

SENSORY STRATEGY HANDOUT

Survival Guide for Halloween

Halloween can be a very challenging holiday. New activities. New noises. New people. Different routines. Help create a sensory safe place for your child to thrive this holiday!



A Child May Become Over-Stimulated By:

1 NEW VISUAL INPUT

- Decorations in your house
- Decorations at the store and other social environments
- People wearing costumes

2 AUDITORY INPUT

- Sounds on various decorations at home and/or store
- Doorbell, knocking on the door
- Large groups of people = lots of noise

3 NEW TACTILE INPUT

- Decorations with new tactile input
- Different fabric and textures on costume

4 INFLAMMATORY FOODS

- An increased consumption of food dyes
- Gluten, Dairy, Soy, Sugar
- Foods that the child doesn't normally eat
- The child eats less food than normal due to picky eating and lack of preferred foods available

5 CHANGE IN ROUTINE

- Change in routine at school
- Change in routine at home, especially the night of



Empathy is key

Tips, Tricks, & Strategies:

1 CREATE A SENSORY SPACE

- A quiet space for your child to retreat to when they need a break.
- Have a prepared "signal" if your child is able.
- Practice beforehand.

2 USE A SOCIAL STORY

- Prepare for the changes that are coming.
- Add what feelings might occur.
- Add what your child can do when they feel a certain way.
- "I can." "I will." "I am."

3 USE A VISUAL SCHEDULE

- A visual schedule is especially helpful when routine is changed.
- Prepare the visual schedule the night before so your child knows what is coming - keep in mind, this can cause more anxiety for some children, so do what is best for your child.

4 KEEP ONE THING THE SAME

- Choose at least one piece of the normal routine that you can maintain the same.
- This establishes one piece of consistency and comfort. Try something like having their normal breakfast or snuggling in the morning together. Do what makes your child feel comforted and happy!

5 MORE PROPRIOCEPTIVE INPUT

- Use a weighted vest, blanket, lap pad.
- Incorporate more animal walks and crashing into the day.
- Add more oral motor input into the day - gum, bubble mountain, thick smoothie through a straw, etc.

6 HEADPHONES

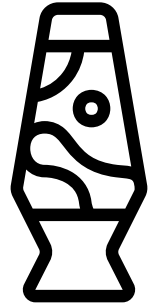
- Over-the-ear noise cancelling headphones can be beneficial, especially when in large crowds. Have their favorite music available and plug that into headphones for them if needed.

7 ROLE PLAY BEFOREHAND

- Try a dress rehearsal before Halloween.
- Include dressing up, practicing trick-or-treating, coming home, etc.

Ideas for a Sensory Space

- Small enclosed space such as a pop up tent
- Lava lamp or other calming visual item
- Pillows, cushions, blankets
- Vibrating stuffed animals / pillows
- Hand and mouth fidgets
- Calming music with headphones
- Preferred books, puzzles, quiet games



Ideas for Heavy Work / Proprioception

- Animal walks
- Push / pull heavy items
- Simple household chores
- Wall walk ups
- Steam roller
- Squeeze box
- Chewy / crunchy foods
- Weighted items (vest, blanket, etc.)

