

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . BIRTHDAY PARTIES

How do I schedule a party?

To schedule a party, call the zoo education department at 304-243-4068 or e-mail vmarkey@oglebay-resort.com.

When can I have a party?

Birthday parties are held on either Saturday or Sunday year-round. Parties last for 2 hours and the times available are typically 10 am – 12 pm; 1 – 3 pm; 4 – 6 pm and 6:30 – 8:30 pm. (Weekday parties are available in the evening on a very limited basis.) Contact the zoo education department for availability.

How early should I schedule a birthday party?

Because the zoo education department conducts large numbers of programs and space at the zoo is limited, it is advisable to schedule your party as early as possible. You must schedule a minimum of two weeks in advance.

What age is appropriate for a zoo birthday party?

Zoo parties can be held for any age! The zoo educators who conduct the parties are experienced in providing programming for all ages. However, we have found that parties are most appropriate for children 3 through 12 years old.

What is included with a birthday party?

We do all the set up and clean up. All you have to do is show up!

The following are included with the basic party package: zoo admission for up to 25 people (any combination of children and adults), party room for 2 hours, paper goods and decorations, an educator to lead activities and take care of your party needs, a t-shirt for the party child, cupcakes, ice cream, punch, potato chips, pretzels, post card invitations, animal presentation, party favors, train ride (seasonal/weather/facilities permitting) and guided tour of indoor zoo areas which include the Discovery Lab, Colors of Nature exhibit and miniature trains. If the party is held during normal zoo operating hours, you may substitute a tour of the barnyard area for the indoor tour. If your attendance is over 25 people, there is a fee of \$2.50 per adult and \$5 per child for the additional people. Parties that do not receive a train ride, or are scheduled when the zoo is not open, will have additional animals added to their presentation.

When do I pay for my party?

A deposit of \$233.20 is due at the time you book your birthday party. This deposit, which is non-refundable, covers the entire basic party package. The balance of your party is due on the day of your party. For Good Zoo Members, the basic party (up to 25 people) is \$220 plus tax. Non-members are \$250 plus tax.

Do I need to pay for adults who stay with their children?

Yes, due to admission policies at the zoo, all people who enter the zoo for the party – adults and children – must be included in the attendance count. Up to 25 people, any combination of children and adults are included in the basic party fee. If your attendance is over 25, there is an additional charge of \$2.50 per adult and \$5 per child. Adults attending the party are entitled to cupcakes, ice cream etc.

Can I purchase additional birthday party t-shirts?

Yes you can. Your party includes one t-shirt for the birthday child. Additional shirts may be purchased for \$10 each.

Do I need to arrive early?

You do not need to arrive early for your party. The educators will have everything set up for you. Should you wish to come early to greet your guests, you may do so up to ½ hour before your party is scheduled to start.

Where do my guests go when they arrive at the zoo?

Our zoo educators, volunteers and/or admission gate staff will be waiting for your guests to arrive. They will direct your guests to the party room. Latecomers can check in with the admissions gate staff for directions to the party room. Your party will be held in one of the zoo's classrooms located on the lower level of the main zoo building.

Can we stay longer than 2 hours?

You are given access to your party room for the two hours designated for your party. Due to the large numbers of educational programs and birthday parties conducted at the zoo, you must be out of the party room at the scheduled ending time for your party. You and your guests may remain in the zoo, visiting the exhibits on your own, if the zoo is open.

Do I need to provide activities for the children?

No, the zoo educator who conducts the party has your two-hour party completely filled with activities including a tour of the indoor zoo exhibits, animal presentation and, of course, time for your cupcakes!

What if it is cold or rainy?

The zoo can host parties all times of year! The train ride is seasonal and may not run when the weather is severe. Generally the train ride is available from April through October. If your group is unable to take a train ride, your educator will add additional animals to your animal presentation.

What is the animal presentation?

During the animal presentation, your party will get up-close with approximately 3 of our zoo education animals. These may include anything from rabbits and ferrets to snakes and insects. The animals used will depend on their availability on the day of your party. If your party does not ride the train additional animals will be added to your presentation.

Can I bring party favors?

Each child attending a birthday party can select one item from our party favor basket. These items may include things such as small stuffed toys, toy animals, balls, masks, etc. If you desire, you may bring additional party favors.

You may also choose to add deluxe party favor bags to your party. The deluxe party favor bags include 5 party favors in a gift bag. Items in the bag vary, but may include stuffed toys, zoo buttons, animal figurines, bubbles, candy etc. (*The zoo reserves the right to change the items in the bags based on availability.*) Favor bags are \$5 each.

Can I bring my own decorations?

The zoo provides themed paper goods (cups, plates etc.) as well as room decorations. You can choose from Barnyard Babies (this theme is well suited for younger children), Zoo Animals, Dinosaurs, Sea Life and Poison Dart Frogs. You may bring your own decorations provided they are confined to the party room, are not excessive in nature and any decorations you wish to keep are removed immediately following the party. Also, due to the nature of the party room, items cannot be taped or tacked to the walls. In most cases, you can have access to the party room up to ½ hour before the party. (The zoo reserves the right to deny the use of decorations. Any items left after the party become property of the zoo.) Due to safety and space issues, only pull-string piñatas are permitted.

Updated April 2008

Party Themes/tableware – (designs may vary)



Zoology

Sealife



Dinosaurs

Dart Frog



Barnyard Babies



Will you sing happy birthday and let my child blow out candles?

Yes, of course!

Can I bring my own cake?

You may provide your own cake either in addition to the cupcakes provided by the zoo or as a replacement for them. If you do not want the zoo to provide cupcakes for you, please notify the zoo at the time of your party booking or by the Tuesday before your party. There will be no discounts given for the deletion of cupcakes.

Can I bring extra food?

The zoo provides cupcakes, ice cream, punch, potato chips and pretzels for everyone at your party. You can also purchase hot dogs or pizza from the zoo. Hot dogs are \$1.85 each. Pizza, which is provided by Wilson Lodge, is \$12 for a 16" cheese pizza or \$14 for pepperoni/cheese. There are 8 slices in a 16" pizza. Food provided by the zoo must be ordered at least 10 days prior to your party.

We highly discourage bringing extra food. From our experience even small amounts of food significantly increase the amount of time needed for eating. Your party is on a tight schedule. Educators allow sufficient time for food. Should your party take longer eating, some party activities may need to be shortened or eliminated. You may bring small amounts of food with you, just be aware it may cause changes to your party schedule.

Will we be able to open my child's gifts at the party?

This is up to you! If you would like more time in the zoo, you may choose to open gifts at home. Your educator will check with you upon your arrival for your preference.

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What is an animal sponsorship?

An animal sponsorship is a donation to the zoo that helps to offset the enormous expense of feeding and caring for the zoo's animals. You may choose to sponsor any animal found at the zoo. When you sponsor an animal for a birthday child, they will receive a birthday card from the zoo with a picture of their animal, an animal fact sheet, and a small surprise gift. (Gift selection is based upon availability.) Sponsorships are \$30.

What is the Gift Registry?

The Nature Express gift shop has a wide variety of gifts, toys and clothing for children of all ages. Your child can create their own registry at the zoo where your guests can purchase gifts that the birthday child wants. For more information, stop by the zoo gift shop or call the Nature Express at 304-243-4035.

What is a Sleepover Birthday Party?

Sleepover Birthday Parties are a fun and unique way to celebrate your child's birthday. You can spend the night at the zoo with your birthday child and their friends doing fun games, seeing live animals and more. Sleepover birthday parties include your cupcakes, ice cream, punch, potato chips, pretzels, party favors, evening pizza snack and a continental breakfast. These programs are lead by zoo education staff. Prices for Sleepover Birthday Parties start at \$450. Call 304-243-4068 or e-mail vmarkey@oglebay-resort.com for more details.