# CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

# Hosting an Online Party
## An Idiots Guide, Written by an idiot.

## ZOOM:

Download Zoom to your device. You'll need to create a login for Zoom (or multiple depending on how many parties you are likely to schedule at the same time). It's worth noting that Zoom will only allow you to host a meeting for 40 minutes on the free version, so consider paying for a premium account if your entertainment will last longer than this.

If you have multiple entertainers accessing the premium accounts at once, you may also want to create a second (free) account for each entertainer. The purpose of creating the additional free account per person is so that you/your entertainers can have a 'practice call' with the client, where you will iron out any problems with them before the actual party. Dedicating an account specifically for this means that booked parties (on the premium accounts) can run simultaneously with practice calls taking place on personal (free) accounts. It also avoids an entertainer being 'kicked out' of a booked party when another tries to log in to the same account.

So, for the practice call you will log in to the additional free account, and for the party itself you will log in to the allocated premium account for that specific booking (which will allow you to stream live for more than 40 minutes.)

## SCHEDULING:

When a booking is confirmed and paid for, you can schedule a meeting from the premium account you will be using at the time of the entertainment. This sends a meeting link to the email of the client, which allows the client ample time to pass on the Zoom link to any attending guests.

## PRACTICING THE ZOOM CALL:

Many clients are not familiar with Zoom and how it works, so it is a good idea to arrange a practice call with them prior to the party. This helps the client feel more comfortable, allows you time to iron out any potential issues and gives you a chance to check the connection. For this reason, it is a good idea that both the entertainer and the client practice this call on the same device and connection they intend to use for the party.

Now is an excellent time to explain what you're going to need to make the party a success.

**1.** Birthday children and other children, ideally, should not have access to toys and other distractions. This can be a challenge at home (as children are usually surrounded by toys at home).

**2.** Minimise background noise in the birthday house. If their older sister has taken up drums, now is not the time to practice! Although you are likely to mute other guests, it is advisable to leave the guest of honour at your event un-muted.

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**3.** Encourage the idea of the whole family getting together to watch the party. This is beneficial for the atmosphere, and helps with focus.

Once they've logged in and you've checked the connection is good, make sure they're aware of the features of Zoom (or at least, the ones which will be relevant).

## SPOTLIGHTING
If you hover over your own video, in theory, three small dots should appear in the upper right hand corner. Clicking the dots will give you the option to spotlight the video - meaning your video will appear larger and be visible to everyone during the party. Some versions of the app do not have this feature, but there are ways around it.

## PINNING
If your version of Zoom does not allow you to spotlight your video, hovering over your own video will show a little pin in the top left corner of your screen. Clicking this will do the same thing as spotlighting - if all of the guests also pin you!

## MUTING
As the host, you have the option in 'Manage Participants' to mute all of the attendees. You will be offered the option to allow participants to un-mute themselves. Our advice is not to allow this - it is best if the entertainer has control over who is talking during the party. You can easily un-mute individual children as and when you need to interact with them.

## VOLUME TEST
During the practice call is a great time to play some music and test the volume for the client (if your entertainment involves music.)

We have found that using a small speaker placed near the microphone on your device tends to produce a clearer/better sound than using the inbuilt speakers of any given device.

*Tips:*
Having the birthday child log in 10 minutes before the start of the party allows you to get to know them. Some children feel shy 'on camera', so this is a great chance to ease any feelings of shyness they may have! It should also ensure that the birthday child is the first guest on your display; this will make it easier to locate the birthday child over the course of the party.

As guests log in, you can ask that they change their username to the name of the guest in their video (rather than the name being a random number, or their parent's name). This helps you interact with the children during the entertainment.

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## THE PARTY!

Ensure everyone says hello to the birthday child and get them excited by asking them to wave to one another. When you have all your guests present, you can mute them all (except for the birthday child). Setting up a 'thumbs up', or another physical action to show that they're ready, is also a good idea. This means that, at a glance, you'll be able to make sure all the children are engaged throughout the entertainment!

## DO YOUR THING!!

At the end of the party, you may want to un-mute everyone to sing happy birthday. It sounds awful but it's good fun, and it's a nice way to leave the children as they can all chatter for 40 minutes after the party ends (just make sure you let them know this **BEFORE** you un-mute them or you'll struggle to be heard!)

Say your goodbyes and then click 'end meeting' (lower right hand corner of Zoom). If you select 'leave meeting', rather than 'end for all', it will let all the children stay in the meeting for the 'after party'. You can also make the birthday child the host before you leave, giving them control over the meeting once you have exited.

## THAT'S IT! GOOD LUCK.....