

Party with the Fishes FAQs

Prior to Reservation

What is the Party with the Fishes birthday program?

Party with the Fishes is the Florida Aquarium's birthday party program designed for children ages 1-12. It is a unique experience guaranteed to make a splash with your birthday child! The Florida Aquarium not only supplies the fun, but the party supplies too. We guarantee you will have a fish-tastic time!

What is included?

All parties include:

- Admission to the Aquarium for party guests
- Discounted parking for party guests in the Aquarium's parking lot (if available)
- Digital party invitations
- A private party space
- A birthday host
- Aquatic themed decorations
- Party supplies (cups, plates, napkins, forks, candles, etc.)
- A sheet cake created by Publix Greenwise Market
- Water and lemonade
- A Creature Feature- an up-close look at one of the Aquarium's animal ambassadors
- A featured activity, unique to your party space
- A special gift for the birthday child

What are the different spaces that can be booked?

The Aquarium has 6 unique indoor and outdoor spaces to choose from:

- **The Open Ocean Room** (Indoor) has a maximum capacity of 30 people and features a guided scavenger hunt.
- **The Coastal Room** and **The Green Room** (both Indoor) have a maximum capacity of 40 people and feature a personalized greeting from a SCUBA diver in our Coral Reef habitat (weather permitting).
- **The Backyard Room** (Indoor) has a maximum capacity of 25 people and features a meet and greet with one of the Aquarium's costume characters and a guided Wetlands tour. Backyard parties are specially designed for ages 1-6.
- **The Lab** (Indoor) has a maximum capacity of 30 people and features hands on science activities and a Behind the Scenes tour. Lab parties are specially designed for ages 8-12.
- **The Overlook Deck** (Outdoor) has a maximum capacity of 50 people and features play time in the Splash Pad.

When can I host a birthday party at the Aquarium?

Parties are held on Saturdays and Sundays only. There are two time slots to choose from, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, or 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM.

How much does it cost?

Birthday parties are priced depending on the space you select, and the number of attendees. You can find the prices for each space in our brochure, [HERE](#).

Can I set up a time to come to the Aquarium and view the party spaces?

Yes! Please contact Education Reservations at 813-273-4015, or education@flaquarium.org to schedule a tour.

Can multiple children share one party?

Yes, a second birthday child can be added for an additional \$50 fee.

How do I book my Party with the Fishes?

Please contact Education Reservations by phone at 813-273-4015. To book your party, you must select your party space, date, time, and provide an approximate guest count. The reservationist will also ask for contact information, the birthday child's name, and age. A \$150 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of reservation. Parties must be booked at least 2 weeks in advance.

After Reserving Your Party

What will happen after I have reserved my party?

You will receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of reserving your party. Please review your confirmation email and its attachments. The confirmation email will contain information on finalizing your party and a copy of the digital invitation. Education Reservations will contact you the Tuesday before the party to finalize your party details, and collect final payment.

What is my final payment, and when is it due?

Final payment is the remaining balance of your party package (determined by the number of attendees) after the \$150 non-refundable deposit has been subtracted. **This payment is due by 4:00 PM the Tuesday before the party.** If you choose to add additional food and beverage from the birthday menu, the order and payment are also due by 4:00 PM the Tuesday before the party. If payment is not received by 4:00 PM the Tuesday before the party, your party will be cancelled.

Who is included in my guest count? What if some of my guests are Florida Aquarium members?

Your total number of attendees are counted to determine the cost of your party. This number includes all adults and children attending the party. **Florida Aquarium members, the birthday child, and their family are included.** Children 1 and under do not count towards the package cost, but they count towards the maximum capacity of your party space. When you are reserving your party, you will be asked for an estimated guest count. Your final guest count is required the Tuesday before the party and will ultimately determine the cost of your party package. Please note: parties **CANNOT** exceed the maximum capacity of the party space you have booked.

What food can I add to my party?

Included in the party package is a sheet cake created by Publix Greenwise Market (a ¼ sheet cake will be included for parties of 20 attendees or less, a ½ sheet cake will be included for parties of 21 attendees or more), lemonade, and water. If you choose to add additional food and beverage it must be ordered from the birthday menu:

Cheese, Pepperoni, or Veggie Pizza (14")	\$15 ea.
Cheese and Vegetable Tray	\$35
Fruit and Yogurt Dip Tray	\$50
Tortilla Chips and Salsa	\$20
Kettle Chips and Herb Dip	\$20
Caesar Salad Bowl	\$30
Pitchers of Soda (Coca Cola products)	\$4.50

Please note:

- No outside food is permitted in the Aquarium
- Trays, salads, and chip bowls serve approximately 12 people
- Food must be ordered, and paid in full, the Tuesday before the party. No additional food can be added to the party after the party has been finalized.
- Leftover food and beverage cannot leave the party, except Publix cake, which can be taken home
- Please contact the reservation staff directly if the birthday child or guest/s have food allergies

How do I select my cake?

Follow the link in your confirmation email to the Publix Greenwise Hyde Park website. You may select any theme cake within the guidelines provided in your confirmation email. Please, do not order the cake yourself. When finalizing the party, simply let us know which design you have chosen. Cake flavor options are as follows: Chocolate, Yellow, Marble, Half Chocolate-Half Yellow Side by Side, Half Chocolate-Half Yellow Top and Bottom

What decorations do you supply? Can I bring in my own decorations?

The Aquarium supplies table cloths, center pieces, and a cake display, to compliment your themed party space. If you would like to bring in some additional decorations, please note, the following items are **prohibited** for the safety of the animals and the health of the environment:

- Balloons and inflatables
- Confetti
- Noise makers of any kind
- Piñatas
- Live animals
- Decorations that need to be taped anywhere in our indoor spaces
- Decorations that cannot be weighed or taped down on the Overlook Deck
- Food
- Anything that could pose a risk to the animals, or the bay.

If you are uncertain whether an item can be brought into our facility, please contact Education Reservations prior to purchasing. If you plan to bring in approved decorations the day of the party, you will have access to the party space 15 minutes before the start time for set up. Please note, all decorations must be removed after the party and returned to your vehicle for storage.

Do you supply party favors? Can I bring in my own?

The Aquarium does not supply party favors as part of the party package. You are welcome to bring in your own party favors. The prohibited items listed in the question above cannot be brought as party favors. If you are uncertain whether an item can be brought into our facility, please contact Education Reservations prior to purchasing.

Can I bring a face painter/princess/costume character/clown/magician/photo booth etc.?

No outside vendors are permitted.

What will we do during the party time? Do I need to plan any activities?

The Aquarium will facilitate all your party's activities! Activities include a craft or party games, the featured activity for your party space, the Creature Feature, and time for cake and food. A tentative schedule can be provided at request; however, activities are subject to change. Your party host will review the party schedule with you at the beginning of your party.

Am I required to use the Aquarium's digital invitation?

You are welcome to use the Aquarium's digital invitation, or different invitations of your choosing.

What is a Creature Feature? Can I choose my animal?

All parties include a Creature Feature, an up close look at one of our animal ambassadors! Your party host will bring the animal into the party space for an interactive, and educational presentation about the animal and its role in its habitat. Our party animals include turtles, marine toads, armadillo, lizards, snakes, and alligators. As an organization accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, there are strict handling guidelines the Aquarium must adhere to for the health and safety of our animals. We cannot honor requests for specific animals, however, we are able to exclude your choice of **ONE** animal, should someone at your party be uncomfortable around that animal, or you have met the animal previously.

How can I cancel or reschedule my party?

Parties can be rescheduled up to 1 year from the original party date. Parties that are cancelled will not be refunded, this includes the \$150 non-refundable deposit paid at the time of reservation. Parties cannot be cancelled, or rescheduled, once final payment has been made.

The Day of the Party

Where do I/my guests park?

The Aquarium's parking lot is located at Channelside Drive and E York Street. The car carrying the birthday child will be eligible to receive free parking, and party guests are eligible for discounted parking, **if it is available**.

When finalizing your party, you will be asked to provide the name of the driver that will be transporting the birthday child. To receive free parking, the day of the party, the driver must present an ID to the parking attendant. Your guests are eligible for a discounted rate of \$4 per vehicle by showing the invitation, or mentioning the birthday child's name to the parking attendant.

Please note, the Aquarium is located in busy downtown Tampa, and our parking lot may fill on weekends, especially on holidays and during the summer. **The Aquarium cannot validate offsite parking**, even in the event of the aquarium's parking lot reaching capacity.

How do my guests gain admission the Aquarium?

Party guest should enter through the Aquarium's main entrance. Mention the birthday child's name, or show the invitation for admission to the Aquarium. Birthday party hosts will be stationed in the lobby to greet and escort guests to the party space 10 minutes before the party start time. Guests who arrive early are welcome to enjoy the Aquarium and should return to the lobby 10 minutes before the party starts. Please ensure your guests are aware the Aquarium cannot store birthday gifts.

When can I access the party space?

A birthday host will escort the birthday child and their family from guest services into the party space 15 minutes prior to the party start time.

What if my guest count exceeds the package I have paid for and/or the maximum capacity of the party space I have booked? What if fewer guests attend than the package paid for?

If your guest count exceeds the package you have paid for, but not the capacity of the party space, you will be charged the difference in cost for the appropriate package. Once final payment has been made, refunds will not be issued to parties that drop in attendance. Due to fire and safety regulations, parties **CANNOT** exceed the maximum capacity of the space you have booked. You will be charged an additional \$16.95 per person above the maximum capacity of your party space and guests will be asked to leave the party space until it is at, or under, capacity.

What is a birthday host and what are their responsibilities?

Your birthday host will set-up, clean up, and make sure your party runs smoothly! Your birthday host will facilitate your party activities and keep everything on schedule. Please be advised, your birthday host will oversee your party, however adults are responsible for the supervision of children.

What happens if there is inclement weather?

We cannot refund your party due to weather conditions, however we will try to the best of our abilities to accommodate your party. Activities that are weather dependent will be replaced with an alternative activity or modified to accommodate the weather.

Where can I store my items after the party?

We will provide a cart to help transport items to your vehicle. The Aquarium cannot store gifts, decorations brought from home, or any personal items after the party. Leftover cake can be stored and collected from Guest Services before leaving. Cake must be picked up by 4:45 PM, or else it will be disposed of.