

Hello Readers,

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by Rebecca Wallace



[Anne Robert Photography](#)

When my son turned one, I planned a beautiful celebration; after all, it was a big day for both me and my baby. I baked for hours and sent my poor husband on a wild goose chase in search of lime green balloons to perfectly match the polka-dot decor.

I was so worried about the presentation, the food and whether or not people were having a good time, that I didn't focus much on the actual birthday boy. I didn't get a snapshot of him eating his first slice of cake or "blowing" out his first candle (to be honest, I don't have any pictures of him from that night). I've always regretted this.

Last weekend marked my son's 2nd birthday and I was determined to plan differently. I wanted the celebration to be special and unique but not at his expense. I asked my close friend Anne (whose little girl shares a February birthday) to do a joint party. As we worked out the details we agreed that the party needed to 1) be about the kids 2) remain low-cost and 3) be stress-free!

We decided on a Valentine's Day theme and started out by emailing an invitation to avoid the cost of cards and postage (granted my friend is a photographer and her husband a graphic design guru so the results were prettier than any card I've seen). We shopped the dollar store for décor, hit up post-Valentine's day sales for ingredients and supplies, and used odds and ends from our homes for the rest.



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The party was fun! The kids played pin-the-tail-on-cupid and "bought" popcorn boxes and candy with carnival tickets--both were dollar store finds. We ate chilled raspberry soup, munched on [triple chocolate cookies](#), and drank sparkling grape juice--the menu was tasty, but simple to prepare. Lastly, we ended the night with a magic show (which made the night) performed by our good friend and master magician Eric.

Instead of concentrating on being the hostess with the mostess, I made an effort to enjoy the night and focus on my son. And I took lots of pictures of the birthday boy blowing out his candles.

*Becca*

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**Rebecca Wallace** - *Rebecca Wallace is the co-founder of Store and Style.*