

# Business makes planning parties for kids a piece of cake

Consultants provide the fun so parents can relax, enjoy party

By Greg Kratz

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It's not easy planning a child's birthday party.



*Michael Brandy, Deseret Morning News*

Piece of Cake Party owner Sharon Smith models her fairy godmother costume. The North Salt Lake business plans parties.

**You've got to make and send the invitations. Buy and prepare the food and decorations. Put together the take-home treat bags.**

By the time you've managed all of those details, you've probably run out of time — and energy — to come up with fun ideas for games and entertainment.

That's where North Salt Lake-based Piece of Cake Party can lend a helping hand.

Piece of Cake has been open only a couple months, but owner Sharon Smith said her business already has found a niche when it comes to planning children's birthday parties.

"We kind of take the headache out of it for the parents so the parents can actually enjoy the party," Smith said. "The parents just need to provide the food and the decorations. . . . We provide the entertainment."

That entertainment comes in the form of a "party consultant" who dresses up in an elaborate costume to lead children through a series of games and activities based on a chosen theme — anything from "Aye, Aye Captain!" or "Pop Star Diva" to "Once Upon a Princess" or "Ride 'em Cowboy."

"For a cowboy party, we would have a cowgirl dress up in a costume, and she'll go out and play games and bring music that's related to cowboys," Smith said. "If it's a pirate party, she would do a treasure hunt. We have different games customized to each theme."

And, she said, the prices are meant to be reasonable. Piece of Cake, which displays its wares online at [pieceofcakeparty.com](http://pieceofcakeparty.com), charges \$75 for a party

consultant to entertain for an hour, and \$100 for two hours.

The company also sells themed party wear. For example, if you're throwing a cowboy party for 10 children, Piece of Cake will provide a fabric cowboy vest, straw hat and bandana for each child for \$5 each.



*Michael Brandy, Deseret Morning News*

Piece of Cake Party owner Sharon Smith sews a costume.

"It's very affordable, so consumers can afford to buy a little costume for each child, and they can take the costume home as a party favor when the party is over," Smith said. "We do design (costumes) and manufacture them both here in Utah and do importing. Because we are the creator of the product, it allows us to charge such low prices."

Smith got into the costume business in 1999 when she bought wholesale costume company Royal Ribbons Inc., which now does business as Making Believe.

"We have been selling the party wares to other retailers across the country for a couple of years," she said. "We were doing it wholesale, and we had a lot of party businesses and franchises that were selling our products."

"We just discovered that there were people locally who were interested in having our party consultants come out in costume and provide all the games and the entertainment."

Making Believe was not selling its wholesale products to local stores, so it is not competing against itself, Smith said. And both the retail and wholesale sides of the business are doing well.

"We have about 10 party consultants right now," she said. "We've been doing Davis and Salt Lake counties. We're hoping to expand to Cache County and Utah County. We have customers who want parties there. As we get consultants, we will add those areas."

She said theme costume parties are growing in popularity for children, and Piece of Cake can help parents make such celebrations a reality for a little more than \$100.

"We're trying to get people that elaborate party, with a party consultant coming out in costume, without a real elaborate price."

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