

### Preparing for a Safe and Fun Halloween

Halloween can be stressful for any family. Traditional spooky season sights, smells and sounds can be even scarier for children with autism and other developmental differences.

From the perspective of your child, think about all the decorations, loud sounds and bright lights that accompany Halloween, along with all the social expectations like speaking to strangers and changes to normal routines. In addition, some children simply don't like to be frightened, which is a big part of the holiday.

If you plan to go trick or treating, you can do a few things in advance to prepare. First, sit down and map out the houses in your neighborhood in advance. Limit the number of houses you visit – it's better to end the night early and on a positive note than to push your child past his or her comfort level. If you can only make it to a few houses this year, work on building up to more next year. Next, set aside some time to walk the route in advance of Halloween night. If your child is open to wearing a costume, involve him or her in the process of picking it out. When selecting what to wear, pick something that is comfortable without too many accessories. Before Halloween night, encourage your child to try on the costume, so he or she knows what to expect. When it comes to Halloween night, if your child does not like the costume, don't push it.

When packing to walk the route, bring headphones or ear plugs and a comforting toy for your child. Parents with children who have limited communication could consider using a badge or nametag to let neighbors know that their child communicates differently, or handouts like the sample on the right.

If you plan to skip the trick or treating on Saturday, there are plenty of other Halloween or fall-themed alternatives in which you can participate:

- Attend a trunk-or-treat at your child's school or church
- Have a Halloween-themed movie night
- Carve and decorate pumpkins if your child prefers to stay in with your family
- Try a new fall recipe, like pumpkin bread or cookies
- Stay home and hand out candy. Help your child find a "job" that he/she can be successful with like opening the door, putting candy in buckets, or refilling the candy bowl.

Considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this Halloween will probably look different again this year. The CDC recommends that you reduce your risk of exposure by washing or sanitizing your hands before handling treats, wearing a mask, and avoiding direct contact with other trick-or-treaters.

### THIS MONTH'S FAMILY MEETINGS

**Hammond** – Wednesday, Oct 13, 9-10am- online  
**New Orleans** -attend one, Thursday, Oct 28, 9-10am or 6-7pm online

**Baton Rouge**-school aged: Will return to in -person meetings November 4, 8:45-9:45am

**Baton Rouge** – will return to in-person meetings November 4, 2-3pm in -person and online

**Houma/Thib**-to be announced

**Lafayette**- Tuesday, Oct 12, 9:30am & Saturday, Oct 23, 10-11am online



### NEW FAMILY ORIENTATIONS

Please contact Angie Lanoux at [alanoux@tc-aba.com](mailto:alanoux@tc-aba.com) or Janice Huber at [jhuber@tc-aba.com](mailto:jhuber@tc-aba.com) to register for the New Family Orientation. Families are encouraged to attend one of the sessions within the first couple months of starting services

**Monday, October 11, 10-12noon**

**Friday, October 15, 9-11am**

**Sunday, October 17, 1-3pm**



If your child will be trick or treating and has difficulty communicating – consider making or printing notices like this one which can be found here:

<https://tacanow.org/family-resources/trick-or-treat/>