

## Kids Wedding Reception Activities

Not all brides and grooms want to exclude children from their wedding. Many are happy to welcome children into their wedding both as members of the wedding party and as guests.

Having children at a wedding, however, poses a myriad of problems. Do you leave the children to their own devices and hope they behave and don't get in the way? Do you provide a room with childcare so they are "present" but not too much under foot? Perhaps the best solution is a simple mix of both, with a smattering of fun built in.

First of all, if children are invited to the wedding, take into consideration the ages of the children. Babies will have to stay with mom and/or dad, for a variety of reasons. So planning to have all the children in another room might not be feasible. But if the children are toddlers up to about age 12, you can provide a separate room for them with childcare and make a number of activities available to them.

If the children will be in a separate room at the reception, you can provide a coloring table, perhaps a TV with an appropriate movie ready to roll, and some board games. That could probably be enough for the duration of the wedding reception. Be aware of a few things: there should be a ratio of at least 1 adult for every 5 children if the children are toddlers, or 1 adult to every 10 children if the kids are older. Don't expect the kids to take up the activities on their own, but rather tell the childcare provider to get the kids involved in the activities by doing them him or herself.

What if the children will be part of the reception festivities? What activities can be geared specifically to children at the reception? There are plenty of things you can do, really. You can certainly plan a coloring table at the back of the reception hall or room. There, you can provide loads of paper, coloring books, markers and crayons. Paints are not recommended, for obvious reasons, and moms will thank you if you remember to supply the kids with washable markers and crayons only.

The art table can be more than just coloring, however. Buy a huge bag of pipe cleaners. Kids can amuse themselves for long periods of time, making animals, odd figures and the like. Make sure you have at least 20 or more pipe cleaners for each child, however, as children can go through these quickly. Think about "clean" clay, the new products that don't stick to anything and don't leave a trace on furniture. With a few different colors, kids can create a variety of figures, faces or forms.

Many brides like to plan more formally for their small guests. There are several options if this is the route you want to take. One popular option is to have paid entertainment on hand just for the children. This can take place in a separate room or toward the back of the reception room or hall if it's large and the guest list is big. You can hire a clown or a balloon artist. You can have someone braid the children's hair and provide temporary tattoos. If there is a separate room available, you can even hire a children's musician to come and entertain the kids. The options are endless.

If no plans are made for the children, but they arrive at the wedding expecting entertainment, you'll have to make some plans. One option is a "child only" dance, which allows only the children on the dance floor. This is not only cute to watch, and could be entertaining as well, but it will bring a smile to the face of every grandma and grandpa present.

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