

# How to celebrate special occasions during lockdown



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The pandemic has already had a major impact on daily life for children and young people, with schools closed again, exams cancelled and holidays abroad a distant memory.

It's easy to downplay the importance of a birthday or other special event, but with another UK lockdown during the cold winter months, it's important that children aren't left feeling like their lives have been put on hold again. What's more, a good party can provide a few hours of light relief during a very stressful time for us all.

The good news is that with a combination of creative thinking and some technological solutions, you can ensure those special days are still marked in style.

## 1. Organise a virtual party

Video-chatting apps such as Houseparty, Zoom and Skype are tailor-made for virtual parties. All offer the ability for friends to catch up online – though which one you choose will affect the size of the gathering, with Houseparty having a limit of eight guests while Skype can handle up to 50 and Zoom a whopping 100.

If you're celebrating a child's birthday – and depending on their age – you can set one up and leave them alone with their mates to enjoy themselves, whether having a good singalong, playing a game, doing a quiz or just catching up.

For maximum impact, you could contact your child's friends – or their parents – beforehand to arrange for it all to go ahead at a set time, then spring it on them as a surprise.

## **2. Produce a very special birthday video**

A more complicated, but potentially even more memorable option, for a birthday could be to make a short video with all of your child's friends and family sending them good wishes via video messages. Or how about putting together a video of all of their friends singing a line of their favourite song?

## **3. Throw a gaming party**

Here's another option that's well suited to a child or teenager's birthday: choose their favourite game, whether it's Animal Crossing, Fortnite, FIFA or anything else, and invite all of their friends to join them from their own homes. If you're missing a headset and are unable to chat through your device, you can always set up a video call at the same time.

## **4. Send cards through online delivery services**

No matter what age you are, everyone loves to receive cards. If you are no longer able to deliver a card in person or even send one the old-fashioned way, you can use an online delivery service such as [FunkyPigeon](#) – just be

sure to check the delivery time, because some are now taking longer than usual to reach the recipient.

Of course if you're living with someone who has a birthday, it might be nicer to make them one from scratch. Here you can let your creativity run wild, using whatever materials you have at home (old magazines and newspapers, art resources, cereal packets etc) to create a truly personal card that they'll want to have on show long after their birthday is over.

## **5. Camp-out inside**

Being stuck at home doesn't have to mean being boring. Turn your living room into a makeshift camping ground and your child can experience the excitement of sleeping (or at least playing) in a different environment.

You'll be surprised at how effective blankets and fairylights can be in turning an everyday room into something magical. Call up a fake campfire on your screen via YouTube for the finishing touch.

## **6. Order a special takeaway**

Many special occasions are marked with family meals at favourite restaurants. That's obviously out of the question right now – so bring the meal to your home instead. Plenty of restaurants are still doing deliveries through this period, with services such as Deliveroo, JustEat and UberEats all bringing professionally cooked meals to your doorstep.

Not only will you get to eat pizza, curry or fish and chips in your pyjamas, but you'll also help support local businesses. Just remember to request the social distancing delivery option, where the meal is left on your doorstep rather than handed directly to you.

## **7. Plan another celebration for when this is all over**

Even if you are having a virtual party, then, there's no reason why you can't arrange a physical one for later. It'll give you all something to look forward to, and just think how excited everyone will be when they can all be in a room together.