

Kids' Birthday Parties

Had my daughter's 2nd birthday party over the weekend, and it was a blast. Family and friends came from far and wide, and my daughter recognized the "Happy Birthday" song I've been singing to her the past couple of weeks when everyone sang it to her. On a side note, I have a hint for parents everywhere, including myself the next time I throw a kids' birthday party: have something ready to give the kids to occupy them before the party, otherwise excitement and anticipation will get the best of them, ruining moods of kids *and* parents. My 3 kids were so anxious before the birthday party last weekend that they were running around, fighting, and even tantruming. I would advise giving the birthday child his or her present early (if they can all play with it without fighting!) or setting aside some kind of toy for all of your kids. Better yet, line up someone who can take the kids out of the house all together and let them arrive a mere 15 minutes before the rest of the guests – now that would have been bliss. It's just impossible to get last minute party preps finished with 3 (or any number, for that matter) wild children running amok. And forget about keeping the house clean while waiting for the guests to arrive. Here we are on Saturday, trying to keep the kids sane and serve lunch all while getting things ready for the party. Then we had to clean up the mess the kids made during lunch really quick before the guests began arriving, after making sure that they actually ate something in their excitement. The formula added up to one hectic pre-party morning and early afternoon, with the tantrum-thrower losing her voice before the party began.

But overall, it was lots of fun; especially getting to see family who aren't often able to make the journey to Ohio from Illinois. I know the birthday girl appreciated it and had lots of fun too, and I want to thank everyone who was a part of her special day. Thanks for the gifts and thanks most of

all for being there to wish Disney a happy 2nd birthday. Special thanks goes to justj and his family for the very special gifts they bestowed upon our family; as well as Carol and Megan who also were thoughtful about giving each of the girls a present. This helped alleviate much fighting later in the day while we were suffering birthday party comedown. Another special thanks to the family who travelled hundreds of miles to be there for Disney on her special day. Family and friends are the BEST!

BELOW: Disney eating her birthday cupcake



My Kids

Everywhere we go, I get the comment, “You must have your hands full.” Since I usually only have my younger two with me while the older two are in school, people have no idea how right they are! Here are some recent pictures of my angels – they grow so fast and this is for relatives and people who haven’t seen them in awhile:

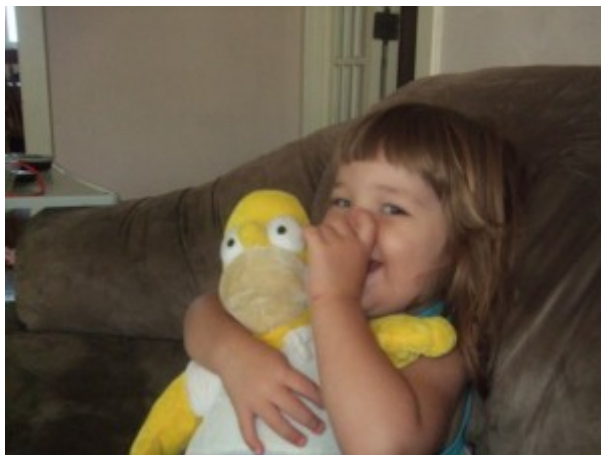
Christopher is a Cubs fan, of course!



Good thing I checked on Christopher during his "tummy time" – this is what I found and he wasn't even making a peep!



Disney loves her Homer doll even though she calls him "SpongeBob"



Here are all 4 of them together: Disney is almost 2, Sammie is 4, Taylor is 8, and Christopher is 2½ months



Christopher doesn't have the hang of holding his own bottle yet



*Everyone says Sammie and Disney look like twins, years apart.
Sammie really wanted us to take this picture
of them holding her Samantha sign – no one had the heart to
tell her it was backwards*



The Question Phase – Already?

My daughter Disney is not yet 2 and has already entered the question phase – a time of life when a child asks questions about anything and everything. It seems a little early for this; I don't seem to remember her two older sisters entering the question phase until about 3½ or 4 years old. Heck, at Disney's age Samantha was busy painting with poop!

But as we know, all kids are different (thank goodness for that because we already have a Sammie), and so we welcome Disney's transition into the question phase. Since it's just beginning, she doesn't yet ask questions about how things work, but rather about where her favorite people are. It's really cute since she gets this little inquisitive look on her face and because she's not even 2 yet, her questions aren't very well formed. We know what she means though, and try to answer the best we can. Some of her favorite questions are: "What Daddy doin'?" "Where Taywer (translation: big sister Taylor) go?" "What Sammie doin'?"

I guess most of her questions do revolve around the whereabouts of her loved ones... an example of her super-sweet nature. Disney truly cares about other people and she is such a sweet little girl – always saying please and thank you even when it's not expected of her. So this isn't a full example of the questions phase – that title will be reserved for the sometimes difficult-to-answer questions that revolve around "why"? Like... Why is the sky blue? Why does Sammie get more candy than I do? Why can't we have a kitty? Why do I have to go to school? Why is Mommy's hair turning gray?

Disney's inquisitive face:



A Whole New World

During our community theater's run of *The Nerd*, they designated one of the nights "80's Night" since the play was set in 1985. I enjoyed the opportunity to visit the local thrift stores with a mission – looking for components to complete my 80's look. 2 thrift stores are within walking distance so I just packed up the little ones in the double stroller and off we went. I found things with ease – a gaudy Mickey Mouse sweatshirt that I cut up to make it off-the-shoulder, a black lacy Madonna-like skirt, jelly shoes, hoop earrings, leggings, ankle socks... I was ready to go!

And of course, what 80's look is complete without makeup and lots of it? I read a hint on a website about dressing for 80's parties – "In the 80's, we didn't accessorize – we "excessorized" and LOVED it!" So I braided my wet hair in the morning, and by evening when I took out the braids, I achieved the "crimped" hair look I was going for. I pulled out the electric blue nail polish (though I ended up regretting that later since I forgot to buy nail polish remover and I was stuck with electric blue nail polish for a few days until I had the time to get to Walmart – OOPS), and I piled on the

purple and blue eye shadow. It was lots of fun to get dressed up like a goofball – I may consider being an 80's time machine traveler for Halloween. But anyway, while I was getting ready for 80's night, I had a flock of admirers. My 3 little girls aren't used to me putting on makeup, dressing up, painting my nails, or spending lots of time on my hair (note to self – next time I dress 80's, I need some Aquanet!) – I'm just not the kind of gal who does – or has the time to do, for that matter – these things regularly. It was like a whole new world for them, and they gawked in awe as they watched me get ready. My oldest kept running up to her room to look for jewelry to use – everyone wanted to help, which was like a whole new world for *me*.

80's night was a few weeks ago, and the girls are still asking to have their nails painted and for us to do each other's makeup, much to my husband's dismay. He's never liked makeup and says he wants our girls to be at least 18 before they can wear it. I've tried explaining to him that there is something innate in little girls that make them like dressing up and putting makeup on – it's just how little girls are made. Being a male, he doesn't get it of course, and so I imagine we'll have many a debate in this house once the girls get to the teenage years and want to wear makeup regularly. For now, I don't have a problem using it as a "toy" once in a while, as long as it's supervised and I can guide my girls to having the right opinions about makeup, especially when it comes to self-esteem issues – makeup does not make you prettier, you do not NEED makeup, it can be harmful to your face if you use it incorrectly, etc. So until they become teenagers, this is a way we can have fun together, and I also view it as an important bonding experience. One of the things I remember doing with my sister the most while we were growing up is her doing my hair and makeup, and I don't remember ever fighting while we were doing that. Anyone who knows my girls realizes how much we need an activity that Taylor and Sammie can do together without fighting! So if you see me walking around

with a hideous makeup job someday, just remember that my face was probably painted by an 8, 4, or 2 year old!

****YOU ASKED FOR IT!!!****



Kids Write the Darndest Email Forwards