Birthday Party Game Cards

1 Freeze Dance

Ages: 3 to 8 **Players:** Any number

Where: Indoor or outdoor

You need: Music. (This game is called musical statues in the UK.)

1. Play the music. Everyone dances.
2. Stop the music. Everyone freezes.
3. Anyone who moves is out.
4. Play on until one dancer is left.

Nobody is out: For under-sixes, nobody goes out. Praise the best statue each round instead.

2 Pass the Parcel

Ages: 3 to 7 **Players:** 5 to 15

Where: Indoor

You need: A prize wrapped in many layers of paper, and music.

1. Sit in a circle. Pass the parcel while the music plays.
2. When the music stops, the child holding the parcel removes one layer.
3. Whoever removes the last layer keeps the prize.

Keep it fair: Put a sticker or small treat in every layer. The adult on the music watches so each child gets a turn.

3 Sleeping Lions

Ages: 3 to 6 **Players:** Any number

Where: Indoor

You need: Floor space. Nothing else.

1. Everyone lies down and stays as still as a sleeping lion.
2. An adult walks around and tries to make the lions giggle or move.
3. No touching the lions!

Nobody is out: Lions who move become helpers. A good calm-down game before food.

4 Pin the Tail on the Donkey

Ages: 4 to 8 **Players:** Up to 12

Where: Indoor

You need: A poster of an animal without its tail, a paper tail with tape and a name for each child, a blindfold.

1. Blindfold one child and turn them around once or twice.
2. They walk to the poster and stick on their tail.
3. Everyone has a turn. The closest tail wins.

Keep it fair: A child who dislikes blindfolds can just close their eyes. Little ones start nearer.

5 Duck, Duck, Goose



Ages: 3 to 6 **Players:** 6 to 15

Where: Indoor or outdoor

You need: Nothing.

1. Sit in a circle. One child walks around tapping heads and saying "duck".
2. They pick a "goose", who jumps up and chases them around the circle.
3. The tapper tries to reach the empty spot first.

Keep it fair: The goose must be someone who has not had a turn yet.

6 Musical Chairs



Ages: 5 to 10 **Players:** 6 to 15

Where: Indoor

You need: One chair fewer than players, and music.

1. Walk around the chairs while the music plays.
2. When it stops, sit down fast.
3. The child without a chair is out.
4. Take one chair away each round.

Keep it fair: No pushing. Whoever is out picks when to stop the music next.

7 Treasure Hunt



Ages: 4 to 8 **Players:** Any number

Where: Indoor or outdoor

You need: Small items to hide (wrapped candy, plastic coins, paper stars) and a bag for each child.

1. Hide the items around one room or the yard before guests arrive.
2. Give every child a bag.
3. On "go", children collect as many as they can.

Keep it fair: Set a limit per child, or pool the treasure and share it out equally. Give the youngest a head start.

8 Simon Says



Ages: 4 to 8 **Players:** Any number

Where: Indoor or outdoor

You need: Nothing.

1. A leader calls out actions.
2. Copy only when the order begins with "Simon says".
3. Anyone who copies an order without it is out.

Keep it fair: Give three "lives" so nobody is out in the first minute. Let the birthday child lead a round.

9 Egg and Spoon Race



Ages: 5 to 10

Players: Any number, in heats of 4 to 6

Where: Outdoor

You need: A spoon each, hard-boiled eggs or small balls, start and finish lines.

1. Balance the egg on the spoon. One hand only.
2. Race to the finish line.
3. If the egg drops, stop and put it back.

Keep it fair: Run heats by age and use bigger spoons for small hands. Check for egg allergies before using real eggs.

10 Red Light, Green Light



Ages: 5 to 9 **Players:** 5 to 20

Where: Outdoor

You need: Open space.

1. The caller stands at the far end, back turned, and calls "green light". Everyone creeps forward.
2. On "red light" the caller turns around.
3. Anyone caught moving goes back to the start.
4. First to tag the caller takes over.

Keep it fair: An adult judges who moved.

11 Balloon Keep-Up



Ages: 6 to 10 **Players:** Teams of 3 to 5

Where: Indoor

You need: One balloon per team.

1. Each team keeps its balloon in the air without holding it.
2. Players tap in turn.
3. Count the taps, or time how long it stays up.

Keep it safe: Clear away popped pieces at once. Skip this game if under-threes are present: broken balloons are a choking hazard.

12 Relay Races



Ages: 7 to 12

Players: Two or more equal teams

Where: Outdoor

You need: A turning marker. For variety: a ball to carry, a hat to put on, a sack to hop in.

1. Teams line up behind the start.
2. One at a time, each runner goes to the marker and back, then tags the next.
3. The first team to finish wins.

Keep it fair: Balance the teams by age. If numbers are uneven, one child runs twice.

13 Charades

Ages: 8 and up **Players:** Two teams

Where: Indoor

You need: Slips of paper with animals, jobs, sports or film titles, and a timer.

1. A player draws a slip.
2. They act it out without speaking while their team guesses.
3. Score a point for each one guessed inside a minute.

Keep it fair: Let shy children act in pairs, or guess only.

14 Scavenger Hunt

Ages: 7 and up **Players:** Teams of 2 to 4

Where: Indoor or outdoor

You need: A list of things to find or a trail of clues, and pencils.

1. Give each team its list or its first clue.
2. List: teams race to tick off every item.
3. Clues: teams follow each clue to the next until they reach the prize.

Keep it fair: Put a confident reader in each team. Give every team a different starting clue.

15 Who Am I?

Ages: 8 and up **Players:** 4 to 12

Where: Indoor

You need: Sticky notes and a pen.

1. Write an animal, object or job on a note for each player.
2. Stick it on their back or forehead.
3. They ask the others yes-or-no questions until they work out what they are.

Keep it fair: Choose things everyone knows, and allow hints after ten questions.

16 Limbo

Ages: 6 and up **Players:** Any number

Where: Indoor or outdoor

You need: A broom handle held by two helpers, and music.

1. Two helpers hold the bar level.
2. Players pass under it leaning backward, without touching the bar or the floor.
3. Lower the bar each round.

Keep it fair: Allow two tries at each height.