



This Special Graduation Party Planning Guide was created to help you plan and organizes the perfect high school graduation party for your special Grad!

Just think about it, your baby has grown up to be a very special young man or woman and graduation, the event that is one of the most important in their lives and your's, is just a month or two away. It seems like only yesterday that you brought home a cute little bundle from the hospital and now they are talking about college, trade schools, jobs, apartments or even the military!

Without a doubt, high school graduation can be one of the most exciting times in your life and in theirs. You want it to be special and to be memorable but you also want it to be fun and as easy as possible on everyone involved. An important thing to remember while you are planning the big event is that your child will be very preoccupied with a lot of things in their final few months of high school. This is a real big and very emotional event for them as they will be saying good-bye to friends, teammates, teachers, coaches and others who have filled their lives for many years.

They are leaving all those things behind and looking to an exciting and unknown future. With all of this in mind, your friends at [One-Stop Rental](#) have put this graduation planning guide together for you to make planning a wonderful and memorable graduation party for your child a lot easier and less stressful.

- First, remember that this party is for you as well. You are going to be seeing a lot of old friends, relatives and all those kids who have been visiting you for so many years. Proper party planning will make it a lot less stressful and also makes it easier to enjoy the party so when the day arrives you have time to spend with your grad and your guests.
- Date - Pick your date as far in advance as possible. While this may seem fairly obvious, you need to consider out-of-town guests who may need to make arrangements for time off from work, buy airline tickets and make hotel reservations. You will also want to coordinate the dates and times with your friends and neighbors and the parents of your children to avoid conflicts. Often, you may be able to spread the cost of the party among a couple of families by having the party at a common time and location.
- Remember that your child may be going to several other parties being held by their friends so you need to let them know the times when they need to be at your house and their party.
- Reserve Hotel - If you have several out-of-town guests who will need hotel rooms, you can often get a special rate with a local hotel by reserving a "block of rooms." The hotel will hold a certain number (or block) of rooms for your guests at a special rate as long as the rooms are reserved far enough in advance.



- Will you be having an indoor or outdoor party? If it is outdoors, be sure to call [One Stop Rental](#) as far in advance to reserve your tables, chairs, a tent and other accessories so that they are available for your date. Our party planning experts will help you pick out the best items for your party and can also help you with party planning details to make it a lot easier on you.
- Guest list - Plan your guest list. Be sure to ask your grad who they would like to invite. Invitations are typically ordered about three months prior to the graduation date. Once again, remember that a lot of companies that supply these items will be very busy so it is better to be safe and order far in advance.
- Invitations - Send invitations about six weeks prior to the party so your guests have time to plan. You may even wish to send several invitations out earlier to your out-of-town guests so they can make reservations. Be sure to include an RSVP so you can plan your menu!
- Thank you notes – You will also want to order thank you notes so your grad can thank guests for presents. If you order them with your invitations, you may get a discount. You can also check your local greeting card or party supply store to see what types of invitations and thank you cards they carry.
- Outdoor party? If you are planning an outdoor party, we do strongly recommend you reserve a tent. Late May and early June weather is pretty unpredictable here in Greater Cincinnati. If it is hot and sunny, your guests and food are protected from the sun and if it rains, they are protected from getting wet.
- Will you be holding a private party or an open-house? More parents and grads are choosing the open house because it is less structured and their friends and family can attend without being locked to a schedule that could keep them from other parties.
- Reserve tables and chairs - The most common tables for graduation parties are round tables that seat eight guests and rectangular tables that seat eight to ten guests. When you call [One Stop Rental](#) to help plan your party, we'll talk to you about the advantages of each configuration.
- Decorations and themes - Since it is graduation, the theme is already selected for you. You will want to select decorations and colors that match school colors. You should plan on buying these types of decorations no less than four to six weeks before your party. Your school colors are going to be in big demand and you'd hate not to be able to get them because they are sold out.
- Memories of the grad - Many parents love the idea of having a special area inside the house that showcases the graduate with year books, class pictures from different grades, pictures from teams and clubs they may have belonged to through the years. You, your grad and your guests will love



looking through the pictures and reliving the fun times! It is also very popular to create slide shows on a computer that guests will see as they walk through your house.

- Guest book - You want to be sure to have a guest book where guests can write special notes to your child, often recalling memories and other moments they may have had together.
- Menu planning
  - You can be as elaborate or as simple as you want to with your menu but be sure to think of your guests. Remember that a lot of them will be high school students who like simplicity and prefer burgers and hot dogs over fancy food?
  - Most local grocery stores or markets make party trays of meats, vegetables and condiments for some great picnic food. Your local butcher can also be a great source of food. Contact them about four weeks before the party to find out how far in advance you need to place your order. You only need to tell them how many guests you are expecting and they will recommend the proper amounts of food.
  - To cater or not to cater. A good caterer will not only make things easier with food preparation, they will also deliver the morning of your party so you don't need to worry about storing massive amounts of food. Many caterers will also offer waiters and waitresses who will not only serve the food but will also clean and remove the serving dishes. [One Stop Rental](#) can recommend one of our partners as your caterer. We plan and coordinate with them delivery, set-up and break down of the party.
  - If you are not catering, be sure to have an idea of how many guests you will be serving. If you are having a lot of high school boys visiting, they will probably eat a lot!
    - Be sure to have adequate storage. You may need to contact neighbors to borrow room in their refrigerators and garages.
  - Plates and utensils. Most likely, you will be using disposable plates and utensils. They are sanitary and you simply throw them away when you are done. The more you can do to reduce the amount of time spent cleaning and serving, the more time you can spend with your guests!
  - Sanitation – You must be very careful to insure food safety so you will need to keep any fresh foods refrigerated and hot foods need to be kept hot. Your [One Stop Rental](#) party planning specialist will help you select the proper serving and storage items to insure food safety. For example, the new “chiller tables” can be a great way to keep foods cold.
  - Disposal – Parties can generate a lot of garbage so you need to have plenty of plastic garbage bags to dispose of the waste. Be sure to have special bins set aside for recycling plastic, cans and bottles.
  - Beverages – You want to be sure to keep your cold beverages cold with adequate coolers and ice. Guess how many you think you will need and then add a couple more! Be sure to have plenty of cold drinks on hand so you don't have to run out to the store



in the middle of the party to restock. It is a good idea to have a couple of coolers for just ice so you don't have to wonder if you have enough.

- Water – Be sure to have plenty of bottled water on hand. It is extremely popular and is the beverage most parties run out of first.
- If you are going to serve alcohol, be sure to limit consumption and be able to prevent underage drinking. If someone does have too much, you must make sure they do not drive.
- Clean-up – Clean up after a party is something nobody looks forward to but a great tip is to hire some middle school kids to serve and clean up (particularly if you are doing all the cooking). They do a great job and usually can use the extra money!
- Entertainment – Many parents find it is nice to have music playing in the background. The [One Stop Rental](#) Mobile DJ can be the perfect choice for entertainment. Easy to use and containing music for every taste, it can be the perfect choice to keep your guests active and smiling.
  - Many parties seem incomplete without dancing! Use your mobile DJ to keep your guests hopping and you can even rent a dance floor for hours of dancing fun.
  - Yard games are also a big hit at graduation parties. Corn-hole, bocci ball, badminton, baseball toss and other summertime games are all great choices to offer your guests. Games like these are usually a big hit with the kids and tend to keep them at your house a while longer.
- Presents - Many of your guests are going to bring presents for the grad. You will want to have an area set aside where they can place their gifts where they won't be in the way of the rest of the party.
  - Be sure to set a time aside when the grad can open the presents while the majority of the guests are still at the party. It is a special moment to share and allows the grad to personally thank the person who gave them the gift.
  - Gift cards, cash and checks have become very popular and are also easy to lose or have stolen. Take these gifts and secure them in a safe place so you don't have any unpleasant surprises.
  - Have your grad's brother, sister or friend write down each gift and who gave it so your grad can thank them.
- Special time – Many parents find it nice to plan a special time before the party for family and close friends. Graduation parties, particularly open houses can be very hectic so you may find it to be a good idea to ask these special guests to arrive an hour or two before the main crowd comes so you have some quiet time to share special moments and presents.
- Most important – Enjoy the day and savor the moments – Your baby has grown up and may be leaving the nest but never your heart.

All of us at [One Stop Rental](#) hope that this One Stop Party Planning Guide has been helpful. We are here and at your service with the advice and items you need to help plan a very memorable graduation party.



[One Stop Rental](#) is the home of the One Stop Tough Stop. We are tough on ourselves to make it easy on you. Our Tough Stop Party Rental Service guarantees you that:

1. We are tough on ourselves and take the time to completely understand your party to insure we recommend exactly what you want and need to have the perfect party.
2. We are tough on ourselves to be sure your party is set up quickly and safely and that everything is set to your expectations and satisfaction.
3. We are tough on ourselves even after the party. We will be there on time to break everything down, remove it and insure we met and exceeded your expectations.