

KIDS' PARTIES: WHAT ARE WE TEACHING OUR CHILDREN?

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PARTIES CAN BE FILLED WITH GIGGLES, EXCITEMENT AND CREATE MANY HAPPY MEMORIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, PARTIES CAN BE FILLED WITH MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED.

Children are like sponges as they observe, feel and often absorb all that is happening around them. Children learn via observation. They watch and feel our every movement, hear our words but learn far more than we choose to acknowledge by observing and feeling our actions. Through our every movement, we are our children's life teacher. Through the planning, organisation and execution of a child's party there are many movements and many potential teaching opportunities.

It is worth asking ourselves, with each of our movements, actions and decisions:

- ✓ What are we teaching?
- ✓ What are we endorsing?
- ✓ Are we saying 'This is what I recommend for you to do as a child, teenager and/or adult'?

PARTIES REQUIRE DECISIONS. DECISIONS ARE MOVEMENTS. WHAT QUALITY TEACHINGS ARE WE OFFERING WHEN WE MAKE DECISIONS?

1. Who do we invite? Who do we not invite and why?
2. What foods and drinks do we offer our guests and why?
3. Do we have a cake? If yes, what sort and why? If not, why not?
4. What games do we play and why?
5. Do we buy a present? If not, what is the reason? If yes, what is the

reason? What presents do we buy, how much do we spend, what is the purpose of gift buying?

There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. Rather, what is being proposed is, are we considering what we are teaching our children with our every movement?

For example, I have heard about parties where parents are interested in offering a better party than the one before. Have parties become a competition of who throws the biggest and best bash? The question I have here is 'What life lessons are being taught as the children observe and feel the quality of that party'? Are the children being taught to be competitive and diminishing the knowing that, at the core, we are all equal? Are the children being taught values allowing them to live their full potential as children, teenagers and future adults?

I heard about another party that offered few games, no lollies and healthy snacks for their children. The children were left to play, make their own games and reportedly had heaps of fun. The parents left very grateful saying to the host 'Thank you for not hyping my children up with lots of sugar'. What lessons were on offer at this party? Were the children being offered an opportunity allowing them to live their full potential?

Parties can be lots of fun, but they can also be a fantastic learning opportunity from the very start of organisation to the debrief at the end. In all our movements, conversations and decisions made, the simple question to ask ourselves is 'What life lessons am I offering all children (and adults) here'?

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