



10 Tips for Great Spring Carnivals

10 ways to make your next carnival fun and profitable for your school or organization:

- 1) **Timeframe:** 4 hours max. People often believe that a longer carnival will lead to more attendance, better sales and exposure to their vendors, however, short 3-4 hour carnivals are just enough time to provide big crowds and great energy.
- 2) **Best time of year/day:** Springtime always has some great weather (in California), and an event spanning lunchtime will lead families to bring the family to your event to grab food for the kids. If held too late in the afternoon you miss your window, as early spring evenings send parents home due to chilly weather.
- 3) **Themes, GO BIG –** Themes are FANSTASTIC, and help bring the spirit of the event together. Encouraging guests to dress up and vendors to do the same (as well as their booths) helps create a super fun atmosphere that guests really enjoy. Costume contests are always a huge hit.
- 4) **Small prizes work best:** Regardless of what games / contests you are playing at your event, don't break the bank on prizes, small prizes not to exceed \$5 do well, or Dollar Store candy is enticing to children of all ages.
- 5) **Vendor placement:** It is very tempting to put all of your "Booth Games" together. By spreading them out in-between other booths, such as food vendors or sponsors, you will experience much better circulation of your guests moving around the event, rather than "playing" in one place.
- 6) **Revenue generators:** Most school carnivals are both fun for the school and also a fundraiser for the PTA, therefore identifying your revenue generators is important. Food trucks, bounce houses, and carnival games all have the potential if diverse enough. "Pay one Price" wrist bands for all rides and attractions are fantastic, and although food trucks will pay you a percentage of what they bring in, make sure families see the food vendors as affordable.
- 7) **Get interactive:** Every carnival has some sort of entertainment, from your basic DJ / or playlist, to a main stage full of fun and exciting entertainment. Finding ways to get your audience involved in your entertainment, food eating contests, talent shows, or teacher dance numbers will bring the crowds.
- 8) **Student performances:** The easiest, fastest way to get the whole family to come out to the carnival is to put your students on stage. Working with your school's music department to create a grade level song(s) to perform at the carnival is a sure fire way to bring the crowds whenever you want them to.
- 9) **A word about cake walks:** Everyone loves them and they are fun, but they should be a side game, not a focal point. Putting a "Cake walk" near the center of your carnival pulls attention away from entertainment & food vendors, which can generally drag the energy out of your event.
- 10) **Ask your vendors:** After you have chosen a quality vendor, don't be afraid to ask their input on placement and flow. Chances are they have been to more carnivals than you, and should be a great wealth of knowledge when laying out your event.

BONUS TIP: HAVE FUN, if you're having fun, your guests will too!