

Parent Guide:

PLAN YOUR BIRTHDAY CHALLENGE

Learning Outcomes

This activity introduces your child to the concept of budgeting and spending within their means. Through playful decision-making, your child will:

- Understand what a budget is, having a set amount of money to spend
- Learn to prioritise and make trade-offs based on value and preferences
- Explore the idea that money is limited, and we can't always get everything we want
- Begin to grasp delayed gratification, saving ideas for another time
- Experience what it means to adjust plans when the budget changes

Overview of the Game

This challenge is a hands-on budgeting game where your child becomes the party planner!

Their mission: Plan the most joyful birthday party they can, with just \$20 to spend.

They'll browse a fun "party menu" of food, entertainment, and decorations. Each item has a cost and a happiness value. But there's a catch: **they can't go over budget**. The game encourages children to compare options, and rethink choices, just like we do in real life when planning birthdays, grocery trips, or family outings.

Materials Needed

- Plan Your Birthday Challenge 1 and 2 printables



Prepare the Activity

- Download and print Plan Your Birthday Challenge 1 and 2 printables.
- Cut out the Party Menu Cards, Special Event Cards and Budget Cards.
- Place the Party Menu Cards face up in the centre of the table.
- Shuffle the Special Event Cards and place them face down in a draw pile.

Activity Instructions

- You're the party planner today! You have \$20 to spend, let's see what kind of party you can plan!"
- Let your child explore the Party Menu Cards and select the items they want for their party. Each item has a cost and a Happiness Point 😊.
- They must stay within the \$20 budget so they may need to compare, swap, or prioritize to make it work.
- Add up all the Happiness points to get the total "Party Happiness Score!"
- Record your total spending and Happiness Points in your budget card.
- Use the conversation starters to talk about how your child made their choices. Discuss their choices, trade-offs, and what they might do differently next time.
- (Optional) Play again with a Special Event Card for a fun surprise twist!



Conversation Starters

Here are some thoughtful prompts to guide your child's learning during and after the activity:

While Playing:

- "You have \$20 to plan your party, what do you want to include most?"
- "That's a fun pick! Do you think it's worth the price?"
- "You chose the bouncy castle, that's \$8. What else can you still afford?"
- "Let's try again! Can you plan a totally different kind of party this round?"

After Playing:

- "What was the hardest decision to make?"
- "Was \$20 enough to plan the party you wanted?"
- "If you could have just \$3 more, what would you add?"
- "Does this feel like something we do in real life (like at the supermarket or when planning your birthday?)"

Talking Points for Common Questions & Objections

Children will naturally ask questions that challenge the idea of budgeting. These moments are great opportunities to reinforce key values. Here are some suggested responses:

- **Child:** “Why can’t I get everything I want?”
- **Parent:** “That would be awesome, wouldn’t it? But in real life, we don’t have unlimited money, so we have to make choices. A budget helps us make sure we spend only what we have, not more.”

- **Child:** “But I really want both the bouncy castle and the cake!”
- **Parent:** “Let’s check the total. Can you think of something else to switch out? Or maybe you can plan the next party with the items you missed this time.”

- **Child:** “Can I borrow more money?”
- **Parent:** “In real life, borrowing is something we can do, like loans, but we have to pay it back, often with extra. That’s why it’s best to spend only what we already have whenever we can.”

- **Child:** “Why don’t we just get more money?”
- **Parent:** “That’s something even adults wish for! But money doesn’t grow on trees or fall from the sky, we usually earn it by working, and that takes time and effort. That’s why it’s important to use the money we do have wisely and not waste it, so we can spend it on the things that really matter.”

- **Child:** “Can I change my choices?”
- **Parent:** “Sure! That’s called re-budgeting. Even adults redo their plans when things change, it’s a smart way to adjust.”

- **Child:** “I’ll just ask Grandma for more money!”
- **Parent:** “That’s a clever idea! Grandparents love to give, but the goal of this challenge is to plan your party using only what you have. Learning to make choices with your own budget helps you become more independent.”



Plan Your Birthday Challenge! 1

<p>Birthday cake (1-tier)</p>  <p>\$4 🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Birthday cake (2-tier)</p>  <p>\$6 🧡🧡🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Cupcakes</p>  <p>\$3 🧡🧡</p>	<p>Dessert table</p>  <p>\$7 🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Pizzas</p>  <p>\$5 🧡🧡</p>
<p>Icecream station</p>  <p>\$5 🧡🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Snack table</p>  <p>\$4 🧡🧡</p>	<p>Sandwiches</p>  <p>\$3 🧡</p>	<p>Magic show</p>  <p>\$7 🧡🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Bouncy Castle (outdoor)</p>  <p>\$8 🧡🧡🧡🧡🧡🧡</p>
<p>Face painting</p>  <p>\$4 🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Bubble Machine (outdoor)</p>  <p>\$3 🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Musical chair game</p>  <p>\$1 🧡🧡</p>	<p>Obstacle course (outdoor)</p>  <p>\$4 🧡🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Ring toss game (outdoor)</p>  <p>\$2 🧡🧡</p>
<p>Puppet show</p>  <p>\$5 🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Piñata</p>  <p>\$6 🧡🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Party hats</p>  <p>\$2 🧡</p>	<p>Birthday Banner</p>  <p>\$1 🧡</p>	<p>Goodie Bags</p>  <p>\$2 🧡🧡</p>
<p>Dance floor and lights</p>  <p>\$3 🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>DIY Craft</p>  <p>\$2 🧡🧡</p>	<p>Balloons</p>  <p>\$1 🧡🧡</p>	<p>Packet Juice</p>  <p>\$3 🧡🧡🧡</p>	<p>Bottled water</p>  <p>\$1 🧡</p>

Plan Your Birthday Challenge! 2

Special Event Cards

Extra Guest Arrives! Add \$2 to your budget!



Budget Cut! Uh oh! Your budget drops to \$15. Re-budget quickly!



Surprise Gift from a Friend: Choose any one \$2 item for free.



Rainy Weather: All outdoor activities (like bouncy castle, bubble machine, outdoor obstacle course, ring toss game) lose 1 Happiness Point.



Magical Discount! Pick one item and halve its cost.



Flash Sale! All food items are \$1 cheaper this round.



Grandparents Steps In! You may add \$3 to your budget, but discuss: "What will you do with the extra money?" and "What if grandparents couldn't help next time?"



Creative Thinking Bonus! If you include at least 1 item from each category (Food, Indoor Fun, Outdoor Games, Decoration), gain 2 bonus Happiness Points.



Last-Minute Rush! You must plan your party in under 3 minutes. Ready, set, go!



Budget Card



Total spending = \$ _____



Total Happiness Points = _____

Budget Card



Total spending = \$ _____



Total Happiness Points = _____