

Potty Patrick's usual programme + hints and tips

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"I thought you would like to know my usual programme for children's parties and a few tips and hints. I am happy to fit in with what ever your requirements are and any special requests. I am versatile and able to adapt my programme quickly to fit in with the children's wants and needs. I encourage the adults to join in with the children's games and dances whenever appropriate and if they want to sit with their children to watch the show that's fine, if they would rather sit and watch at the back with the other parents that's fine too."

30 mins before party: I arrive about 30 minutes beforehand to set up. I bring everything I need except a table or two and a power supply socket.

Start time: The guests take about 15 minutes to arrive.

I usually start by playing guitar and singing, blowing bubbles and getting the children to join in with dances. They soon get used to me and after a while they are all joining in. I am used to very shy children or over excited children and make allowances for both so they are happy and under control! I might play a game or two. In my games everyone joins in and no one is 'out'.

20 mins: When everyone has arrived I get the children to sit down and introduce myself and announce the birthday children. I usually do some magic tricks at this point and get the birthday child to help.

50 mins: By now we are nearly half way through so I stop for food and tea - break!

Food usually lasts about 20 minutes but it may last half an hour or 10 minutes! Depending on the children's appetites and interest.

I wouldn't make too many sandwiches. Crisps, sausages, pizza and nuggets are popular. It's best to leave cakes and sweets till the end and bring them out on their own. I don't recommend Ice cream or lollies as this takes ages and also often results in a bit of a mess.

As tea draws to an end the children get up and start playing, I make balloon animals and play music. When everyone is more or less finished I would suggest bringing out the birthday cake for singing and blowing the candles out.

80 mins: I carry on with some more music and dancing and games.

90 mins: I get the children to sit down and introduce my puppet "Bubbles" the baby gorilla or "Lucky" the old English sheep dog.

110 mins: The last ten minutes everyone joins in dancing and singing. This is a good time to give out the party bags. The parents begin to arrive and the children start to leave.

Hints and tips

1) **Balloons:** Loose balloons are a great distraction and frighten some of the children. Some balloons tied up high out of reach are fine.

2) **Pass the Parcel:** I don't do pass the parcel unless you are really keen. I've got many games, which involve all the children all the time and are more interesting.

3) **Prizes:** I give out stickers, wands, clown noses and make balloon animals. No other prizes are needed.

4) **Birthday Gifts:** I would suggest that any presents should be put to one side. Then they can be taken home and opened in peace!

I always make sure the birthday children are the STARS of the show and that you can enjoy the party with out stress. Best wishes Patrick.