

Tips and Tricks for The Holiday of Tricks and Treats

For many, their favorite Fall childhood memories come from Halloween. Pumpkins, costumes and the thrill of trick-or-treating. Of course, not everyone celebrates this tradition, though the decorations and décor is everyone. And for some adults with fearful kids, Halloween is more about pumpkin flavoring and avoiding the decorations, costumes, and all that is Halloween.

Fear is a natural thing and here are a few tips that may help get your loved ones through this Fall season:

Don't minimize a child's fears.

It is helpful to recognize that there is a reality in fear. Halloween can be a scary time. As young people are exploring the world, monsters and bloody eye balls may not seem super festive. According to experts at Bradley Hospital, young children have a growing-and vivid-imagination and are often unable to differentiate between what's real and what's pretend. That's why they may suddenly become fearful of objects or events that they did not seem to mind only months earlier or are very frightened by trick-or-treaters dressed up in scary costumes. Allow your child to share some of his or her fears and acknowledge the fear as something that is valid. The fear, however unfounded, is causing real anxiety. Offer support and comfort and use a calm voice and reassuring words.

Start preparing your child for Halloween early.

It is impossible to keep your child in a bubble for the entire month of October. Instead of avoiding Halloween, help prepare your child. Tell your child that during this time of year, and on Halloween in particular, people find it fun to dress up like scary things. Let them know that the monsters and scary creatures they will see are not real. If you see scary decorations in the shops – demystify them as you are able, encourage the child to touch and feel them to see how fake they feel.

If you do celebrate Halloween, don't get too attached to those cute little costumes.

This tip is geared towards people with toddlers in their lives. While you your toddler might plead with you to buy that perfect costume, they may also refuse to wear it on Halloween. Youngsters are moody. What is exciting one week – is boring the next. To spare the frustration – keep your expectations for Halloween low. Be flexible with costumes – and have a backup from the dress up bin.

We wish you a great fall season and hope this tips and tricks help make the end of October a tad less stressful for all!

Monthly Messages are brought to you by the Tompkins County Youth Services Department, a proud partner of The Community Coalition for Healthy Youth.

If you have further questions or comments about this message or would like information on how to become involved with the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, please email bnugent@tompkins-co.org.

