



## ***A compilation of some of our best Halloween tips:***

### **Think small and local:**

\*\*\* Think about how **your** child will react to Halloween activities, and let them know *it is ok to not participate*.

\*\*\* Consider hosting an event, perhaps for just a few people, and with activities your child can handle. You can limit the number of children at your own celebration, set the rules about masks, require your pint-sized guests to check their costume-prop "weapons" at your door, bob for apples or not depending on your child's preference, pick party food your child likes, and limit how scary the party is. You can control the volume of spooky music played. Create a mummy by wrapping a child (your own if they'd like the idea, another child if not) in toilet paper.

### **Costume considerations:**

\*\*\* Consider how your child will react to costumes, including painted faces, masks, and (usually inexpensive) materials. *It's ok for your kid to not wear a costume, wear a*

*sports team t-shirt as a costume, or a favorite piece of clothing incorporated into a creative character costume.*

\*\*\* If a store-bought costume is important to your sensory-sensitive child, buy the costume early. Be sure the costume is comfortable and something your child has picked out. Have your child practice wearing the costume around the house, and make sure it is easy to take on and off. Hoods and masks can be particularly uncomfortable for tactile sensitive children.

Great words of advice from a [blog](#): "The more sensitive your child is to fabrics, tags, and seams, the more you should aim towards homemade costumes. Take what they actually like to wear, and figure out how to make it into something else. Sweats? Give them a lab coat and a stethoscope for a doctor (or vet, so they can carry their stuffed animal!). Another way is picking a costume that they are SO OVER THE MOON about that they will wear it. It is only a matter of an hour or so. Or, my favorite, scrap the costume idea and let them go as themselves. There are DOZENS of book characters out there like "Amber Brown" or "Junie B. Jones" or "Hubie" (from Black Lagoon Series). Pick a regular kid from your child's favorite book, and there you go-instant costume no scratchy things required. : ) Follow your child's lead on this. Every kid is different and you can have a great Halloween regardless of the costume."

## **Parades:**

\*\*\*Clue in your child's teacher ahead of time if the school has a major Halloween parade and your child

does not want to participate. Perhaps they can be the official photographer.

## **Trick or Treating:**

\*\*\*Plan your trick-or-treating route ahead of time. Share the route with your child so they know what to expect and so you can avoid neighborhood "haunted" houses, etc.

Social Stories (a short, simple story about what to expect or that helps explain something for a child) are a great way to prepare and practice trick or treating etiquette.

\*\*\*You might trick-or-treat just on your block, or go to a friend or relative's house, where the environment is friendly and familiar. What's important is not how many houses you go to, but how your child feels about the interaction.

\*\*\*Start trick-or-treating early and before it gets dark.

\*\*\*If you do trick-or-treat and collect candy, have your child try to open the wrappers on their own. Although, the candy is not the healthiest, opening the packaging is great for finger strengthening and coordination!

\*\*\*If your child is afraid of going trick-or-treating to houses they don't know, and that might appear scary at night, or of seeing others dressed up in dark outfits and costumes, keep them home. Let them be in charge of handing out candy to trick-or-treaters who come to *your* home. Or consider making "dirt cups" (chocolate pudding sprinkled with

cookie crumbs, complete with gummy worms), or baking/ decorating Halloween cookies or cupcakes together. Plan ahead by recording or renting a non-threatening Halloween movie like "It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown".

## Halloween as a Sensory Experience:

\*\*\* Many kids will love the great sensory experiences of Halloween, from dipping their hands into the insides of a pumpkin, bobbing for apples or exploring buckets of "worms" (cold cooked spaghetti) and "eyeballs" (grapes).

\*\*\* Other children will prefer painting faces on the outside of a pumpkin and eating gummy worms.

