

TRICK-OR-TREATING TIPS

Halloween is a lot of fun for most kids, but for some it may be overwhelming and scary. There are spooky decorations everywhere, people dressed up and unrecognizable and noisy kids running all over the streets shouting “Trick-or-Treat!” Good news! There are a lot of ways that you can help your child have an awesome and memorable Halloween.



- **Talk about it ahead of time.** Explain what will be happening when you go trick-or-treating. Talk about the costumes, decorations and going door-to-door. Role play what to do when that door opens. Use social stories to help your child understand.
- **Choose your time wisely.** If possible, start early. This will mean less traffic and more daylight. Make sure your child has eaten and is well-rested. All the prep work in the world won't help if you have a hungry and tired little one.
- **Choose the costume early.** Make sure your child is comfortable in the costume and can wear weather-appropriate clothing with it. You don't want a too hot or too cold child during trick-or-treating. Have her wear it around the house beforehand to see how it feels. Remove any tags that may be bothersome and make sure he can see and move around properly. If your child is not comfortable in a costume, choose Halloween-themed clothing instead.
- **Don't force it.** If your kid decides they only want to go to a few houses, that's okay. If your kid decides to take off their costume, that's okay. If your child does not want to go out for Halloween, celebrate another way.
- **Have an escape plan/offer breaks.** Come up with a plan for when your child has had too much. You could use a code word, so they don't have to say the words in front of others. Take breaks when needed, so they don't get overwhelmed.
- **Trade in sugary treats.** If you don't want your child to have all those goodies, you can have them trade them in for something else, like a new toy or book. Limit the amount of goodies they are having each day.
- **Learn about the BLUE pumpkin.** The blue pumpkin is a sign that the child has special needs. Teach your child that if they see a blue pumpkin it means that the child may not communicate with others the same way that they do.
- **Take notes.** Mental ones. Notice what upsets your child, which times she enjoyed herself the most, and how well the costume worked. The more details you commit to memory, the better experience your child will have next Halloween.

*Resources: <https://www.nymetroparents.com/article/how-to-celebrate-halloween-with-a-child-with-special-needs>, <https://pocketot.com/halloween-tips-for-kids-with-special-needs/>, <https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/7-tips-for-having-a-sensory-friendly-halloween>