minutes in a private party room, homemade pizza, carrot and cucumber sticks, an ice cream pot, squash, a party host, a party bag for each guest and one free adult per child invited. Bring your own cake and candles (sparklers aren't allowed).
Mazzy Bees Soft Play, Sheerwater	Soft play designed for ages 0-8	**Party Corner:** up to 10 children, £225 peak (weekends and half term) or £195 off-peak. A 90-minute slot during public play: 45 minutes play, 15 minutes food, 30 minutes disco and karaoke or play. Includes sandwiches, unlimited squash and crisps. **Exclusive hire:** £490 for up to 15 children, then £12.99 per extra child, up to 40. Party bags £3 per child; pizza and chips £4.50 per child.

OPTION	AGE FIT	PRICE AND WHAT'S INCLUDED
Sporty Kidz (coaches come to your venue)	Animal Adventure party for ages 3-4	**£200** for up to 12 children with one coach, £225 for up to 20, £250 for up to 30 or £300 for up to 40. Parties run 2 hours, with coaches leading the first 90 minutes. Includes a Sporty Kidz T-shirt and a trophy for the birthday child. Medals £1 each. You provide the venue and food. Travel is £20 if you're more than 15 miles from Chobham, or £30 over 25 miles.

What stands out from a parent's seat

- **Munchkins Play Cafe:** Two very different parties under one roof: a private room you fill with your own entertainer, or soft play for the under-5s. No outside food apart from the cake, so budget for their menu.
- **Chobham Adventure Farm:** The most complete package: food, party bags and a host are included. For under-4s it's the weekday package only, the minimum is 10 children, and two parties can run at once on the party floor.
- **Mazzy Bees:** The Party Corner runs during public play, so other families will be around. Food and squash are included. The page doesn't list deposit or cancellation terms, so ask.
- **Sporty Kidz:** Coaches run the games, so you can focus on food and guests. You'll need a hall or garden big enough to run around in.

Browse all Woking party venues

ASKED AT TEN AT NIGHT

Questions parents ask

How many children should I invite to a 3-year-old's party?

About four is the rule of thumb (age plus one), from HealthyChildren.org, which uses exactly that example for a child turning three. Venue minimums can push the number higher, so choose the venue first.

How long should the party last?

Under 90 minutes, with 10 to 15 minutes per activity. Venue slots are similar: Chobham Adventure Farm gives 1 hour 15 minutes of play, then 45 minutes in the party room.

Should parents stay?

Yes, at three. Say so on the invitation, and plan food and seats for the grown-ups.

Do I have to invite the whole nursery room?

No. A few close friends is plenty at three. If you're not inviting everyone, give invitations out privately rather than at nursery.

Do I need an entertainer?

Not necessarily. Bubbles, a parachute and simple games are often enough. If you book one, choose a short session designed for under-5s, like Sporty Kidz's Animal Adventure party for 3-4 year olds.

Is it safe to give grapes and nuts at a party?

Cut grapes and cherry tomatoes into quarters, and don't give whole nuts or popcorn to children under 5, as the NHS advises. Always supervise children while they eat.

SAY IT KINDLY

Save the date, invitation and RSVP wording

An invitation is a small promise that you'll look after someone's child. Make it easy to say yes.

1. Save the date (6-8 weeks before)

Save the date! [Child's name] is turning 3 and we're having a little birthday party.

Date: [day, date, month]
Time: [start - end]
Place: [venue or area]

Full invitation to follow. We hope you can come!
[Your name and number]

2. Invitation with the dietary question (4-6 weeks before)

You're invited! Come and celebrate [Child's name]'s 3rd birthday with us.

Date: [day, date, month]
Time: [start - end]
Venue: [venue name and address]
Parking: [where to park]
Parents: [please stay with your child / drop-off is fine]

Food: please tell us about any allergies, dietary requirements or special needs, so we can look after every guest. Just reply with the details below.

RSVP by [date] to [your name, number or email].

We can't wait to see you!

3. RSVP reply for guests to copy and fill in

Child's name:
Parent / carer name and phone:
Coming? Yes / No
Adults staying:
Siblings coming:
Allergies (nuts, dairy, egg, gluten, sesame, other):
Dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, halal, kosher, other):
Details, such as how severe and what to avoid:
Anything else we should know (shy, needs a quiet space, toilet help):

4. Reminder for anyone who hasn't replied (about 3 weeks before)

Hi [name], just checking whether [guest's name] can make [birthday boy's name]'s party on [date]. No pressure at all! Could you let me know by [date], and tell me about any allergies or dietary needs? Thank you!

5. Thank-you message (the week after)

Thank you so much for coming to [Child's name]'s party, and for the lovely [present]. He had the best time and hasn't stopped talking about it. Love, [Child's name] and [your name]

Handling the replies

You're holding other families' information, so treat it with care.

- [ ] Keep a simple list of each child's allergies and dietary needs.
- [ ] Send it to the venue, caterer or entertainer with your final numbers.
- [ ] Tell the party host about any serious allergy on the day.
- [ ] Use the information only to plan the party, and delete the list afterwards.

Sources

- HealthyChildren.org (American Academy of Pediatrics), Playful birthday party ideas and tips for young children
- My Little Princess Parties, Prices and booking
- My Little Unicorn, home page
- Chobham Adventure Farm, Parties
- NHS, Preparing food safely (Start for Life)
- St. Louis Children's Hospital, Why are latex balloons dangerous for children?
- NHS, Foods to avoid giving babies and young children
- Munchkins Play Cafe, Parties
- Mazzy Bees Soft Play, Parties
- Sporty Kidz, Birthday parties in Surrey

Playtrail · Woking's party venue & entertainer finder · real local listings, no booking fees, no middleman.

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