

# STUFFED ANIMAL BIRTHDAY PARTY

(FOR AGES 3+)

## INGREDIENTS:

- Stuffed animals
- Birthday party accessories
- Paper
- Crayons
- Markers
- Tape

## PREP TIME:

- 15 minutes

## RECIPE FOR FUN!

Birthdays are one of the highlights of childhood, so this dramatic play idea for kids lets them recreate their favorite day of the year - and use their imaginations to celebrate their plush friends.

**Tips:** Play with plush toys helps children build empathy! Children also project feelings onto their dolls and plush toys. Remind your child to consider the interests of the stuffed animal in whose honor the party is being thrown, as well as ways to serve and entertain their plush guests.

Ask play-starting questions like, "What theme would bear want to have for their party?", "What color decorations would bear like to have?", or "What kind of birthday cake do you think is bear's favorite?" Then let their imagination take it from there! The challenge is to play *with* your child, but not *do the activity for them*.

**5 Ideas for Creating a Stuffed Animal Birthday Party:** Just like a real birthday party, planning is part of the fun! Here are some ideas to help make the plush toy party special, and keep your little one busy:

- Create a happy birthday banner out of printer paper and tape. If your child wants a traditional “Happy Birthday” banner and is an emerging writer, create outlines of each letter so your child can color them in. Or, encourage them to carefully write each letter themselves.
- Let your child choose toys that the birthday animal would enjoy. Let them wrap toys as “gifts” with leftover wrapping paper from the holidays, newspaper, or even pillowcases.
- Children love making lists! Prompt them to independently create lists (even scribbled!) of other plush toys to “invite”, activities to play, and a menu of food options that every animal will enjoy.
- Don’t have paper or plastic toy dishes for the party? No problem! Children can draw place settings on pieces of notebook or printer paper. This is also the perfect time to teach kids which side the fork, spoon, and knife goes on.
- Each party animal needs an outfit - and that includes the human guests as well! Let your kid wear their favorite “dress up” outfit, or a fun pick from the dress-up box. Remember nothing is off-limits in imaginative play. Kids can wear costumes that go with the overall theme, and even create accessories like jewelry from playdough or crowns from paper plates. Dressing the animal invitees is going to take a little imagination. Let them try dressing plush toys in a younger sibling’s clothes or use paper towels to create party animal attire.