



Early Childhood Center



Preparing for Halloween with Preschool Age Children

While Halloween overflows with imagination, fun and creativity, it can be overwhelming at times for younger children. Here are some ways to keep it fun for your preschooler this year.

- 1. Take advantage of local kid-friendly Halloween activities** - Check out your local community center for festivals or parades that have age-appropriate activities during kid-friendly hours. While traditionally Halloween activities focus on the evening of October 31st and walking around the neighborhood after dark, the alternative celebrations can offer wonderful opportunities for your child.
- 2. Host a neighborhood party** – Start a new tradition of gathering with neighbors and their children for a family friendly celebration before the sun goes down. It gives kids a chance to show off their costumes and have fun playing age-appropriate games in a safe and familiar environment. Encourage guests to bring decorations to help set the stage for the celebration and arrange a potluck for a healthy, festive meal.
- 3. Safety Tips** – An important part of keeping Halloween fun is keeping it safe for your little one. For example, remembering to choose costumes that are flame-resistant, comfortable and allow your preschooler to move safely can make a big difference. There are many online resources to help parents put safety first. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has some great tips for a safe and healthy Halloween at http://www.cdc.gov/family/halloween/halloween_tips.pdf.
- 4. Prepare Your Child** – Talk to your child about dressing up and the difference between pretend play and reality. Discuss with your child what she can expect to experience during celebrations. These conversations can go a long way to prepare your child for upcoming activities and making it a more enjoyable day.
- 5. Expect the Unexpected** – Plan to be flexible and responsive to your child's needs during the festivities. While a child might show lots of enthusiasm about his costume leading up to the big day, this excitement might change during the actual celebration. It might be that once he begins to participate in the Halloween activities, his enthusiasm towards the costume dwindles rapidly. Help your child through this shift by giving him a way out of the costume. You can dress him with a change of clothes under the costume or bringing an extra set of clothes with you. Also be prepared to leave early in case the celebration becomes too overwhelming.

Halloween celebrations can be a lot of fun and spark the imagination. Taking a few pre-emptive steps to prepare for a kid-friendly celebration can go a long way to making cherished, shared memories together.