



Finding A Children's Party Entertainer.

By Nicholas "Tricky Nick" Johnson

A few weeks ago I received a frantic call from a young mother in Brighton who was trying to organise some last minute entertainment for her son's fifth birthday. The clown she had hired from the yellow pages had shown up to the party thirty minutes late with no colourful costume, no make up, no wig, no props and smelt of beer at eleven o'clock in the morning.

After dispatching the clown, she grabbed the yellow pages and began her frantic search for a last minute entertainer. She had begun at 'A' and by the time she got to 'T' and Tricky Nick she realized that this was a busy weekend and finding a last minute entertainer was just not possible.

Every parent has heard or experienced similar horror stories of performers who didn't live up to their marketing. The internet, newspapers and parenting magazines are jam packed with dozens of different birthday party options. With thousands of children's parties happening each weekend, cut price entertainers will always find enough work to keep themselves busy but leave in their wake a trail of disappointed parents and crying kids.

To avoid this kind of nightmare scenario I have compiled a list of the top ten questions every parent should ask a children's entertainer before placing a booking.

“How Long Have You Been Performing?”

Keeping a group of children entertained and entranced is a difficult job and requires a lot of practice and experience. Ask your entertainer how long they have been performer and how long they have worked with children.

In some cases the entertainer might have only a small amount of experience at children’s birthday parties but has spent many years as a childcare worker, teacher or tutor. Make sure that the entertainer you hire has worked and performed for children before.



Tricky Nick answers – *“I grew up in the circus and first set foot on stage at just four years old. I have now been performing for 25 long years!”*

“Do You Have Public Liability Insurance?”

Every performer should have at least \$10 million of public liability insurance. Insurance for performers is very affordable and every entertainer who takes his job seriously will have it. Whilst in 20 years of entertaining I am yet to hear of or meet a performer who has ever needed to make a claim, a performer who has public liability insurance takes the safety of your guests seriously.



Tricky Nick answers – *“I provide a \$20 million public liability insurance policy with every booking...not that I’ve ever needed it!”*

“What Do I Need To Provide?”

Every performer has different needs to make their performance a success. Some performers need to be in doors so their props don't blow away whilst others are happy to perform out on the lawn but need the use of a power point. You will find that many magicians prefer that they perform against a wall so as not to reveal their secrets. I know that whenever I bring my rabbit Cornelius to a party I ask that dogs be left in another room!

Before making a booking, ask the performer what they would like for you to provide so that you can be sure that you meet their criteria. This will save you time on the day searching for extension leads, moving furniture and locking up pets.



Tricky Nick answers – *“When you make a booking I provide all of my simple requirements in writing. If you have a lounge room, you can have a Tricky Nick magic show.”*

“Who Is The Star Of The Show?”

A good kid's entertainer will always tell you that the star of the show is most definitely the birthday boy or girl. They should be made to feel like this is their day and they are the star. Not surprisingly, children are not interested in watching an entertainer who only shows off how clever and talented they are.



Tricky Nick answers – *“In every show, I have a special routine where you child makes the magic happen! It's the perfect video moment!”*

“What Will You Wear?”

A good costume doesn't make a good performer. However, it can be a little disappointing to see a fairy show up in a tracksuit or a clown in jeans and a t-shirt. Make sure you see a photo of the performer before you book and you will get a fair idea of the quality of the act you have booked.



Tricky Nick answers – *“I wear a very snappy, very bright outfit that looks like a colourful cross between a magician and clown!”*

“What Happens If We Cancel?”

Life is full of unplanned emergencies. Find out from your performer whether you have to pay in full for unexpected cancellations. Many will charge you the full fee, others will just keep your deposit and some will allow you to cancel with no penalties.



Tricky Nick answers – *“There are no cancellation fees for a Tricky Nick magic show providing you let me know before the party!”*

“How Much Do You Charge?”

Ok, so this is an obvious one! However, some entertainers have a limit on the number of children you can invite to the party and charge you extra for more than 10 or 15 kids. Others charge an extra fee to travel to certain areas. I've even met one magician who charges extra for shows that are not on the ground floor!

Make sure that you know exactly how much the entertainer is going to cost and whether there are any additional charges and fees.



Tricky Nick says – *“I provide three different packages for children parties with no limit on the number of children. Give me a call on 0409461776 for the prices”*

“Do You Have Any References or Testimonies?”

Children’s entertainers are very good at blowing their own trumpets! However, if the entertainer does not have any written references or testimonies from previous satisfied clients, ask if they can put you in touch with a previous satisfied client.



Tricky Nick answer – *“My website at www.funnybones.com.au, has tons of testimonies from satisfied customers, audiences and critics!”*

“Can I Get That In Writing?”

Once you have made your booking, make sure you that you get all of the details in writing. This should include your address, the date, the time, the number of children and exactly what the performer is going to provide and how much it is going to cost. This will prevent any misunderstandings or miscommunications.



Tricky Nick answers – *“I send out a detailed booking form with all of your details as well as a few simple hints and tips to make the party a success!”*

“Where can I see you perform?”

The only way to be 100% sure of the quality of the entertainer you are hiring is to see them perform live. Nice photos, quality testimonies and lots of experience all pale in comparison to seeing the entertainer’s show first hand.

Many performers have a venue they perform at once a week or fortnight such as a family restaurant where you can meet them in person. Others perform solely at private events but have a promotional video for you to watch a portion of the show online.



Tricky Nick answers – *“While most of my show are for private functions, I perform over 100 public shopping centres shows each year. You can also see my promotional video at www.funnybones.com.au”*

By asking the children’s entertainer you book for your child’s party these questions you can rest assured that you will have a birthday party to remember rather than one you’d like to forget!

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