

Pediatricians offer tips on a spooky but safe Halloween

October 31 2022, by Cara Murez



By the time they're in elementary school, kids typically know their

favorite parts about celebrating Halloween.

But the holiday is still new to babies and [toddlers](#), and some little ones may find it all too much.

That's OK, said pediatrician Dr. Dina DiMaggio, a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She offered some tips for getting started with [babies](#) and toddlers who might be ready for some Halloween fun.

"As a parent, you know your child best," DiMaggio said in an academy news release. "The best way to handle fear and get a toddler ready is to discuss what's going to happen. Reading books to your child about [trick-or-treating](#)—and Halloween in general—are great ways to help that discussion. Consider having your child practice in their costume before the big day."

Tell your child Halloween is just for fun and all of the scary stuff that goes along with it is just pretend, DiMaggio added.

One fun seasonal activity for a baby or toddler would be to squish their hands around the inside of a pumpkin, the AAP suggested. Or you could decorate a pumpkin together using one of many no-carve options.

Try trick-or-treating when it's still light outside, so you can maintain a normal bedtime.

Choose a costume that isn't long or bulky, which will make it easier for your child to walk. Have a backup costume in case of a [potty training accident](#) or leaky diaper. It may be helpful to have a costume easy for a child to get in and out of so that bathroom breaks are simpler.

Check the [weather forecast](#) and include clothing layers if needed.

Help your little one climb up and down steps and navigate curbs, the AAP suggested.

It's possible that a scary house or [costume](#), a fall or even just a hard day can contribute to a [temper tantrum](#). If your child loses interest in trick-or-treating, think about stopping. Your child can help hand out candy to the big kids at home instead, the AAP advised.

The academy suggested looking for non-food treats when possible, such as crayons, colored pencils, notepads, stickers, stamps, chalk, bubbles, temporary tattoos, Play-Doh or small stuffed animals. Limit sugar. Also watch what your child is eating from their treat bag at home or while still trick-or-treating.

Babies and toddlers should not eat any hard candies, caramel apples, popcorn, gum, small candies (jellybeans, etc.), gummy [candy](#), pumpkin seeds or anything with whole nuts.

Candy wrappers, stickers, small toys, or temporary tattoos can also be choking hazards, the AAP said. Check all the [candy](#) your child receives, to be sure nothing appears wrong.

Don't let your young child trick-or-treat through the neighborhood alone, the AAP advised. Plan and review the route if [older children](#) are going alone and agree on a specific return time. Get flashlights with fresh batteries for each child.

You may want to skip trick-or-treating altogether if your town doesn't start until after dark and if festive activities are offered earlier in the day.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on potential [choking hazards](#) for young children.

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