



AUTISM SERVICES INC.

OF WINDSOR & ESSEX COUNTY

*& Community Partners for
an Inclusive Halloween*

AUTISM AWARENESS HALLOWEEN

Therapeutic Learning Centre



ARE YOU PLANNING ON HANDING OUT CANDY THIS YEAR? HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER TO BE INCLUSIVE AND KIND TO ALL!

Be Understanding of Preferences: Whenever possible, let children choose their own candy so they can select treats that suit their preferences.



Be Inclusive of Dietary Needs: Some children may have allergies or food intolerances that you may not be aware of. Consider offering safer options such as dye-free fruit snacks or fruit leather, non-cheddar popcorn snack packs, YumEarth treats, and Enjoy Life chocolate bars.

Think Outside the Box: For children with allergies or dietary concerns, non-candy treats may be a safer option. Consider stickers, crayons, small toys, or other party favours. If you offer non-candy treats, a teal pumpkin can let families know they are available.

Be Kind & Patient: Some children may not have the language to say "trick or treat," explain their costume, or say "thank you." They may still be excited to participate and appreciate the treats. Be patient, accepting, and welcoming to everyone!



ARE YOU COLLECTING TREATS AND CANDY WITH YOUR KIDDOS? HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER TO KEEP THINGS SMOOTH, FUN, AND SAFE!

Look before they eat - Before consuming candy, lay it all out and check for tampering. Remove any items with damaged packaging, and items that contain allergens or other restricted ingredients.
Look for the Teal Pumpkin - A teal pumpkin is a way for households to indicate that they are offering non-food treats.

Stay Safe - Certain candies may be unsafe for younger children, or children with oral motor difficulties. Hard candies that are not on a stick can be a choking hazard, so avoid those candies, or stick with suckers which are safer.



Thames Valley Children's Center

tvcc



Behavioural Essentials Inc



Virtual Behaviour Services



HERE ARE A FEW WAYS THAT A NONVERBAL INDIVIDUAL OR SOMEONE WITH A COMMUNICATION BARRIER COULD SAY 'TRICK OR TREAT':

Use a communication device (iPad, PECS binder, communication board)

Have a sticker on their treat bag that they could hold up or point to when trick or treating.

Have printed cards that say 'trick or treat' that the individual can hand to the person giving out candy.

Have the phrase 'trick or treat' pre-programmed on a switch device or phone so that all the individual needs to do is push a button to request.

Have an adult or sibling help prompt the individual if they are having difficulty.

WAITING AND BEING IN CROWDED SPACES CAN BE DIFFICULT AND OVERWHELMING FOR AN AUTISTIC PERSON DUE TO UNFAMILIAR PEOPLE, SENSORY SENSITIVITIES, AND EVEN EXCITEMENT ABOUT THE DAY. HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Be calm and patient: Keeping calm body language can help reduce the child's anxiety and could prevent escalating the situation.

Give space: Respect the child's need for personal space and avoid crowding them.

Allow the child to move ahead- Step aside to place candy in the child's bag, or let the child move ahead in line to reduce their wait time, if it seems appropriate to do so.

Keep an eye out for early and late trick or treaters:

Some families may take their child trick or treating earlier in the evening or later in the evening to avoid crowds of people and to reduce the wait time.

Avoid judgement: Recognize that the child may be struggling. Offering patience and kindness will be beneficial to the child and the parent/caregiver.



TO BEST SUPPORT EVERYONE AND ENSURE HALLOWEEN INCLUDES OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY PLEASE KEEP IN MIND:

General Unfamiliarity- The child might feel uncertain about wearing something new, whether it be a costume, a mask, or other disguises.

Sensory Considerations- Costumes can be bothersome—itchy fabrics, excessive length, or bright lights may pose sensory challenges.

What to wear- Caregivers don't want to force their child to wear a costume, it might be easier for the caregivers to allow their child to **NOT** wear a costume, rather, something Halloween related like black and orange. Caregiver might be unsure of what their child is currently interested in, can't find a costume their child is interested in or costumes are sold out.

Age of Participation- Some older children/teenagers may still want to go out trick or treating and dress up because this is what Halloween means to them

