

Homeroom Parent Reference Guide

The Homeroom Parent Reference guide is an accumulation of ideas that have come from past and present homeroom parents. Please use THIS guide as a reference for planning your parties. Some of the games and crafts are universal with any party - just change the theme.

Please email Michelle Esterbrook at esterbrookm@gmail.com with your ideas.

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Halloween Party

Have a CD of spooky haunted house sounds playing while the kids eat and play games. For younger kid's interactive story time. "The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything"

Snacks/Drinks

- ✚ Green or orange fruit drinks; Apple Cider
- ✚ Halloween themed/decorated cookies
- ✚ Popcorn/popcorn balls
- ✚ Caramel apples (apple slices with caramel dip)
- ✚ Chocolate dipped pretzel rods.
- ✚ Fruits & Veggies

Crafts

- ✚ Simple Foam craft picture frames from Oriental Trading or craft store. Take Polaroid/ picture of each student in costume to put inside the frame.
- ✚ Egg carton pumpkin. Have kids color egg cartons with orange marker, make jack-o-lantern faces, and then fill with a treat.

Games

- ✚ Mad Libs with a Halloween theme are always a hit – the party helper can do these with them as a group while they're having their snack.
- ✚ Freeze Dancing to "The Monster Mash" song (turn on song, and periodically stop it – when music stops, kids have to 'freeze' in place until the music starts again)
- ✚ Candy guessing Game: Fill a jar with some type of candy (make sure you know how many are in it!!!). Have each student guess how many are in the jar, write it on a slip of paper with his/her name on it, and put it into a paper bag. At the end of the party, whoever had the closest guess gets to take the jar of candy home! (You might want to bring a bag for just the candy)
- ✚ Pin the Nose on the Jack-o-Lantern (If you can't find in store, use poster board to make the Jack-o-Lantern.
- ✚ Halloween Bingo

Halloween Station Option

- ✚ Set up 4 stations: 1-Costumes, 2-Snacks, 3-Crafts, 4-Halloween stories. Children rotate between the 4 stations.

Winter/Holiday Party

Snacks/Drinks

- + Hot Chocolate – kids love this! I used a 24C coffeemaker to heat water, then added it to Swiss Miss hot cocoa mix with marshmallows in a cup for each student. (if it's too hot, you can always either add some cold milk or water to it)
- + Cookies!
- + Popcorn
- + Cheese and crackers.

Crafts

- + Snowflake or snowman ornaments (check out Oriental Trading Co. for inexpensive ornaments)
- + Cookie Decorating: Undecorated sugar or gingerbread cookies, icing (various colors/flavors), sprinkles and candies for decorating
- + String fruit loops onto string for a necklace or pipe cleaner for a bracelet.

Games

- + Bingo
- + Cold Snowball (hot potato).
- + Snowman Hangman game: Have kids play Hangman as a group (led by the party helper, done on the chalkboard using winter-themed words). Each time a word is guessed correctly, each student receives a part of a snowman making kit (ex. A pipe, a black hat, a scarf, pieces of coal or stones for eyes, wooden nose, mouth – all available inexpensively from Oriental Trading – you can be creative and find objects to use for free, as well. I collected old polar fleece & various fabrics from friends and cut it into scarves & had enough for 22 kids). At the end of the game, each child goes home with a complete snowman kit! This was a huge hit!!!
- + Pass the Package: Wrap a box of candy canes a whole bunch of times. Have the kids sit in a circle, put on a winter song (Like Frosty the Snowman), and have them begin passing the package around to one another. Stop the music periodically – the child holding the package when the music stops unwrap one layer of the wrapping. Begin the music again. Kids continue to pass the package & unwrap a layer each time the music is stopped until all layers are unwrapped. The child to unwrap the last layer gets to open the package & pass out a candy cane to each student in the class.
- + Winter themed Mad Libs
- + Pin the carrot on the snowman: (Check Oriental Trading Co.) or homemade.

✚ Dress the snowman: Break the class into groups. Each group is given a roll of toilet paper and assorted winter clothing like scarves, mittens, hats, etc. (party hats are great to use) One person in each group is the snowperson and the rest of the group must dress the snowperson in each amount of time (about 2 minutes). The first group finished wins.

✚ Winter Word Scramble:

Supplies: Index cards (you'll need LOTS of them) with a letter on each one to spell out a winter word, paper lunch bags (one for each team)

Instructions: Divide class into teams of 4 or 5 students. Each team receives a paper bag containing a word (each team will have a different word, but all should have a word of the same length), each letter of which is written on individual index cards. On "GO!" the teams dump out their index cards and try to unscramble the word. The first team to unscramble their cards into a word wins a prize. You can do several rounds of this game, working from shorter words to longer words (see word bank below.)

Tip: paper-clip together each set of index cards by word and put all words of the same length into separate bags – switch each team's words easily this way by just grabbing the next word, removing the clip, and dumping it in their bag.

Word Bank for "Winter Word Scramble":

8 letter words: freezing, sledding, flurries, blizzard, snowball

7 letter words: snowman, skating, snowing, icicles, crystal

6 letter words: skiing, icicle, frozen, frosty, flurry

5 letter words: igloo, frost, cocoa, snowy, skate

✚ **Indoor Snowball Fight! (a little noisy, but FUN, and worth it!):**

THIS WAS AN ALL-TIME FAVORITE!!! (my kids are in their teens, and they still do this at home occasionally!)

Supplies: Small, round white balloons, inflated – enough for two per student white tablecloth or sheet (either an old one or a cheap plastic one will do) to use as a divider.

Instructions: Move desks & tables out of the way – leave a nice, big area to play. Divide the class into two 'teams', one on each side of the sheet divider. Have two adults hold the sheet up in the middle of the area to separate the teams, but low enough that the kids can still see each other. Arm each student with at least one 'snowball' balloon. On "GO!" the students throw their snowballs over the divider at the other team. You can set a time limit for the snowball

fight, and when time is up, all players must stop. Each team counts the number of snowballs on their side of the divider. The team with the least # of snowballs on their side is the winner of that round. Winners can either receive a small prize (a treat – maybe a tiny candy cane, etc.) or that team may choose the next activity.

Valentine Party

Snacks/Drinks

- + Hot cocoa with heart shaped marshmallows
- + Chocolate covered strawberries or plain strawberries
- + Cheese, pretzels, valentine cookies, brownies

Crafts

- + Sign Language 'I Love You' hand shape craft foam pins
- + Decorate heart-shaped sugar cookies
- + Decorate a construction paper heart with tissue paper (heart is red, tissue is white and pink).
- + Coupons - design 5 coupons for each child on the computer, cut to same size with the words "This Coupon Good For _____". Provide envelope for each child. They can decorate the envelope. Have kids create their own Valentine coupons to give to family members. (i.e. hug, kiss, taking out the trash, doing the dishes, cleaning their bedroom, helping with laundry, etc.)

Games

- + Bingo
- + Don't get stuck without a Heart - have children sit in a circle and pass around small paper hearts to music. There should be one less heart than child. When the music stops, the child without a heart is out.
- + Stacking Hearts - Give kids 30 seconds to stack as many candy hearts as they can (this is harder than it seems... the kids really enjoy it)
- + Blindfold Drawing Hearts - Kids need a sheet of paper and a red crayon. Each child needs to put the paper on top of their head and draw a heart. Give candy prize for best heart.

- ✚ Valentine Word Scramble: Similar to “Winter Word Scramble”. (In this variation, all the teams get the same word to unscramble. The first team to do so wins the round)

Supplies: Index cards (you’ll need LOTS of them) with a letter on each one to spell out a winter word, paper lunch bags (one for each team)

Instructions: Divide class into teams of 4 or 5 students. Each team receives a paper bag containing a word, each letter of which is written on individual index cards. On “GO!” the teams dump out their index cards and try to unscramble the word. The first team to unscramble their cards into a word wins a prize.

Tip: paper-clip together each set of index cards by word and put all words of the same length into separate bags – switch each team’s words easily this way by just grabbing the next word, removing the clip, and dumping it in their bag.

Note: make sure the cards are not IN ORDER in the bag! They should not be able to pull the cards out & lay the letters down in order right away!

Word Bank for “Valentine Word Scramble”:

Cupid, Chocolate, Sweetheart, Flowers, Valentine, Hugs & Kisses

- ✚ Heart Estimating: Print heart from internet (www.coloring.ws is a great site for kids coloring pages for any topic or holiday). Give each child candy hearts and have them guess how many it will take to fill the heart. Then let them fill it in to see how close they were.
- ✚ Pass the Heart: Kids line up in two teams, pass a heart over the head and under the legs. First team finished wins.
- ✚ Web of Kindness:

Supplies: Ball of pink or red yarn

Instructions: Divide kids to sit or stand in a circle, and hand one child the ball of yarn. That child must say something nice about another student, and then, throw that student the ball of yarn while holding on to the end of the yarn. The child who catches the ball of yarn must wrap it around his/her wrist once, say something nice about another student, and throw him/her the yarn. Play continues this way (students do NOT need to go in order around the circle! It’s best when they are throwing across.) until all students have received the ball of yarn and have had something nice said about them and have said something nice about someone else. At the end, the students must untangle themselves from the Web of Kindness!

Variation: You can simply cut out enough paper hearts for each student and have each put his/her name on their own heart. They then pass their hearts around the class, and each student must write something nice about the owner of the heart (maybe even one nice thing about them in a single word, ex.: nice, pretty, helpful). At the end, each student receives his/her heart back with all the kind things written about them by their classmates. This is a nice thing for the kids to be able to keep. My daughter still has hers on her bulletin board from 2nd grade. She's now a Junior.

✚ Valentine Mad Libs

✚ Candy guessing Game: Fill a decorated jar with some type of Valentine themed candy like Conversation Hearts or Hershey Kisses (make sure you know how many are in it!!!). Have each student guess how many are in the jar, write it on a slip of paper with his/her name on it, and put it into a paper bag. At the end of the party, whoever had the closest guess gets to take the jar of candy home! (You might want to bring a bag Ziploc bag if you only want to give away the candy)

✚ Love Letters Guessing Game: These are a little more challenging, because you must write them yourself. Unfortunately, I can't find my original copies. The idea is that you write a brief love letter from one famous person or character to his or her true love (I remember writing one from Shrek to Fiona, one from Cinderella to Prince Charming, one from Britney Spears to Justin Timberlake – yes, it was years ago, but you get the idea). The letters should have 'clues' to who wrote it to whom. Read them aloud, and the kids must guess who wrote it & to whom. It's just a fun activity.

✚ Freeze Dancing: Turn on a Valentine-themed song (ex. "Sugar, Sugar"). Students begin dancing. Periodically pause the music – when music stops, students must 'freeze' in place until you turn it back on again.

✚ Heart Shaped Boxes: Buy heart shaped boxes at a craft store and use stickers and markers to decorate. Line finished box with tissue paper and fill with candy. Kids can give these to their favorite valentine.

✚ Valentine Heart Match-Up: (homemade) There are several variations to this game:

Supplies: Paper hearts (laminated or un-laminated), marker, scissors
Cut out paper hearts (I laminated mine, so I could use them year after year).

Instructions: Each student receives one half of a heart shape at random. Students must then mingle around the room trying to find the classmate with the match for their heart half. When the pair finds one another, they come to you for a Valentine's Day treat.

- Variation 1 Puzzle Hearts; Cut each heart in two in random 'puzzle' fashion, so that no two heart pairs are alike.
- Variation 2 Couple Hearts; Cut each heart in two halves, each half having the name of one person of a famous couple on them (ex. Brad Pitt/Angelina Jolie, or Cinderella/Prince Charming – I did an entire Disney theme for this one year for a Kindergarten class); can also be cut as puzzles.
- Variation 3 Riddle Hearts; Cut each heart in two halves, one half having a Valentine's riddle written on it, the other half with the answer to the riddle; can also be cut as puzzles.

Riddle suggestions for Variation 3

Q: What did the boy elephant say to the girl elephant on Valentine's Day?

A: I love you a ton!

Q: What did the caveman give his wife on Valentine's Day?

A: Ughs and kisses

Q: If your Aunt ran off and got married, what would you call her?

A: Auntelope

Q: What did the boy light bulb say to the girl light bulb on Valentine's Day?

A: I love you watts and watts

Q: What do you call a very small Valentine?

A: A Valentiny!

Q: What did the boy octopus say to the girl octopus on Valentine's Day?

A: I want to hold your hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand!

Q: What did the boy pickle say to the girl pickle on Valentine's Day?

A: You mean a great dill to me!

Q: What did the boy squirrel say to the girl squirrel on Valentine's Day?

A: I'm nuts about you!

Q: What did the farmer give his wife on Valentine's Day?

A: Hogs & kisses!

Q: What did the boy snake say to the girl snake on Valentine's Day?

A: Give me a hug and a hiss!

Q: What kind of flowers do you never give on Valentine's Day?

A: Cauliflowers!

Q: What did the boy bird say to the girl bird on Valentine's Day?

A: Let me call you Tweetheart!

End-Of-The-Year-Picnic

Snacks/Drinks

- ✚ Kids usually pack their own lunches, parents volunteer to donate drinks/desserts
- ✚ Fruit punch
- ✚ Water bottles
- ✚ Popsicles
- ✚ Cookies
- ✚ Pretzels

Crafts

- ✚ Pet Rocks – Kids decorate rocks with googly eyes, ribbon, buttons, fun fur, paint or anything else you have around the house. You can get a 5 gallon bucket of rocks for \$2.50 at Reedy's. This craft can be used for any seasonal party.

Games

- ✚ **Water Balloon Toss – HUGE HIT!!!** (be sure to have lots of water balloons prepared)

Instructions: Have kids pair off & form two long lines, with paired kids being across from one another. Start with the two lines about 5 yards away from one another, with the students on one side having the water balloons. Have them throw their balloon to their partner across from them. Those who catch it step back one big step and throw it back to their partner. If that person catches it, they step back, and so on. Any pair whose balloon breaks must sit down. The winning pair gets a prize.

Note: I remember someone did an egg toss one year, but it's messy – the playground was a disaster afterward, and kids were covered in raw egg.

- ✚ **Win a Goldfish**

Have you ever gone to a carnival and the kids threw ping pong balls into little cups or fish bowls to win a goldfish? That's the look I was trying for. I taped the bottom of clear, plastic, punch style cups to a large flat tray so they wouldn't tip over. I filled the cups halfway with royal blue colored shredded paper (the kind they use in baskets and gift bags) and put 1 to 3 red Swedish fish in each cup. They looked cute - like little fish bowls. I put the tray on a desk in the center of open space and set rubber mats a few feet away. I made up cards with easy questions - I wanted the game to be fun, not stressful. The kids answered their question, then earned 3 ping pong balls to toss into the "goldfish bowls". The game went quickly, and all the kids won multiple Swedish fish.

✚ Sack Race

✚ Three-legged Race

✚ Wheelbarrow Race

✚ Rocket Math:

I picked up an educational poster that had numbers 1 through 10 and hung it on the white board. I bought two of those stickies, slap hands and tied them into two balls. I told the kids they were "slime balls". The kids threw the two slime balls at the numbers. They had to add whatever numbers their slime balls landed on. When they gave the correct answer, they got a Hershey Kiss. I only did addition, but you could do subtraction, multiplication, etc. I wanted the game to be fun, not stressful, and told the kids if they didn't know the answer, they could use their fingers and toes or even get help from a friend.

✚ Relay Races

Dragon's Tail Race: Need a long strip of fabric for each team. Divide the class into four teams. Have teams form a 'dragon' by holding on to one another's hips (like a Conga line), with the last person in line tucking the strip of fabric into his/her belt loop. The object is for each dragon to prevent the other dragons from catching its tail. Once a dragon loses its tail, that team is out. The last dragon remaining with its tail is the winning team.

Egg on the Spoon Relay: Divide class into teams, divide each team in half, facing one another. The first player on each team has an egg on a spoon and must walk to the next player on his/her team without dropping & breaking the egg, pass the spoon & egg to the next person on the team, and the play follows in the same manner.

Candy Relay: Break kids evenly into groups and have a pair of mittens for each group. First child in group puts on mittens and tries to unwrap a piece of candy. When child is finished, he/she may put the candy in mouth and hand the mittens to the next person. The first group finished wins the race.

Balloon Pop Relay: (this was done at the pavilion by the basketball court; this relay is better for older kids) Break kids evenly into groups and have each child blow up a balloon. The first person in each line races to the bench, sits on his/her balloon and tries to pop it. After they pop their balloon, they run back to the line and the next person goes. The first team to finish is the winner.

Bucket of Water Relay - Just as much fun as the water balloons and half the work. You need 4 buckets (2 of the buckets need to be the same), 2 sponges and water.

Draw a black line about 6-8 inches from the bottom of the 2 buckets that are the same.
Split class into 2 teams. Place 1 bucket filled with water in front of each team. Place the empty buckets with black line on the opposite end.
The kids take the sponge, dunk it in the bucket of water, race to the bucket with the black line, squeeze the water out of the sponge and race back. They continue this until one of the team's water reaches the black line. Lots of fun!

✚ **Sidewalk Chalk**

✚ **Give kids time to play on the playground!**

Communicating with the Class

The following are some sample letters from Homeroom Parents with an explanation of how they plan and divide the work for parties. Some HRP do all the planning for parties, others have parent volunteers supply food and plan games and crafts for the parties. Please include all parents that have returned a Classroom parent form.

Below are sample of the letter sent out in the beginning of the year.

Hello Everyone,

My name is HRP NAME. ASSISTANT HRP NAME and I will be the Homeroom Parents for TEACHER. I wanted to touch base with you as we begin a new school year. If at any time you have questions, please feel free to contact me at EMAIL or text or call at PHONE.

We have 3 classroom parties this year. I would like to organize the volunteers for the year to ensure that everyone that would like to volunteer will have the opportunity. A sign-up sheet for classroom party volunteers will be posted in TEACHERS NAME classroom at open house on DATE.

Party Dates

Halloween Party on Friday, October ___ at 1:30-3pm

Winter Party on Friday, December ___ at 10:30am-12pm

Valentine's Day Party on Friday, February ___ at 1:30-3pm

You will receive an email 1-2 weeks before each party with a list of specific items needed. Choose the item you would like to send to class and reply to all. (Or use a sign-up Genius)

We have some children in the class with allergies. TEACHERS NAME has asked all food sent into class be pre-package with food labels. Our class parties will gluten, peanut and tree-nut free.

Please remember you must have Clearances to volunteer in the Classroom. If you have any questions about the clearance process, please let me know.

I look forward to working with you all throughout the school year.

Sample Email of follow up (or send a sign-up Genius type list to class)

Hello Everyone,

The Halloween party is on Friday, October___. The parade starts at 2:30pm.

The following items are needed for the party. Please remember we have gluten, peanut and tree nut allergies in the class.

There are 24 kids in the class.

- *Plates*
- *Napkins*
- *Small water bottles*
- *Cheese stick*
- *Grapes or some kind of fruit*
- *2 bags Mini Marshmallow (for games)*
- *2 bags candy corn (for games)*
- *4 rolls toilet paper (for games)*

Please email and reply to all, if you are interested in supplying any of the above items. When sending in any items for the Halloween Party label for TEACHERS NAME AND GRADE grade party. Please reply to all on the email so that everyone will know what is being sent into class.

Thank you,

Party Plan Sent to Teacher

Hello TEACHER'S NAME,

Here is the Plan for the Halloween Party on Friday, October __ at 1:30-3:00. The parents coming in to volunteer are_____.

Parade starts at 2:30pm. Kids can put on costumes at the start of the Party.

We have 4 activities. My thought is to have them rotate through the first 3 activities and after parade we can do the mummy wrap, take off costumes and have snacks. I have a few additional minute to win it games in case we have extra time.

1. Halloween feel box- is putting this together and will make sure nut and peanut free.

2. Minute to win it station 1-

Ghost Booger Pick-Up: Using a straw see how many mini marshmallows you can suck up and move to a plate or container in one minute. Person with the most marshmallows on their plate wins.

Separation Anxiety The object of the game is to separate a bowl of skittles by color. The person to separates first wins

3. Minute to win it station 2-

Noodle Pick-up - Place six uncooked pieces of penne pasta near the edge of a table. Give the player a skewer to hold in his/her mouth and use to try to pick up all the penne noodles.

Candy Corn Stack

See which player can stand the most pieces of candy corn upright before a minute is up.

4. Mummy wrap- kids are placed in groups of 4, with one student assigned to be the mummy. They are given rolls of toilet paper and have a time limit to try to make the best mummy.

Extra Minute to win it in case we have extra time or to fill in around parade.

Movin' On Up – Give player a stack of 39 orange cups with one black cup on the bottom. Moving one cup at a time, player must move the black cup from bottom to the top.

Vampire teeth- Object is to transfer marshmallows from one plate to another (with your mouth) while wearing vampire teeth. Player with the most transferred marshmallows wins!

Halloween Memory - Halloween related items will be placed on a tray. Give each player a paper and pencil. Players have 60 seconds to view the items on the tray. When the time is up, cover up the tray. Players write down everything they can remember seeing on the tray. The person that gets the most items is the winner.

Snack:

- Rice Crispy Treats- I will make they are gluten and nut/peanut free
- Cheese sticks
- Fruit
- Water bottles

Do you think this is good? The Gluten and Nut/peanut allergy make it tough. Let me know if you have anything to add for snack.

Please let me know if you have any adjustments, additions or deletions to the plan.

Thanks so much,

Sample Letter

Hello parents!

As Teacher mentioned yesterday, there is a large number of parents interested in helping this year. HRP name and I will be organizing volunteers for the classroom parties. No one will be at all the parties, but I want to be sure that everyone who would like to help gets an opportunity.

Important Notes:

- 1. Everyone **must** have clearance to be in the classroom.*
- 2. No siblings are permitted at parties. If you are having trouble securing a sitter, please let me know and I will try to switch you to another event.*
- 3. If there are any Dads who are interested, please let me know. Right now, all I have are the mother's names.*

Teacher class has 4 parties planned this year:

<i>Halloween</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Winter</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Valentine's Day</i>	<i>2-14-2012</i>
<i>End of Year</i>	<i>TBA in May</i>

Please e-mail me your first, second and third choice for parties. I will try to get everyone their first choice, but know that I cannot guarantee it. When the list is completed, I will e-mail everyone their assigned date, so that you can mark it on your calendar. As we get closer to the date, I will contact you to see which "job" you would like (craft, snack or game). Please do NOT ask for your "job" now, as it will be really confusing.

I think this will be a really fun and exciting year for the kids.

Thank you,

HRP name

It is helpful to post a volunteer sign-up at open house for party volunteers. Parents are in the "mode" at the Open House to sign up for things and are excited to help. One other tip is to ask for Holiday Party in November.

End of Year Gift Letter

The following is a sample letter for the end of year gift. We can ask for donations. This sample letter asks the parent(s) to send the donation to school in the envelope provided. This HRP also included an envelope with the letter to send the donations

back to school so that the amount of the donation will remain anonymous. Mark each envelope with "**Please send home with Your Child's Name**".

Dear Parent,

The end of the year is almost here! Teacher's Name truly enjoys being a teacher. His/Her passion and dedication for teaching have made a difference in all our children. I will be collecting money towards a gift for Teachers Name. The gift will be from the entire _____ grade class. We plan to purchase a _____. Anything left over will go towards a gift certificate.

If you would like to contribute towards the gift, please send your donation to school with your child in the envelope provided. I would like all donations by DEADLINE. The class will give Teachers Name the gift before the end of the year or at class picnic.

If you have any questions please contact me,

Thank you,

Websites and Other Notes

- ✚ Check Dollar Store, Craft Store & Oriental Trading for reasonably priced supplies.
- ✚ Bingo & guessing games are great for any party.
- ✚ Check internet for Halloween, holiday/winter or Valentine ideas. (i.e. Google "Kids Halloween Crafts", "Kids Valentine Parties" or "Kids Winter Parties"). Google images are also helpful. Just type in what you are looking for with images or click on the images in side bar.
- ✚ <http://www.dltk-cards.com/bingo/> Website can make bingo cards coupons and much more.
- ✚ <http://www.kaboose.com/> ideas for games and crafts
- ✚ <http://familyfun.go.com/> ideas for games and crafts
- ✚ <http://www.amazingmoms.com/> ideas for games and crafts