

Take a Walk Through the Halloween Costume Store

By Karen Kaplan

I am all about expanding language comprehension through meaningful activities. Well, Halloween is just around the corner and the Spirit Halloween Store is about to open in your town. So, take your individual with communication challenges to the store and expand their comprehension and expression skills, while at the same time getting them use to the idea that Halloween is coming. What a great priming activity for individuals who are anxious about change.

Here are some of the activities you can do getting ready for the trip and once in the Halloween Costume Store.

- 1) **First**, prior to going to the store, **drive** by it. Point **out the sign** to your individual. Take out old Halloween costumes from the past and remind your individual what occurred last year. Maybe you took some **pictures** of last year's activities. Review them. Then pull out the calendar and circle the day of Halloween. Help your individual mark off the days until Halloween. These actions help prepare your individual.
- 2) Take a trip to your local grocery store or Target or Rite Aide and have your individual pick out **candy for trick or treaters** or pencils and spider rings if candy is not your tradition of handouts. This involves locating these items, waiting in line, and paying. These are good social skills and math skills.
- 3) You might also review some **U-tube videos** of trick and treating with your individual. This again helps prime them for the actual event.
- 4) You might develop a **Social Story** about Halloween and read it to them several times before the actual day. [Home - Carol Gray - Social Stories \(carolgraysocialstories.com\)](http://carolgraysocialstories.com).
- 5) Now, it is time to plan the trip to the Costume Store. **Pick a date**. Put it on the calendar and have your individual mark off the days prior. Perhaps they look up the address on the web. Perhaps they look up the hours of operation. Perhaps they choose the time they want to go. These activities help develop problem solving.
- 6) You might sit down with your individual and **talk about** their **favorite cartoon** characters, or TV or film Characters, or book characters. You might suggest they look for these characters in the costume store and choose one of those. You might **practice** them **asking** the sales people where these costumes are located. This works on their social skills and asking questions when they get into the store.
- 7) You might bring up the concept of **WIGS**. Ask questions. What are they? What are they one? How many kinds are there? Do you want to wear a wig on Halloween?
- 8) You might bring up the concept of **MASK**. You might encourage your individual to ask the sales person where to find masks in the store. You might then go see masks, count masks, talk about how you wear a mask and try some on. Then they can decide if they want to wear a mask on Halloween.
- 9) **You could then explore outside decorations**. You might ask your individual if they want to put out some decorations on the front porch, the front lawn or inside their home. You could explore the store for decorations and have them choose some. Can they find a ghost? Can they find a black cat? Should we buy a Skeleton to put on the porch? This **develops vocabulary** understanding.

