

# Halloween Tips

## ***Tip 1 - Expose them to it early and often***

Halloween is scary enough even for children without development delays, physical limitations, neurological disorders or other issues that cause them to be in part of the more than 6 million children who are labeled “special needs.” Getting an early start in explaining Halloween to children can go a long way in ensuring a successful goblin night. As is often the case with kids on the spectrum, repetition is key to helping the child better understand the event or holiday.

## ***Tip 2 - Pick the right costume***

Try out the costumes and make sure they are a good fit. Have your child practice walking and sitting while wearing the costume. If your child is afraid of going around to houses that might appear scary at night seeing others dressed up in dark outfits and costumes, keep them home and hand out candy from the front yard or at the doorway. The child can wear the costume to go to neighboring houses and relatives where the environment is safe and familiar. Many children with autism have sensory issues so if they do not want to wear a costume at all, that's okay too.

## ***Tip 3 - Avoid Scary Games and Activities***

Halloween games are almost as popular as the act of trick or treating, often serving as the tailgate before the game. But games like bobbing for apples or swinging the apple on the stick can be difficult for some children to grasp and can prove to be dangerous as well.

For games in the classroom, make sure to talk to your child's teacher to see if you agree it's appropriate practice the game at home. Also, don't pressure your child to participate in games at home or at parties you attend. As with most things, it's best to test these out on your child at home first, before trying at school or at a party.

## ***Tip 4 - Try a New Tradition Like a Private Party***

Did you know the act of knocking on doors and tricking or treating is actually on the decline? Many people are trying new traditions such as private parties where parents can control the environment and the type of candy and food their child receives.

## ***Tip 5 – Do a Trial Run for Trick or Treating***

If you want your child to experience trick or treating first-hand, remember, practice really does make perfect. Repetition of the route you will take for trick or treating will make it easier for child to grasp the act of trick or treating. Keep in mind, it's also not the quantity of house visited that is important, but instead the quality of the interactions for your child. Picking a few homes where you know the families can go a long way in making the actual act of tricking or treating enjoyable for your child. Also, start trick of treating early and “before it gets dark.”