

Linda Crissey, a former director of 18 years at Ruth Washburn, had these wise words to share about Halloween.....

The teachers will approach Halloween with sensitivity to your family's religious views and your child's individuality and emotional well being. One child may be ready for all the fun and another can be terrified. Consequently, you may expect a low-key approach with emphasis on fall activities, the fun of dressing up, and talk about what is real and what is not. Decorations will be kept to a minimum to provide the security of the same safe familiar environment. Please speak to your child's teacher about any special concerns or questions you might have.

Children usually love to dress up so parents are sometimes surprised or upset when their child refuses to get near the costume they spent days or weeks finding, creating, or sewing. Some children feel uncomfortable with the attention they draw in the costume. Other children feel anxiety because they don't really understand what might be expected of them. The costume itself might be uncomfortable. They can be heavy, hot, scratchy, restrictive, vision-blocking, or isolating.

Masks can be especially frightening to children and unsafe to wear if they restrict vision. Many children don't like the feeling of having something on their faces.

Minnow (our school's founder) used to remind us not to forget that the Halloween and "trick or treating" fun we remember from our childhood was experienced at some period between ages six and twelve rather than ages two to five. If you approach Halloween with sensitivity to your preschooler, letting him or her take the lead, you and your children can look forward to plenty of costume fun in the years ahead.





Halloween for Preschoolers:

A Trick or a Treat?

Your young children are going through a period in their lives in which they have begun to feel a sense of security within the home, family, and school. They have begun to develop a trust and knowledge of the world around them. They know what friends look like and what to do with friends.

Your children trust you. They know that you would not do anything to harm them. They have come to believe in you and have faith that you will protect and guide them.

Now all of a sudden a day called "Halloween" comes around. This secure world changes:

-  People whose faces they once knew have changed.
-  People come over to their houses for a different reason – Trick or Treat.
-  The house and maybe the places they visit have changed. Now they have pictures of scary or unusual faces.
-  The stores have these faces too.

Young children need extra care during this time. Very gently you need to explain that this is a dress-up day. It is a day that people “pretend” to be somebody else. Children put on masks, paint their faces, and wear funny clothes and costumes.

Before Halloween, take time to talk with your children about what might happen. Talk about store decorations. If you decorate, be sensitive to the children’s feelings and reactions.

But remember, on Halloween your children may still not be ready. It could really scare them. Please don’t push them. Let them ease into the holiday. It often takes several years. One of the best things you can do for children who are uncomfortable is to understand, “I know these masks are scary to you,” “You are really scared when someone wears a costume,” or “Stay close to me. I will not let anyone hurt you.”

Finally, if you feel that your children will not enjoy Halloween, skip it.

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