

birthday parties

frequently asked questions

When does the Museum offer birthday parties?

Birthday parties are available on Saturdays and Sundays. We offer a morning time slot from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and an afternoon time slot from 1:30 to 4:30 pm.

The first 30 minutes of each time slot is to be used for set up and the last 30 minutes is to be used for clean up.

What types of birthday celebrations are offered?

We currently offer 2 types of birthday party packages. Both packages include a free birthday t-shirt for the birthday child.

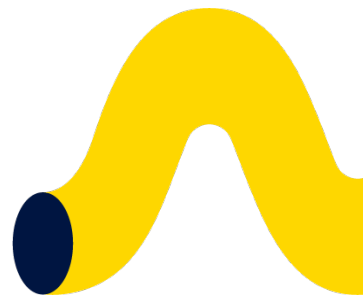
The **Dream Factory** package costs \$575 (plus an incidentals deposit) and includes a 3-hour rental of a semi-private lounge with communal tables and Museum admission for 22 guests.

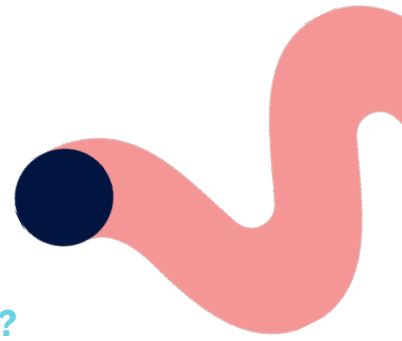
The **Tinkerers Treat** package costs \$750 (plus an incidentals deposit) and includes a 3-hour rental of the private *Tinkerers Studio* and Museum admission for 30 guests. This package also includes a hands-on activity, approximately 30 minutes long, for the birthday child and friends, facilitated by a Museum Educator. The activity will begin 90 minutes after the reservation begins. The following activity options are available:

- movin' + groovin': Make things GO with this car-themed party. Decorate your own vehicle and compete in an epic race!
- little artists: Get creative and hone your artistic talents with a hands-on art activity! Activity options include model magic monsters, tie-dye coffee filters, watercolor self-portraits, and paper collages inspired by DC artists Gene Davis or Alma Thomas.
- up + away: Explore the way things move through the air with handmade hovercrafts, whirly-gigs, and more!

How many party guests can attend?

The Dream Factory package allows admission for up to 22 guests and the Tinkerers Treat package allows admission for up to 30 guests. Guest limits are based on capacity limitations of the space. The total guest count includes all adults and children ages 1 and up, including the host family. If the actual guest count exceeds the applicable guest count limit, any additional guest (or the host) will be required to pay regular admission to enter the Museum, and party guests will be prohibited from entering the reserved space if it is determined that the number of guests will be unsafe.





How far in advance do I need to reserve the space for the party?

Parties can be booked up to 4 months in advance. We recommend you reserve your party at least 2 months in advance of your child's anticipated party date so that we can plan the best experience possible.

How do I book a birthday party?

Parties are booked on a first-come, first-served basis. To book your party, please visit www.nationalchildrensmuseum.org/host-an-event/birthday-parties/. Once you've purchased your birthday party, you will receive a confirmation email that includes an agreement to download and sign. Your booking will not be considered complete until a signed agreement is submitted to the Museum. The agreement must be submitted at least 2 weeks in advance of the birthday party date.

When is payment due?

Payment for the birthday party package and the incidentals deposit is due at the time the birthday party reservation is made.

Why do I have to pay an incidentals deposit?

A refundable \$125 incidentals deposit is charged along with the cost of the birthday party package to:

- ensure that the host and guests vacate the reserved space on time;
- cover any damages to the Museum or its property; and
- pay for additional cleaning if a significant number of items are left behind in the space.

The incidentals deposit will be refunded to the guest within 5 business days, unless it is needed to compensate the Museum for additional staff time, damages, and/or additional cleaning.

How early can I arrive to set up the party?

Entry to the Museum or the reserved space will not be granted until the reservation start time.

Can I extend the time my party ends?

Other parties may be booked before or after your reservation, so rules regarding the reservation beginning and ending times are strictly enforced with NO exceptions allowed. The reserved space must be vacated by the reservation end time or the incidentals deposit will not be refunded.

Can you provide a sample schedule for the party?

A sample schedule for your party may look like the following:

- 1:30 pm: Arrival and set up by host family.
- 2:00 – 3:30 pm: Arrival, sign in of guests, and free play time in the Museum. Open presents, serve cake, etc.
- 3:30 – 4:00 pm: A facilitated activity in the *Tinkerers Studio* with the Tinkerers Treat package.
- 4:00 – 4:30 pm: Guests depart and host family cleans up and vacates the party space.

Can I sign the waiver for kids coming to the party that are not mine?

Each adult guest, upon arrival, must sign a liability waiver for their child. The liability waiver can only be signed by the legal guardian of each child. Other adults are **not** allowed to sign for children for whom they are not a legal guardian.

Can parents drop off their kids and leave?

Parties at the Museum are not drop-off events. Parents will be responsible for their children at all times.

What food and beverage items are allowed and what items are prohibited?

Suggested items you **can** bring:

- goodie bags
- cake or cupcakes
- doughnuts
- individually-packaged snacks
- water or juice boxes
- non-alcoholic beverages

Please **do not** bring:

- catered entrees
- alcoholic beverages

No food may be delivered to the Museum from a third party except our café partner, Bluestone Lane, as noted below.



Does Bluestone Lane provide food options for the party?

Yes, Bluestone Lane catering is available for birthday parties hosted at National Children's Museum. To order catering from Bluestone Lane, place your order for pickup at the DC - West End location at www.bluestonelane.com/catering/. Input your party's date and 30 minutes ahead of your party's set-up time (i.e., 9 am or 1 pm). Once you complete your order, forward the confirmation to our team at groups@nationalchildrensmuseum.org. Our team will coordinate with Bluestone Lane to transport and set up your food at the start of your reservation. **You will not need to pickup your catering order.**

Can I decorate the space I reserve?

Decorations are limited to tabletop decorations. If any decorations are hung on the wall, they must be hung with tape **ONLY** and must not be permanently affixed to the walls, doors, fixtures, or ceiling, nor damage them in any way. A "Happy Birthday" banner will be provided and must be returned at the end of the party.

You **can** bring:

- tabletop decorations

Please **do not** bring:

- balloons (prohibited in federal buildings)
- piñatas
- glitter
- confetti
- silly string

What type of support does the staff provide?

Museum staff will provide the following support:

- Greet host family in the Museum at the reservation start time.
- Provide a cart to transport any party items to the reserved space for set up.
- Greet guests, provide wristbands, help facilitate the signing of liability waivers, and direct guests to the reserved space.
- A Museum Educator will be present when it is time to facilitate the hands-on activity for Tinkerers Treat parties.
- Supply waste receptacles for the parties.



What is your policy regarding reservation changes, cancellations, and refunds?

To request a change to the party date, at least 2 weeks advance notice is required, and the availability of a new date and time is not guaranteed.

If the Tinkerers Treat package is selected, the selected activity cannot be changed less than 2 weeks in advance of the reservation date.

Cancellations must be received at least 2 weeks prior to the reservation date to receive a refund. Except for cancellations within the required notice timeframe, refunds will not be granted for any reason.

Refunds will not be issued if any exhibit, including the *Dream Machine*, is closed at any time during the party for any reason.

Where can I park my car?

There are several private garages within close proximity to the Museum. The adjacent Ronald Reagan Building also has a 24-hour public garage. Rates vary per hour and vehicles are subject to inspection. If you use the Ronald Reagan Building Garage, you can park on any level; however, the Atrium North parking area, marked with green signs, is nearest to the Museum. Please note, because the Museum's main entrance is located off Woodrow Wilson Plaza, it is not possible to pull up directly in front to unload party supplies.

Which public transportation stops are nearest to the Museum?

The Museum is easily accessible by public transportation. We are located steps away from the Federal Triangle Metro station (orange, blue and silver lines) and are just three blocks from Metro Center Metro station (red line). Nearby bus routes include 30N, 30S, 32, 33, 34, 36, D6, and P6.

If you have any additional questions, please be in touch with our team at groups@nationalchildrensmuseum.org.

