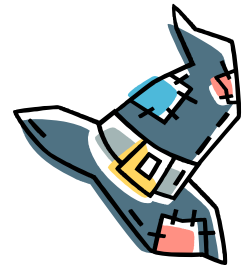


Halloween for Children on the Autism Spectrum

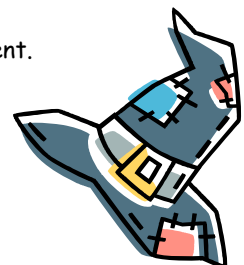
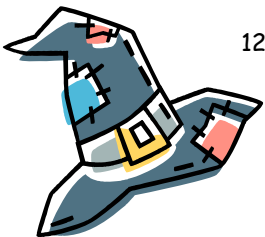


Information gathered from: Lisa Jo Rudy
<http://autism.about.com/od/autismhowtos/ht/halloween.htm>

Many children on the autism spectrum look forward to Halloween. It's a time when they can dress up as their favorite character and (at least in some homes) eat piles of candy. But Halloween can be stressful and demanding for kids on the spectrum. Follow these tips to prepare for a pleasant, positive Halloween experience.

Here's How:

1. Use videos and books to prepare your child for Halloween expectations. There are many Halloween options out there, so choose the ones that are most like your own real-life situation.
2. Together, decide what costume your child will choose. Take into account not only his or her preferences, but also sensory concerns. For example, a Spiderman costume may include a full mask - which can become overwhelming. Some children love face paint, but others can't take the sticky sensation.
3. Make a plan that you can stick to. Choose a time to leave the house, plan a path, and know what will happen when you come home (can he dump the candy on the floor? What may he or she eat? If the candy is not a good choice, what substitute treat will she get?).
4. Keep it simple. Knowing your child, what's reasonable to expect? If he can handle just one house, that's fine. Know that, even when you see other kids running up and down the street, it may not be the right choice for your child.
5. Create a social picture story. Use digital photos, images from the web, or other sources to show and tell exactly what your child will do. Include all the steps, not forgetting that he must knock at the door, say "Trick or Treat!" and "Thank You!"
6. Read the social story together, not once but as often as possible. From time to time, toss in a clincher: ask - "what if no one is home?" Help her understand that it's ok to skip a house, to take a piece of candy from a basket (if that's ok with you), and so forth.
7. Practice, practice, practice! Put on the costume many times before the Big Night, and work out any kinks. Role play the entire treat or treat scenario as often as you can.
8. Act out a number of scenarios so your child has a small repertoire of possible responses. For example, what should she say when someone says "You look beautiful (or scary or creepy)!" What if you don't like the treat that's offered? What if you meet kids you know?
9. Scope out the neighborhood ahead of time. Do you see any decorations that might upset your child? Flashing lights that might trigger sensory reactions? If so, consider skipping that house (or visiting ahead of time) to avoid melt-downs.
10. Consider recruiting peer support. If your child with autism has no siblings (or his siblings have other plans), consider recruiting another typical peer to go house-to-house with you. Explain to that child and his parents that he will be helping your child to understand Halloween a little better. You may be surprised at how helpful another child can be!
11. On the big night, remember to be flexible. If your well-prepared child suddenly rebels against his costume, consider letting him go in just a silly hat. Remember that Halloween is for fun - and it really doesn't matter what he wears or how many homes he visits.
12. Take pictures. Get excited. Have fun! Even if you're only going to one house, make it an event. When you're done, put together a memory book that can help you prepare for next year.





~*How To Make a Halloween Costume for a Child with Sensory Integration Dysfunction*~

Children with sensory integration problems are notoriously picky about clothing. They may need soft fabrics, tag-free shirts, non-binding wastebands, nothing scratchy or tickly. So standard, store-bought Halloween costumes, with their flimsy fabrics and mismatched parts and unfinished hems and inexact fit are pretty much of a no-go. Here's a quick way to make your child a costume out of a pair of nice, comfy sweats. Make them as simple or spectacular as your craft abilities allow.

Difficulty: Average

Time Required: Depends on how crafty you are

Here's How:

1. Start with a hooded sweatshirt: brown for a dog, black for a cat, red for a devil. Your child can pair this with matching sweatpants, or any other leg wear he or she feels comfortable in.
2. Decorate the sweatshirt using felt or construction paper. Cut out contrasting spots for the dog, a white tummy for the cat, maybe some orange flames or a pitchfork for the devil. Attach these to the costume depending on whether you want to use the sweatshirt again: with staples, tape, safety pins, fabric glue, stitches. You can even use fabric paint if you want the costume to live forever.
3. Decorate the hood with felt or construction paper. Make little ears for the cat, floppy ears for the dog, horns for the devil. Attach them as indicated in Step 2.
4. Attach a tail to the seat of the pants. Cut out a black tail from felt or construction paper for the cat, a brown one for the dog, a red one for the

5. Put the costume on your child. If he or she will tolerate it, add a devil. Attach it as indicated in Step 2. Attach a felt or construction paper collar to the dog or cat. Let your devil hold a pitchfork. Face makeup is also a possibility if your child doesn't mind it.

6. Now take a picture! If the costume reverts back to its normal sweatshirt state after Halloween night, you'll want to have a record it existed.

Tips:

1. The material you use for the add-ons and the way you fasten them can be determined by how active your child will be in the outfit. If it's just for a quick round of trick or treating, you can probably get away with paper and staples. If it's for a party or a day at school, felt and glue might be a better bet.
2. If your child finds a weighted vest helpful, he or she can wear it under the sweatshirt, or load up the pockets of the sweatshirt with curtain weights and sew them shut.
3. If your child prefers tight clothing, have him or her wear a tight shirt under the sweatshirt. Any favorite piece of comfort clothing can likely ride under there; determine sweatshirt size accordingly.

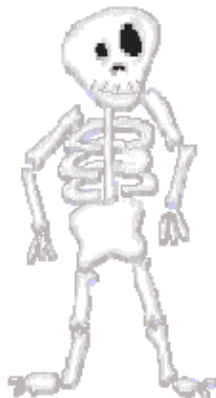
What You Need:

- Hooded sweatshirt
- Matching sweatpants (optional)
- Felt or construction paper
- Fabric paint (optional)

Staples, tape, safety pins, glue, and/or needle and thread

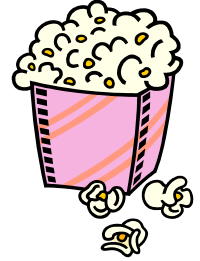
This information has been provided by :

<http://specialchildren.about.com/od/sensoryintegration/ht/SIcostume.htm>





GFCF HALLOWEEN RECIPES



Gluten Free Dairy Free Caramel Popcorn

Source: modified from Jiffy Pop Popcorn package

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Grease a large roasting pan with melted gluten free casein free margarine. Pop 6 quarts of popcorn. Melt 2 sticks margarine in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in 2 cups brown sugar, 1/2 cup light or dark corn syrup (or maple syrup), 1 tsp salt, 1/2 tsp baking soda, 1 tsp gluten free casein free vanilla extract and blend well. Pour over popcorn, tossing popcorn to evenly coat and bake in oven for 30-40 minutes.

Dinner In A Pumpkin

Source: GFCF Recipes, Yahoo Groups

- 1 Small to medium pumpkin
- 1 onion -- chopped
- 1 Cup milk substitute
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 Can sliced water chestnuts -- (8 oz) drained
- 1 1/2 Lbs ground beef -- (1 1/2 to 2)
- 1 1/2 Cups cooked rice
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp favorite seasoning mix



Cut off top of pumpkin; clean out seeds and pulp. Paint on appropriate face on front of pumpkin with permanent marker or acrylic paint. In a large skillet, sauté' onion in oil until tender; add meat and brown. Drain drippings from skillet. Add soy sauce, brown sugar, seasoning and milk; simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add cooked rice and water chestnuts. Spoon mixture into pumpkin shell. Replace pumpkin top and place entire pumpkin, with filling, on a baking sheet. Bake for 1 hour in 350 degree oven or until inside meat of pumpkins tender. Put pumpkin on a plate; remove top and serve. For your vegetable, scoop out cooked pumpkin and serve.