



HALLOWEEN TIPS FOR PARENTS ON MAKING MATH LESS **TRICKY** AND MORE OF A **TREAT**

1. **Let the kids decide how much candy to buy. (No, really!)** Estimate the number of trick-or-treaters your family can expect. Some questions to consider: How many people came last year? What's the weather supposed to be like? Discuss with your child about whether it's better to estimate high or low. "High" makes sense if you don't want to run out of candy and you like leftover treats. "Low" makes more sense if rain is expected or if you don't want leftovers.

Decide how many pieces to give each visitor. Then, using your estimate, figure out how many total pieces you should buy. Depending on your child's skill level, you might want to use repeated addition, or use multiplication. But do the math together and talk about it as you go.

Once you know, go to the store and pick out the candy. You can either estimate how many pieces are included in each bag and do the math, or estimate the weight of the total number of pieces (assuming, perhaps, 25 pieces per pound) and buy enough to cover your estimate.

2. **Talk fractions while making Halloween treats. Learning's baked right in!** Invite your child to help you measure out the ingredients before you begin. As you're working, ask "what if...?" questions. For example, if the recipe calls for 1 cup of flour, how many scoops would you use if you only had a $\frac{1}{3}$ cup measure? And can you substitute four $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons for 2 tablespoons?
3. **Challenge your kids to categorize their candy.** After you finish trick-or-treating, ask your child to divide the treats into piles based on a "secret rule" which you have to guess. For example, your child might sort all the chocolate into one pile and everything else into a second pile. Using reasoning skills, you would guess that "chocolate" and "not chocolate" were the secret attributes. Other features might include color, shape, and brand. Reverse the roles.
4. **Pumpkins are packed with possibilities.** Challenge your child to estimate the pumpkin's weight with you before you carve it. Then, find the exact weight by putting it on a bathroom scale. (For an alternative method, weigh your child on a bathroom scale and then weigh your child holding the pumpkin. Subtract the first number from the second to find the answer.) Here's another activity: How many of your pumpkins would it take to weigh the same as your child? You can use repeated addition with your child to find a close answer.

Carving the pumpkin offers a fun occasion to use geometry. Make an outline of your pumpkin on a piece of paper and plan what its face is going to look like. Ask: What simple geometric shape can we use for the eyes? The nose? How about the mouth? How can we combine shapes (multiple triangles, for example) to make fun facial features? Once you have your plan, map it out on the pumpkin with a colored marker and carve it!

5. **Leave time for trick-or-treating!** Talk to your child and agree on how much time you will spend trick-or-treating. What time will you leave? When will you return? Examples of questions to ask: If you plan to be out for an hour and a half, and you leave at 5:45 p.m., what time will you return? If it takes 25 minutes to walk to your cousin's house, and it's 6:10 p.m. now, when will you get there?

For more math fun visit the **CYBERCHASE website @ pbskids.org/cyberchase**