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Sesame Family Newsletter

October 29, 2008

Halloween Is Almost Here!

by Jordan D. Brown

"Spooktacular" costumes need not break the bank.

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Featuring:

Creative Alternatives to Costly Costumes

A Ghostly Gift

Staying Safe and Healthy



Games and More

Boo!

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Help Zoe make Halloween decorations.
- [Dress Grover](#)
Help Grover decide which crazy outfit to wear.
- [Count to Twenty](#)
The Count directs actor Liam Neeson.
- [Weekly Trivia](#)

Send a Halloween E-Card

Send a Sesame Street E-Card and make a donation to celebrate learning!

[Create E-Card](#)

Remember 3-2-1 Contact?

From 1980 until 1992, 3-2-1 Contact brought science to life for a young audience.

[Read About the Show](#)

Creative Halloween Costume Fun



Need an easy last-minute costume? Follow these step-by-step plans for fairy and elf costumes that parents and kids can make together. Print out wings and a star, grab some accessories, and create a magical costume that would make Abby Cadabby proud!

[Get Started!](#)



Earth's Best: A Proud Sponsor of Sesame Street

Earth's Best brings you fun, delicious, organic, healthy alternatives to kids' favorite foods with nutrient-rich Earth's Best *Sesame Street* breakfasts and snacks made from organic ingredients. Fortified with 8 essential vitamins, iron and zinc, Earth's Best helps to ensure that little tummies get the big nutrition they need.

CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES TO COSTLY COSTUMES

From a child's point of view, Halloween is a remarkable day. In addition to dressing up in costumes, kids are actually encouraged to eat sweets. ("Sorry, honey, no more cauliflower and lima beans until you finish all your candy corn and gummy goblins." OK, I



exaggerate.) For parents like me, though, Halloween can be stressful.

On a recent trip to a big department store, my 3-year-old daughter Olivia was mesmerized by all the colorful costumes. While the fake severed heads and bogus bloody hands on sale were certainly gory, most terrifying of all were the price tags. I looked at one elaborate Captain Hook costume and converted its worth into a full tank of gas. ("Arrr! Piracy indeed!")

"Daddy!" Olivia called, yanking a sparkly costume off the rack. "Guess what? I don't want to be a fairy princess anymore!" (WHAT? I thought.) "Now I want to be a mermaid!" she cheerfully announced.

I reminded Olivia that just last week we bought her the fairy princess costume she *had to have*. I reassured her how great she looked in it, and explained that we didn't have money to buy any more costumes this year. "Just go to the bank and get MORE money, Daddy," she suggested.

As we shopped for what we came for, Olivia would not let go of the mermaid idea. I mistakenly suggested, "Maybe you can be a mermaid NEXT year!" I might as well have said, "Olivia, now would be a really good time to have a tantrum." Eventually, I was able to distract her with an impromptu game of hide-and-seek. Later that day, I thought about some of the homemade Halloween costumes I wore as a child. Old family photos reveal that I was a ghost, a robot, a superhero, and a magician. None of these costumes cost my parents more than a few dollars. They were made of simple, inexpensive materials like an old white sheet, cardboard boxes, aluminum foil, paint, and so on. What's happened to this wonderful tradition?

Still undecided about your child's costume? Consider helping your child make his or her own. In retrospect, I wish I'd experimented with the homemade approach this year. Like most preschoolers, Olivia insists on doing so many things "by herself." With a few supplies and a little grown-up help, young children can create their own exciting costumes. If you're stumped by how to make a particular costume, explore the library or Internet for ideas. Many resourceful parents are eager to share pictures of homemade costumes, and even provide detailed instructions online.

While it is too late for homemade costumes for my kids this year, at least I am able to follow my own advice. Rather than buying a pricey ghoulish get-up, or a costly rubber mask of some political celebrity, I decided to keep it simple. I'm going to dress up as the enigmatic "Man With Three Mustaches" -- one 'stache under my nose and one on each cheek! All I need are a few pieces of fuzzy material and a little "spirit gum," and I'll be ready to help my kids trick or treat (and get strange glances from other adults).

A GHOSTLY GIFT

Grandparents and other relatives love receiving homemade Halloween cards. If you are looking for a creative project, consider making "foot ghosts" with your child. All you need is some black paper, white paint, and a black marker. Simply brush white paint on your child's foot, let her step on the black paper to make a footprint. Once the paint dries, help your child use the black marker to draw spooky eyes and a mouth on the heel of the footprint. Then cut out the "ghost" with a black border around it, and you've got a "foot ghost."



[SHOW YOUR CHILD THE BASICS OF CREATIVITY](#)

Children thrive best in environments where they can explore a wide variety of music, art, materials, and instruments.

[BATTY BAT](#)

The Count does a dance he learned as a boy in this classic video.

TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY AND SAFE



Halloween may be a night for monsters, but having a child with a monster sweet tooth can be more tricky than treaty. Olivia has always had a fondness for sweets, and we frequently have to remind her that chocolate isn't a vegetable. To make sure she won't eat too much candy on Halloween night, we plan to prepare meals earlier in the day that are as healthy as possible. Once Olivia fills up on macaroni and cheese, nibbles some broccoli, and has a few slices of apple, we know that her appetite for candy will be much less ravenous. We also have a rule about not eating any candy until we get home from trick-or-treating, and even then we dole out one piece a day, not counting the candy that Mommy and Daddy, um, "borrow" when the kids aren't looking.



When I was a kid, there was only one way to trick-or-treat: going door-to-door in our neighborhood. If you plan to go this route, make sure you bring along a flashlight so cars can see you. Today there are many interesting alternatives to the door-to-door tradition. Some people host a Halloween party, which allows families in a neighborhood to celebrate the holiday together. This is what our family is doing this year. The kids and I even constructed a homemade mini-pumpkin launcher in our backyard as one of the party games. Some churches have families gather in their parking lot to "trunk-and-treat." Kids in costume walk from car to car with their parents, collecting treats.

Whatever your tradition, have a happy and healthy Halloween!

Jordan D. Brown
Sesame Workshop

WEEKLY TRIVIA

Did you know?

The Count and Mumford the Magician have the same head, but different eyes, noses, and hair.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP



Sesame Workshop is a nonprofit educational organization making a meaningful difference in children's lives around the world. Founded in 1968, the Workshop changed television forever with the legendary *Sesame Street*. Today, the Workshop continues to innovate on behalf of children in 120 countries, using its proprietary research methodology to ensure its programs and products are engaging and enriching. Sesame Workshop is behind award-winning programs like *Dragon Tales* and *Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat*, *Pinky Dinky Doo* and ground breaking multimedia productions in South Africa, Egypt and Russia. As a nonprofit, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from sales of *Sesame Street*, *Dragon Tales* and *Sagwa* products right back into its educational projects for children around the world. Find the Workshop online at www.sesameworkshop.org.

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