

**Please stay safe while enjoying your Halloween activities and remember to wear a mask!**



## Spooky Halloween Behavioral Challenges

Children (and adults) of all ages and abilities enjoy Halloween. It is the one time of year when it is socially acceptable to pretend to be a superhero, princess, or monster. The sugar-induced anticipation of going trick-or-treating can quickly become overwhelming for an individual with a developmental disability. So, what can cause this change in demeanor—from excitement to anxiety—and what can parents do about it?

Halloween events are often riddled with sensory stimuli, activities, or tasks that can trigger challenging behaviors. By identifying possible triggers, parents can take steps to eliminate or reduce the impact of the trigger. This can reduce the likelihood of a challenging behavior occurring and put the focus back on fun!

Trick-or-Treat Triggers	Trick-or-Treat Tips
Decorations—fog machines, flashing lights, spooky music, etc	Be aware of the locations of these triggering decorations prior to going out. Plan your trick-or-treat route to avoid these houses or go to these houses before dark when the decorations are not turned on or are less overwhelming.
Costume Sensory Sensitivities	Practice wearing a costume around the house prior to going trick-or-treating or attending other festivities. Make sure it is comfortable and meets your child's unique sensory needs (type of material, temperature, seams or tags, elastic, too tight, etc). Have a change of clothes available so that your child can take off their costume (if it becomes intolerable) and still participate and have fun.
Social Interactions with Unfamiliar People	Consider trick-or-treating at the beginning of the allotted time for your community when there will be fewer children and families out and about. Practice or role play the social skills and manner you expect from child before going out trick-or-treating. For children who are non-verbal or struggle with social interaction try using these cards (available in Spanish too): <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X_TirITzdVvi5qIVSlxfydNohrz6dZQc/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X_TirITzdVvi5qIVSlxfydNohrz6dZQc/view?usp=sharing</a>
Lack of Structure or Routine	Plan your trick-or-treat route in advance and in a familiar neighborhood. If you are unsure of how your child may respond to trick-or-treating, keep the route short and nearby to your home. Use pictures or other visual aids to help your child understand the expectations. Be clear and concise about the expectations for trick-or-treating <b>and</b> for what comes after trick-or-treating.

## Upcoming Events

Date/Time	Topic	Link
Thursday, 10/29 @ 6pm	Binder Training: Organize All Your Stuff!	<a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2040212404373577231">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2040212404373577231</a>
Wednesday, 11/4 @ 10am	Basics of Vocabulary Instruction for Families	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/yy3yvavo">https://tinyurl.com/yy3yvavo</a>
Thursday, 11/5 @ 6pm	Structure, Routine, and Strategies During COVID-19	<a href="https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJMkfuqgpjMjGdTB-kFtIja1M4_XKNn27std">https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJMkfuqgpjMjGdTB-kFtIja1M4_XKNn27std</a>



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