

**Comfort**

**Play**

# Comfort, Play & Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting™

## Tip Sheet

Use Halloween to Comfort, Play with and Teach your Child  
Tips from the Experts at Invest in Kids turn  
Fright Night into Fun Night

Halloween can be as much an evening of fun, dress-up, and too much candy, as it can be a night of scary goblins, strange noises and haunted houses. The parenting experts at [www.investinkids.ca](http://www.investinkids.ca) have come up with some ways in which parents of young children can use Comfort, Play and Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting™ to enjoy both the tricks and the treats of this spooky and exciting night.

**Comfort**

Children will have very different reactions to trick or treating. Those with very shy temperaments may cling closely to the parent or show obvious signs of discomfort towards scary masks and costumes. Children with a more easy-going temperament, may show great excitement or react in a neutral way. It's important to deal with your child's emotions in a sensitive, understanding way. Fears seem especially common in children between three and six years of age, when a child's ability to think about and remember scary things increases.

Prepare your child for things you expect will be scary for him. Talk to him in advance of the event about how people like to dress up in funny and scary-looking costumes. Give your child an opportunity to voice any concerns and together you can develop a plan to help him cope when he comes face to face with the source of his fear. Try making up funny names for monsters that he can use when he spots one. For example, "There goes Victor the Vile Vampire or Frankie Frankenstein".

Just being able to label and use words allows your child to exert some power and manage negative emotions. When you comfort your frightened child, you are helping him feel safe. This sense of security gives him the courage needed to eventually face and conquer his fears.



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When children play, they are practicing skills in every area of development: thinking, solving problems, talking, moving, sensing and making moral judgements. This natural form of learning is very similar to the real world, because instead of learning one thing at a time, children are engaged in several things at once – learning new ideas, objects and playing with friends. Playing is also fun. It makes children happy and leads to easier and more effective learning. Typical Halloween activities offer another opportunity for you and your child to play together.

Let your child decide what she would like to “be” for Halloween. Then take the opportunity to plan together how the costume could be made. For example, if she wants to be a computer, let her design the box with the appropriate buttons, knobs and pictures.

Using one’s imagination to create a product requires a lot of creativity and thinking. The actual creation necessitates another set of skills such as trial and error, problem-solving and fine motor coordination. At the end, there is the emotional satisfaction of having made something that you really wanted.



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Everyday routines and activities can be used to give your child practice in communicating, thinking creatively and abstractly, paying attention and making new judgements. Halloween can be a time to teach children and give them a chance to exercise their newly emerging skills.

Parents can turn the candy and treats bag into a fun, sorting game. Youngsters are overwhelmed by the amount and variety of treats. You can help by asking your child to sort or group the treats. Start by putting all of the chocolate bars into one pile, the lollipops in another, the chips in a third and so on. Older preschoolers may want to create their own category (soft, hard, crunchy or drinkable). They can then indulge according to the guidelines you set e.g. one item from the pile of hard candy and one from the soft.

For more Comfort, Play & Teach™ tips for Halloween, visit [www.investinkids.ca](http://www.investinkids.ca). The site also provides some practical Halloween safety tips from Safe Kids Canada.



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