

## Practice

- Invite your neighbors to have a “rehearsal” for Halloween so your child can practice the steps. If this isn’t a possibility for you, it may be helpful to watch YouTube videos of trick-or-treating.
- Walk around the block a couple nights before so your child is familiar with houses in relation to yours. Let your child know the trick-or-treating route in advance.
- Encourage your child to try on his/her costume before Halloween.
- Role play “trick or treat!” Practice knocking on doors, saying trick or treat, answering a couple basic questions and saying thank you. If your child is nonverbal, have him/her hand each house a card with a greeting.
- Before you go out, discuss how much candy your child can eat and when.

## Trick or Treating

- Use a visual map and cross off houses as you visit them.
- Set a time limit.
- Stay close to home where it's familiar and easy to get back to quickly if necessary.
- Let your child stop when HE/SHE wants to stop, even if it's only two houses in. Make sure an adult is available to take your child aside if they need a break or need to go home.



**Follow these helpful hints to ensure a safe and enjoyable Halloween for your whole family.**

## Preparing Others

- Ask neighbors to answer the door quietly, without any strobe lights or scary greetings.
- Make yourself aware of houses to avoid based on decorations that are gory, that have excessive lighting or strobes, or any other aspects that you know will make your child uncomfortable.
- If your child has dietary or sensory concerns with different candy, provide neighbors with a snack your child likes/can eat the night before to hand out when your child comes.

## Consider alternatives

- Join with other parents to throw a Halloween party that is autism-friendly based on the needs of your child and the needs of other party guests.
- Boo at the Zoo or Trunk or Treat activities at a local church could be a nice daytime alternative.
- Celebrate with a themed activity, such as Halloween activities at local museums or art institutions.

## Safety (for everyone)

- Make sure your child has identifying information on him/her (tag, card, bracelet, etc.) in case you get separated.
- Put something on your child such as a glow stick necklace to help you spot him/her in a crowd when it's dark.
- Check all candy before your children eat it!
- Have your kiddos put on long johns or other warm clothing under their costumes in case it gets cold at night.
- Place a flashlight in the treat sack for your child to use when extra light is needed.

## Remember, it's okay to stay at home!

- You can create your own Halloween tradition that fits your family's needs. This could include a special movie night, creating Halloween-inspired foods together, or anything that is fun for the whole family.
- Keep it fun!!



— MIDWEST —

