

# Party bags are a contest for Mum

By MICHELLE COLLINS

**F**ORGET the cachet of throwing your little one a birthday party – it's your party bags that you will be marked on.

No longer is it enough to toss together a few lollies and balloons and wrap up a piece of birthday cake for your little guests to take home.

Party bags are now packed with chocolates and small gifts, from toy cars and tiaras to miniature water pistols and packs of cards.

A study by the British supermarket chain Tesco found demand for goodie bag contents had risen 12-fold in the past three years.

And it is a trend that has caught on here.

Some parents are paying as much as \$20 a party bag for their little VIP to hand out to guests as they leave the party.

If, say, a dozen children attend, the cost can run into hundreds of dollars.

And don't think that just because a parent opts for a party at an outside venue that includes a party bag, they have saved money.

Many parents feel pressured to embellish what is included in the party package, or even to give an extra party bag.

Helen Creswick, who runs [www.partydirectory.com.au](http://www.partydirectory.com.au) – a website designed to provide parents with everything they need to plan a memorable birthday party – said young guests expected a party bag.

But while the kids are more than happy with a few lollies, a balloon or some pencils,

mothers do compete with each other to provide the "best" bag, Mrs Creswick said.

"There is a trend I am now noticing – a trend more towards the designer-type bag," she said.

"And it is unusual to see a party bag that only contains lollies. You often see an item relative to the party theme, or a toy of whatever the popular trend is.

"Noodle boxes are extremely popular at the moment, and most of them will have nice favours in them – stamps, stickers, glitter, kids' make-up or funky pens.

"For fairy parties, the organza bag filled with lollies and fairy goodies is definitely the most popular, and often it includes a nice wand.

"I have seen small treasure chests at pirate parties filled with gold coins, pirate patches, temporary tattoos and lollies.

"Paper carry bags you buy at dollar shops are used at many parties. They are quite large and can be well stocked with all sorts of goodies and a nice helium balloon added to each bag."

Mrs Creswick said one way to cut costs was to scour variety shops for specials or to incorporate a craft game into the party so the child could take the item home as part of the goodie bag.

"But at the end of the day, kids will be happy with whatever they receive as long as they get a bag," she said.



**BIG BUCKS:** Party bags are becoming more elaborate

## CURRENCY WATCH

Travellers' exchange rates

Currencies	Buy	Sell	Currencies	Buy	Sell
Britain	0.457	0.387	Japan	111.5	91.35
US	0.856	0.810	NZ	1.245	1.049
Euro	0.662	0.586	Norway	5.707	4.338
Canada	1.032	0.869	Singapore	1.407	1.139
Hong Kong	7.020	6.052	Thailand	20.74	22.50

FIXED RATE* TERM	8% p.a	8.75% p.a	9.25% p.a
	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	24 MONTHS

\*The rates are the distribution rates, net of fees and charges.

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