

Fun Ways to Celebrate Your Kid's Birthday Without a Party

By [APRYL DUNCAN](#) | Updated on 01/26/22



The Spruce / Christopher Lee Foto

A recent survey found that families can spend upwards of \$30,000 on their kids' birthday party [celebrations](#) between [the first](#) and 21st birthdays. Throwing a [birthday party](#) can be a major source of stress and a major drain on the bank account for parents. You can still make your child's birthday a memorable celebration without throwing a party. Suggest some of these ideas to your child (or brainstorm your own non-party activities) for a fun and memorable birthday.

Go Camping

Pack up the family and go [camping](#). Pitch a tent and rough it, even in your own backyard. Another option is to rent an RV for the weekend and head to the local campground. The time your family spends without the tablets and phones is the quality time you can't put a price on. You'll spend your weekend playing board games, roasting marshmallows by the campfire, and enjoying the great outdoors together.

Take a Day Trip

Get in the car and head to a neighboring city for the day. Go to the children's museum or hit the bouncy house park. Changing up your scenery for the day and making a trip out of it will make your child feel special because this family-friendly day trip is all about him or her. Let them navigate the route or pick between two neighboring cities for a feeling of ownership.



The Spruce / Ashley Nicole DeLeon

Sleepover

Keep the celebration simple but memorable with a [sleepover](#). Instead of a cake and full-on party with decorations, you can hit the grocery store for some snacks everyone can munch on as they play games, tell stories, and watch a movie. For younger kids, try a "sleep under." The kids stay for snacks and a movie, but all go home to sleep.

Fly Somewhere for the Weekend

You can fly the friendly skies for less than the cost of a birthday party these days. Bare-bones flights can be as low as \$20 per person one way. It's a great way to make your child's birthday a huge event without spending an equally huge amount of money. If your family budget can't handle everyone taking off to some other city, let your child pick a parent to go with them this year. Celebrate onboard the flight too with fun activities to keep you entertained until you reach your destination.

Take in a Movie

Keep an eye out for kid-friendly movies coming out at the theater or new to stream or download. That way, you can take in a movie for the birthday. If you're planning a [movie night at home](#), make it even more special. With a little extra prep like popcorn and movie snacks, your home movie night can become an event.

Spend the Night in a Hotel

Grab some clothes and head to a hotel for the night. Make the celebration one they'll always remember while keeping it on budget. Try the name your own price options that let you decide what you want to pay for the room. The downside is, you don't get to choose the hotel where you want to stay. But you can select the quality, location, and price, which could work out perfectly for one night away.

Invite a Friend Along

An informal get-together is perfect for little kids as opposed to extravagant and expensive parties for 20+ kids. Think of it as a mini playdate. With just a couple of friends to celebrate the birthday, your child gets more quality one-on-time with their pals. Take the kids out for pizza, hit the arcade, or play mini golf. Whatever your child likes to do is what they should get to do on their birthday.

Host a Family Dinner

Some of the best birthday memories are made with your family around the dinner table. Take your child to their favorite restaurant and don't forget to ask the server to have the staff sing "Happy Birthday" to your child. Another option is to plan their favorite homecooked meal. If there are relatives that are nearby or especially important to your child, invite them too!

Let Your Child Decide

What does your son or daughter want to do for their birthday? Just ask. They may surprise you and say they would just like to spend the day playing with you. If your kid is stumped, help make a list and talk about the many fun things you can do together to celebrate the [birthday](#). In the end, let your child make the decision.

Hit the Skating Rink

Skating may have been more popular when you were a little kid but it's still something fun you and your family can do together on your child's birthday. Hit the skating rink for a couple of hours. It doesn't matter if you go roller skating or ice skating. Be sure to let the rink know you're there to celebrate a birthday so the DJ can announce the birthday and play a special song.

Have a Spa Day

Even the youngest of ladies enjoy a spa day every now and then. If you have a daughter celebrating a birthday, she'll love having a spa day with you to celebrate her big day. Book a day at the spa for the two of you well in advance so you don't run into an overbooked spa that can't accommodate walk-ins. Make sure the spa knows you'll be bringing in a child and her age in case that particular spa has a rule about minors. Or plan a home spa day and give each other facials, mani/pedis, and serve fruity drinks.

Go to a Sporting Venue

For the sports lover, take them out to the ballgame. Buy tickets to your child's favorite sport for their birthday. If you can't see the professional teams where you live or the tickets are too pricey, take them to a college or high school game. It's all about the atmosphere and you can help root for the locals. If they're a sports fan, there are plenty of sports-themed [gift ideas](#) to make the birthday even more special.

Play at the Amusement Park

A birthday will be one big thrill ride if you take your son or daughter to an amusement park. Many parks have perks you can buy in advance to save money, such as discount food, parking, and ticket packages. If your child has a birthday in the winter months, you can still visit the amusement parks or try an indoor water park. Even though some parks reduce their hours in the offseason, look at the schedule calendar online and you'll often find open dates around the time schools are out for certain holidays.

Go Bowling

The bowling alley is a great place to take your child on his or her birthday. Make the day special by incorporating this idea with dinner at a favorite place and some of the other ideas on this list. They don't have to do just one activity on this list to celebrate. You have many options and a bowling alley is a great place for your whole family to have fun together on a special day.