



TWISTED BIRTHDAY PARTIES & MORE!  
Check us out under Kohl Children's Museum



in your price range (or wrap that last-minute gift). The museum has five different party rooms and can accommodate up to 80 guests from \$195 to \$600. Rate includes full-day admission to museum and party room for 1 1/2 hours. Parties work best for children up to 8 years old. 2100 Patriot Blvd., Glenview, 847/832-6923; [kolhchildrensmuseum.org](http://kolhchildrensmuseum.org).

**Exploritorium Skokie Park District** For little ones with short little attention spans, the Skokie Park District's Exploritorium offers an eclectic range of attractions. Kids can choose from about 50 costumes and head for the land of make-believe on a stage surrounded by mirrors; tackle more than two stories of tubes, tunnels and slides; feed their inner Picasso with an art project; or splash splash in a special area devoted to H<sub>2</sub>O. Residents pay \$180 and nonresidents \$225 for an hour in the Exploritorium and another hour in a private party room. Parties max out at 50 guests (20 tykes and 30 adults) and require a \$150 refundable security deposit. 4701 Oakton St., Skokie, 847/674-1500; [skokieparkdistrict.org](http://skokieparkdistrict.org).

# Party On

(Someone else's turf)

Looking for a birthday party destination? We've got a few ideas that simply take the cake. By Jeff Cockrell and Tricia Hermes

**T**here are few things more overwhelming than a gaggle of wide-eyed children primed for a good time. A birthday party full of kids is a cataclysmic force of nature — like a tornado that runs on juice boxes and lasts for hours. Someday scientists will find a way to harness this energy and use it to power the world's major cities, but until then, you don't necessarily have to plug it into your living room. The following are a few nearby party locales perfect for a juvenile shindig; thanks to facilities that range from water slides to ice rinks (plus staff to handle the details and cleanup), each has the potential to make your child the toast of the playground.

**Kohl Children's Museum** Sure, party guests can still get into all the favorites — the grocery store, pirate ship and train exhibit — but now the museum offers more food options and party extras. Kim & Scott's Gourmet Pretzels' Bakery & Twisting Café can provide pretzel sandwiches, pretzel croutons on soup or salads, or pretzel-wrapped hot dogs. Or have a Twisting Party where a Pretzel Master brings strips of dough for each guest to twist, paint and top with cheese, cinnamon sugar or chocolate chips, for \$5.99 per child. The Museum Village Toy Shop can help create personalized invitations and goody bags

**Northshore Cookery** Hands-on cooking parties let the celebrating chef choose one entrée — from homemade mac & cheese with hot dog octopus to cookie cutter sandwiches — and one dessert — think flowerpot cakes, pudding parfaits and (yikes!) aggression cookies — for the whole group to prepare. Parties start at \$300 for up to 15 kids. Menu options vary for older ages; age-appropriate for ages 5 and up. Parties last 1 1/2 to two hours with ample time after eating for gift opening or time with friends. 600 Central Ave., Highland Park, 847/432-2665; [northshorecookery.com](http://northshorecookery.com).

Photo by Michael Crohn/Photo by Michael Crohn