Birthday Party Checklist for a 5-Year-Old Boy

Five is the age of first school friends, fierce loyalty and very strong views on who gets to be in goal. This guide is for the parent doing the planning: what to book, when to book it, and how to keep the afternoon on the happy side of overwhelming.

👦 Age 5 | 📍 Woking | ⏱️ 90 minutes or 2 hours | ✅ Tick-off checklist

Updated October 2026. Prices and details were read from each business's own website on 24 October 2026, except The Creative Brick Company, read from its printed flyer on 18 October 2026. Always confirm before you book.

PICTURE THIS

A Saturday afternoon in a Woking hall. A football coach in a bright bib, a pile of cones, and twenty five-year-olds who have never been more serious about anything. The birthday boy has scored twice and told everyone four times. In the corner, a parent is quartering grapes and checking a list of allergies. One boy is sitting out with his mum for a minute, and that's fine. None of the children will remember the paper plates. All of them will remember whether they were included.

START HERE

What's different about a 5-year-old's party

At five, friendship is serious business, and so is the score.

Five is a lovely age for a party. Most five-year-olds can follow simple rules, take turns, sit for a craft and throw themselves into a theme. They still tire quickly, and losing a game can still end in tears.

- **The guest list is the big decision.** Most children turning five are in Reception, so the question is often whole class or a few close friends. Infant classes (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) can have up to 30 pupils per teacher. For a small party, the age-plus-one rule of thumb that HealthyChildren.org gives for younger children is a useful starting point: about six guests.

- **Aim for 90 minutes to 2 hours.** HealthyChildren.org, from the American Academy of Pediatrics, suggests keeping parties under 90 minutes for toddlers and says school-aged children can manage about 2 to 3 hours. Five sits in between. Plan about 10 to 15 minutes per game or activity.
- **Some guests will still be four.** Reception classes mix fours and fives, so pitch games and food at the younger end. It matters for food safety too (see below).
- **Drop-off often starts at five.** Some parents will drop off and others will stay. Say on the invitation which works for you, and collect a phone number for every child who's dropped off.
- **Check age limits early.** Ninja Warrior UK Guildford's minimum age is 5, with under-8s accompanied on the activities by a ticket-holding adult. Rugged Earth Adventures' Nerf parties start for children turning 6, so save those for next year.
- **Let him choose, from a short list.** Offer two or three themes rather than an open question, and be ready for a change of mind.
- **Expect big feelings.** Excitement, shyness and a wobble at cake time are all normal. A quiet corner helps everyone, including the birthday boy.

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 from two or three options (ideas below).
- [ ] Decide: whole class or a smaller group. If you plan to hand invitations out at school, check the school's policy first.
- [ ] 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** and a line on whether parents stay or drop off.
- [ ] 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, allergies and who is collecting each child.
- [ ] 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 5-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 five include superheroes, dinosaurs, football, space, pirates, ninjas and building bricks. Plenty of five-year-old boys would rather have unicorns or a favourite film, and that's a great party too. A simple theme (a colour scheme, one activity and a matching cake) costs less than theming everything.

Shop by theme: Superhero · Dinosaur · Football · Space · Pirate · Ninja · Building blocks. 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.

- **Football.** Pitch Pals and Sporty Kidz (prices below) bring coaches to your venue. We Make Footballers Woking runs parties for ages 4-12; contact them for a price.
- **Ninja course.** Ninja Warrior UK Guildford has a minimum age of 5. Its parties include an hour of action and 45 minutes in a private party room, with safety socks, food and drink.
- **Role play.** Little Street in West Byfleet (prices below), Little Street Frimley and Imagination Children's Role Play in Camberley.
- **Building and making.** The Creative Brick Company runs LEGO® brick building parties (prices below), and Fired Frog Pottery Café in St John's lists parties on its website, so ask about ages and timings.
- **Superheroes and magic.** Magic Star Parties runs character, superhero and UV glow parties, and Jelly Kelly does magic and balloon modelling. Parents' reviews mention 5th and 8th birthday parties.
- **Bouncy castles and discos.** Bouncy castle hire from Kingdom of Castles, Elmbridge Inflatables or Have A Bounce, and kids' discos from Matt's Entertainments or Crazy Hazy.

THEME PLAYBOOK

4 themes with games, food and a cake for a five-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.

Brick Builders

Five-year-olds can build with a plan, so a brick party suits them. Set out tubs of bricks, give each child a challenge and take photos of the creations.

- Build a bridge: teams build the longest bridge they can across a gap on the floor, then test it with a toy car.
- Brick guess: draw a picture and the others guess what it is, then build it.
- Mystery bag: put a brick in a bag and guess its shape by touch.

Food and cake: 'Brick' sandwiches cut into squares and fruit. For cake, a plain sponge with coloured brick shapes on top.

Party bag: A small brick set, or a sticker of the creation they built.

Tip: A hired host usually supplies the bricks, but ask whether they offer sessions for under-sixes.

Local help: The Creative Brick Company.

Browse brick builders supplies in the shop

Football Party

At five, a coach-led football party is a hit with most children. The coach runs the games and the match, and you keep the oranges coming.

- Skills stations: dribbling, shooting and passing, with a coach on each.
- Match day: two teams, a small pitch and a referee with a whistle.
- Presentation: a medal or certificate for every player, as at a real match.

Food and cake: Oranges at half-time and a simple tea of sandwiches and fruit. For cake, a football-pitch sponge.

Party bag: A medal or certificate from the coach.

Tip: Ask the coach how many children they can run at once, and what happens if it rains.

Local help: Pitch Pals, We Make Footballers Woking.

Browse football party supplies in the shop

Knights and Dragons

Five-year-olds can follow a quest, so a knights-and-dragons party with a shield to decorate and a dragon to defeat is a good fit.

- Knight training: balance a beanbag 'sword' on a spoon, run round the castle and return it.
- Dragon hunt: find the dragon's eggs hidden round the garden or hall.
- Decorate a shield: card shields with stickers and pens.

Food and cake: 'Castle' sandwiches, 'dragon fire' sweet-potato wedges and fruit. For cake, a stone-effect sponge with a card flag.

Party bag: A card shield, a sticker or a small plastic dragon.

Tip: Skip real swords and use foam or card ones only.

Browse knights and dragons supplies in the shop

Junior Detectives

A detective party gives a five-year-old a job. A simple mystery, such as a missing cake, with picture clues to follow keeps the whole group busy.

- Who took the cake? Hide picture clues round the room and let the detectives follow them to the answer.
- Fingerprint fun: press fingers on a washable ink pad and compare prints with a magnifying glass.
- Secret message: write a short message in picture code for the group to crack.

Food and cake: 'Evidence' sandwiches and fruit on a plate with a magnifying glass. For cake, a plain sponge with fingerprints in icing.

Party bag: A notebook and a pencil, and a magnifying glass for the birthday child.

Tip: Keep clues in pictures rather than words, because not every five-year-old can read yet.

Browse junior detectives supplies in the shop

Planning for a girl instead? See the 5-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. Venues and entertainers will set their own timings, so fit the rest around them.

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00	Guests arrive. A craft table keeps early arrivals busy (mask or medal decorating)
0:10	Welcome and a quick, lively game (musical statues or freeze dance)
0:20	Main activity: entertainer, soft play, a coach or a treasure hunt (about 30 minutes, broken into short games)
0:55	Wash hands and sit down for food

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

A 2-hour party

Two hours suits a home or hall party where arrivals and goodbyes take up part of the time. Build in one calm break, and make the second hour gentler than the first.

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00	Guests arrive, craft table or dress-up corner (arrivals are staggered, so keep this relaxed)
0:15	Welcome and a circle game, such as a name game or pass the parcel
0:25	Active block: entertainer, disco or two games of about 15 minutes each
0:55	Calm break: story or colouring, a drink of water and toilet trips
1:05	Second activity: treasure hunt, parachute games or a dance-off where everyone gets a turn
1:30	Wash hands and sit down for food
1:45	Birthday cake and singing
1:52	Party bags and goodbyes

- [ ] 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 5-year-olds

At five, most children understand winning and losing, but not all of them enjoy it yet. Games where everyone gets something keep the afternoon happy.

- [ ] Musical statues or musical bumps, with nobody “out” (or anyone who's out becomes a judge).
- [ ] Pass the parcel with a small prize in every layer.

- [ ] Sleeping lions, a calm game to play between busy ones.
- [ ] A treasure hunt with picture clues.
- [ ] Pin the tail on the donkey, with eyes closed rather than a tight blindfold.
- [ ] Freeze dance, or a dance-off where everyone gets a turn in the middle.
- [ ] Parachute games, if your entertainer brings a parachute.
- [ ] A craft table: masks, medals or a building challenge. Keep small beads and parts away from younger siblings.

Party bags

Keep them small and useful: bubbles, stickers, a mini dinosaur or car, a superhero mask, or a slice of cake in a napkin. One small picture book makes a lovely alternative to plastic bits. Check the age labels on toys if younger siblings will be at the party. 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).
- [ ] Some Reception guests will still be four, so follow the NHS advice not to give whole nuts or popcorn to children under 5 (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.
- [ ] Keep sweets small: a treat plus the cake is plenty.
- [ ] 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, and note who is collecting each child.

- [ ] 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, with their party bag, to the adult you expect to collect them.

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 thank-yous. At five, he can draw a picture or write his name on each card.
- [ ] 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 Pitch Pals football party is £160 for up to 20 children, plus venue hire; a Sporty Kidz party is £200 for up to 12 children before you add a venue; and exclusive hire of Little Street is £295 (or £225 on a Friday afternoon). 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
Pitch Pals (football, at your venue)	No party age range stated	**£160** for up to 20 children, for a 90-minute session that can be extended. An FA-qualified coach runs football games and matches with the equipment provided, and the birthday child gets the Player of the Day Award. Venue hire is extra.
Sporty Kidz (coaches come to your venue)	Games Party for ages 5-7, or Mini-Olympics for 5-12	**£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.

OPTION	AGE FIT	PRICE AND WHAT'S INCLUDED
Little Street, West Byfleet (role-play town)	Rooms scaled for young children. No upper age stated	**Exclusive hire £295** for an 85-minute session, for up to 60 people including adults. A Friday offer (3.45-5.15pm) is **£225**, for Friday bookings to the end of December 2026. Includes unlimited squash and water for the children, £25 of café drinks for the adults, a PDF invitation and a free return visit for one child and one adult. Food isn't mentioned, so ask.
The Creative Brick Company (LEGO® building party)	No age range on the flyer	**£300 for up to 20 children**, then £7 per extra child. 90 minutes of themed LEGO® brick builds with two party hosts, plus invitation and thank-you cards, a gift for the birthday child and a badge for each guest. Read from the company's printed flyer. It has no Google reviews yet.

What stands out from a parent's seat

- **Pitch Pals:** The best-value football party we found, but add a hall or pitch to the cost.
- **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.
- **Little Street:** One price for up to 60 people, adults included, so it works for a big family party or a whole-class party. You'll need to sort food and cake.
- **The Creative Brick Company:** A calmer, creative option for children who love building. We couldn't check its website, so call to confirm the details.

Browse all Woking party venues

ASKED AT TEN AT NIGHT

Questions parents ask

Should I invite the whole class?

If you can host it, a whole-class party means nobody feels left out, but it's a big party: an infant class can have up to 30 children. A smaller party is just as good, and about six guests (the age-plus-one rule of thumb) is a sensible starting point. If you're not inviting everyone, hand invitations out privately or send them by message rather than through school bags.

How long should a 5-year-old's party last?

90 minutes to 2 hours. HealthyChildren.org suggests under 90 minutes for toddlers and about 2 to 3 hours for school-aged children, and five sits in between. Keep each game to 10-15 minutes.

Can parents drop off, or should they stay?

Either can work at five. Say clearly on the invitation which you'd like, collect a phone number for every child who's dropped off, and make sure you have enough adults to help.

Is five too young for Nerf or a gaming van?

Usually, yes. Rugged Earth Adventures' parties are for children turning 6 to 12, and Dropzone Gaming's van is for ages 6+. A football coach, a ninja course (minimum age 5) or a building party suits five better.

What should I say about presents?

Whatever suits your family. Some parents write “no presents, please”. Others suggest a small, clearly optional contribution towards one bigger gift, sometimes called a “fiver party”. Keep the wording gentle so nobody feels awkward.

Is it safe to serve grapes and nuts?

Cut grapes, cherry tomatoes and other small round foods into quarters, and don't give whole nuts or popcorn to children under 5, as the NHS advises. Some of your guests may still be four.

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 5 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 5th birthday with us.

Date: [day, date, month]
Time: [start - end]
Venue: [venue name and address]
Parking: [where to park]
Grown-ups: [welcome to stay / drop-off is fine. Please leave a number we can reach you on]
Wear: [party clothes / dress-up welcome / clothes that can get messy]

Food: please tell us about any allergies, dietary needs or sensitive skin, so we can look after every guest.

Photos: we'll take a few photos on the day. Let us know if you'd rather we didn't share any that include your child.

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
Staying or dropping off:
Who's collecting (name and phone):
Siblings coming:
Allergies (nuts, dairy, egg, gluten, sesame, other):
Dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, halal, kosher, other):
Sensitive skin or eczema (for face paint or glitter):
OK to share photos that include your child? Yes / No
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
- Lancashire County Council, Infant class sizes (the limit of 30 pupils per teacher in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2)
- Ninja Warrior UK Guildford, Ninja Warriors, and Guildford.org.uk, Ninja Warrior Guildford
- Rugged Earth Adventures, Price list and Party information
- My Little Princess Parties, Prices and booking
- We Make Footballers, Woking birthday parties
- NHS, Preparing food safely (Start for Life)
- St. Louis Children's Hospital, Why are latex balloons dangerous for children?
- Pitch Pals, Birthday parties
- Sporty Kidz, Birthday parties in Surrey
- Little Street, West Byfleet and Parties and groups
- The Creative Brick Company, printed party flyer (seen 18 October 2026)
- Dropzone Gaming, Booking and How it works

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