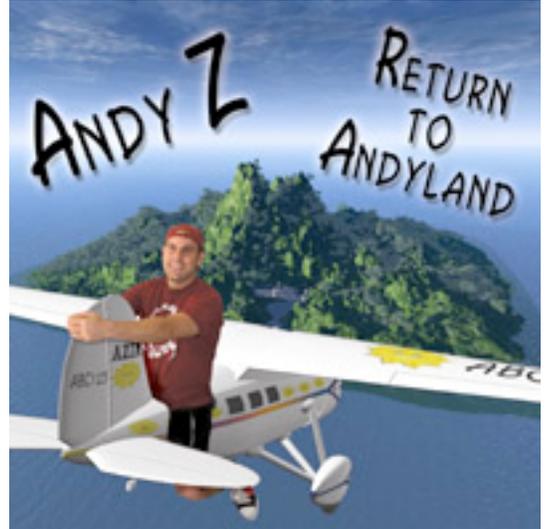


Adventures in Parenting from Blogging Baby.com

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When my husband and I plan Nolan's birthday parties, strategy is essential. We believe in the KISS principle: Keep it simple, stupid. But we have one variable factor that toys with us every year: Mother Nature.

Nolan's birthday is December 23rd, but we always have his party a few weeks before so it doesn't get lost in the holiday madness. For the past three years, we've had miserable weather on party day. Sheets of rain, bone-chilling wind, or dreary overcast skies. If you have a tiny house like we do, bad weather spells chaos when kid's parties are involved. Since we were hosting ten of Nolan's little buddies, their parents and our families, this year we decided to hire some "entertainment" in the form of a children's singer name AndyZ. I wrote a story about him after seeing him wow some kids at our local farmer's market. We figured if the weather were as bad as it's been in past years, we'd need to take drastic measures to keep these kids happy. The thought of 10 kids stuck indoors for two hours - no, don't. Your heart will palpitate just like mine did everytime the words came out of my mouth.



Somehow, somehow, the weather genie decided to give us a nice day. Blue skies, crisp air and warm sunshine. The entire party was held outdoors on our patio and in the backyard. The kids were climbing the trees, digging dirt, running around. And just when things started to get rowdy, AndyZ magically appeared. The kids didn't know what to do - they all knew who he was but they couldn't believe he was at this party. He broke out his guitar, they gathered around him on the lawn, and pretty soon he had everyone singing and dancing. AndyZ rocked. If your little one's dig Ralph Covert of Ralph's World, then you should check out AndyZ.

When Nolan had finally tuckered himself out, I kissed him good night and said, "I hope you a fun day." And my sweet little guy managed to make me cry:

Nolan: "Thanks mama."

Me: "What for Nol?"

Nolan: "Thank you for my birthday party."

I'm even tearing up as I write this down. He's still not four but he knows how to melt my heart.