

Graduation Party Checklist

By Laura Cooper Peterson

- Three to six months before the party**
 - Save** Set up an account at your bank specifically for saving funds towards the party, and add a little each week. Ask other family members to chip in.
 - Make a guest list** This is subject to flux, but get a ballpark idea of how many guests you can handle.
 - Choose a venue** June is wedding month as well as graduation, so book early and put down a deposit. Or, plan to have the party at your house, or a classmate's home.
 - Network** Planning way in advance can discourage wild off-site parties being planned by the graduates themselves. Work with other parents to plan an all inclusive party for a safe, fun time.
- Six to eight weeks before the party**
 - Budget** By now you should have save some cash and have an idea of what you can spend. Lay out a realistic game plan.
 - Supplies** Graduation party supplies can sell out fast, so get some of the paper products and decorations early - they won't spoil.
 - Liquor** If you are holding your college graduation party in a banquet hall you may need to obtain licensing, and find a vendor well in advance.
 - Entertainment** Maybe one of the graduates is part of a band, or you can convince a local DJ to provide musical entertainment.
 - Catering** Another item that should be taken care of sooner rather than later, as spring schedules fill up fast.
- Two to four weeks before the party**
 - Invitations** Send these out in plenty of time to make sure your party is the one people decide to go to. Ask for RSVPs - include your phone number and email address.
 - Dress code** Decide if your party is formal and elegant or casual and laid back. Include this information I the invitations.
 - Games** Plan some fun games to break the ice and get the party started.
 - Karaoke.** Put a deposit down on a machine and sound system early for maximum fun
 - Seating** Make sure you have plenty of folding chairs even if you are having a casual event.
 - Dishes/cutlery/linens** If the caterer isn't providing plates, silverware, napkins and table-cloths, make sure you have this covered on your end.
- Two to three days before the party**
 - Cake** Get your cake ordered and set a time to pick it up - this avoids delivery problems.
 - Extras** Make a list of what the caterer is covering, and fill in any gaps.
 - Deliveries** To avoid late deliveries and delays, accept as many deliveries as you can prior to the actual day of the party.

- Flowers** No party is complete without them, so order early and arrange to pick them up the day of the party.
- Day of the party**
 - Relax.** Get some extra rest in the morning - the party will be exhaustingly fun!
 - Memories** Have batteries in cameras and video cams, and a blank book for all guests to sign and later transform into a scrapbook.
 - Decorations** Balloons, streamers, signs and everything else should be in place in plenty of time.
 - Refreshments** Make sure the caterer has room to work, and pick up the cake.
 - Gifts** Set up a table for gifts for the graduate if it is a private party.
 - Fun** Have some! This is a celebration, and everyone should have a blast.
- After the party**
 - Caterer** Pay promptly and thank them for their service.
 - Clean up** Have plenty of large trash bags and get everyone to pitch in.
 - Congratulate** Let your graduate(s) know how proud you are.