



HOW TO - Deliver a Birthday Party

Birthday Parties can create magical moments and memories for children that last a lifetime. We have a tried and test method for delivering parties which is documented in this How To Guide. This guide includes:

- Preparing for your party
- Providing a warm welcome
- Party structure
- Putting on a Show
- End of party presentation
- Leaving on a high
- Facing challenges

Preparing for your Party

Syllabus

Head Coaches have access to an extensive syllabus of session plans. The Football Fun Camp syllabus that includes sessions using our inflatables, can be used for your birthday parties. You can choose which sessions to deliver for your party.

If you have assistant coaches that deliver alongside you, it is a good idea to provide them with session plan that you would like them to deliver at least 24 hours prior to the party. This will allow for adequate preparation time and an opportunity to ask you any questions they may have.

Equipment

It is advisable for the Head Coach to be responsible for bringing all equipment to the session. As many assistant coaches are part-time self-employed coaches with other commitments, it is not advisable to rely on them to bring equipment to your session.

Ensure that you have enough equipment for your party. It is important that you have enough footballs and bibs for every child (if your session plans require it). You will also need cones and depending on the goals available at your venue, it may be useful to have some target goals too.

Providing a Warm Welcome

The birthday boy/girl and their parents are likely to arrive first in good time ahead of the party. It is important to warmly greet the parents and birthday child by name and say hello to any siblings or other family members. There are a number of other ways to provide a warm welcome:

Try to ensure each of the following measures are met consistently:

- Set up near the entrance

Most parties take place indoors. It's important to set up near to the entrance for when people arrive. Being positioned near to where parents will congregate will also give you the chance to showcase your superstar coaching abilities right in front of the parents.

- Welcome any children you know by name

Take pride in knowing children's and parents' names and showcase that you know them. Saying hello to people by name will intrigue parents who are new to the Football Fun Factory and prompt questions about how to get involved with our programmes

- Speak to parents

A simple hello, or perhaps asking how somebody's day has been will go a long way. Part of your role as a Head Coach is to build relationships within your community. Your aim should be that the parents of the children you coach should feel comfortable to speak to you and ask any questions that they may have. Making yourself approachable will also encourage enquiries. At parties parents will be considering their own plans for their children's birthdays, which presents a real opportunity.

Safeguarding measures

For parties you will not have a list of participants or their contact details and medical information. Parents tend to stay and your point of call should be the parent who made the booking or a child's parent, should there be any issues. As with our other programmes there are two main areas of safeguarding risk during your sessions. A reminder of these is shown below:

1. A child needs to go to the toilet during your session

The procedure for this will depend on the facility you use and the proximity to the nearest toilet. The age of the child in question should also be taken into account when considering how best to deal with the request from a child.

Where possible, a child should be escorted to the toilet by their parent. Failing this children should may be sent in pairs. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy for further guidance.

2. Children departing the session safely

Ensuring that children depart safely at the end of each session is very important. The procedure for this is for the Head Coach to facilitate collection at the sports hall

doors. This procedure has the added benefit of ensuring a friendly 'goodbye' and gives parents an opportunity for face to face engagement with the Head Coach.

Session Structure

See below a guide for your 90-minute party:

- 0-25 minutes - Arrival matches (children tend to arrive late for parties)
- 25-30 minutes – Group introduction
- 30-50 minutes – Session 1 (could be 2 activities, with 2 groups)
- 50-55 minutes – Drinks break
- 55-75 minutes – Session 2 (rotate activities if you have 2 groups)
- 75-77 minutes – Drinks break
- 77-90 minutes – Small-sided matches
- 90 minutes – Blue Card/gift presentation and departure

Whilst the above guide offers ideal timings, there are many factors that may affect the timings that you apply to your sessions. For example, whether there are bookings at the facility immediately before or after yours, the age of the children or the size of your group and how many coaches you have delivering the sessions.

Set Up

As detailed above in the 'Preparing for your sessions' section of this guide, it is ideal to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to your session and to be set up and ready before the first child arrives. The set up time required may be greater if you have two or three inflatables to set up. As parties often take place in unfamiliar venues that you don't regularly use, it is important to allow for extra time to get your inflatables to the sports hall door. For example, it may take 30 minutes to set up, but a further 20 minutes to get the equipment to the hall you are using.

When setting up your session, it is advised to ensure the following:

- Set up some safety circles

Having safety circles set out for children to put their water bottles, jumpers etc will help avoid lost property, avoid trip-hazards and showcase your high levels of organisation.

- Have as much of the session set up as possible

During your session, any time that you spend moving cones or other equipment may disrupt your session and affect the timings outlined above. Spending time setting up mid-session will also cause challenges with child management. You may have your pitches set out for matches and sessions set up elsewhere to ensure that you can focus on the delivery of the session for the full 90 minutes.

- Use goals instead of cones on your pitches

Each venue will be different in terms of the goals that are available for your small-sided matches. Having a goal to shoot into improve the match experience for the children and it is therefore advised to invest in target goals if your facility does not have enough goals for the required number of pitches.

Putting on a Show

Your aim when delivering all programmes should be to put on a show for the watching parents. Your aim should be to impress parents with your coaching ability, the interaction that you have with their child individually, your passion and enthusiasm for the game and how much you love and care about your role as a FFF Head Coach. There are a number of practical things you can do to put on a show:

Coach in front of the parents

Giving parents a front row view of your coaching sessions demonstrates your confidence in your own ability and allows you to showcase your talent. Parents love watching their child play with a big smile on their face and hearing the positive feedback that our coaches give to their child. At the Football Fun Factory we allow and actively encourage parents to watch the sessions. For parties it is advisable to use any benches or chairs at the venue to provide a seating/viewing area for parents.

Speak to the children as a group

Calling the children in at the start and end of your sessions and periodically within your sessions showcases your group control and child management. It also builds your position as the leader of the programme.

For parties the start of the session (once all children have arrived) is a great opportunity to showcase your superstar delivery to the watching parents.

Make sure you are heard

If there is something you are saying that would impress parents then make sure you are heard! For example, if a particular child deserves individual praise or feedback, are you able to do this within earshot of the parent? This may be challenging but these opportunities may arise, depending on the set up of your venue.

Blue Card/Gift Presentation

You should 'sprinkle some stardust' at the end of the party by giving the birthday boy or girl a small gift. As a minimum this should be a Blue Card and some other examples include:

- A medal – Choose a player of the day, that just so happens to be the birthday boy or girl.
- A giant football – When they have been used for a while the giant footballs tend to lose their stick for use with the Inflatable Dartboard. You may decide to give a ball away if you are due to order some new ones.
- A FFF football.

Presenting a gift is a fantastic way to end the party on a high.

Leaving on a High

Your aim should be that everyone leaves on a high. By standing at the sports hall door you can ensure that you say goodbye to each child and parent. Offering some of the children individual praise/feedback can really impress parents and send them and the child home happy. For example saying “well done today Emily!”.

However, the above may not be possible if the group are staying for food or birthday cake after the party.

Facing Challenges

However well you plan ahead there are some ‘uncontrollables’ that may give you challenges to the quality of your delivery. There may be things you can do to prepare for these challenges and some recommended actions to take if you are faced with each challenge. Each challenge has guidance listed below:

Children Wanting to Continue Playing

At the end of your party children often head off for some party food or cake. Take the opportunity to ensure that all footballs are collected and put away, out of reach. After the children have had a break they often want to run around again. Parents arrive to collect their child but tend to loiter and chat to other parents. This can end up in you being in a difficult position where you are packed away and ready to leave but children are still playing, using your footballs. This also causes a safeguarding issue as they are not being supervised.

Siblings Joining In

Brothers and sisters often attend parties and may want to join in. If you can facilitate this then you may allow it. However unless pre-agreed with the parent booking the party, you may need to let the parents know that you can’t facilitate a safe environment with the extra participants. The best way to avoid this is being clear with parents prior to the party that the capacity of 15 (or 25 if you have 2 coaches).