



HALLOWEEN!

Time for Peaceful Pretending!



Children learn from the choices you help them make. Will their Halloween costume:

- ◆ teach the values that you want to encourage?
- ◆ promote positive, cooperative play and empathy for others?
- ◆ be age-appropriate and family-friendly?
- ◆ encourage cultural respect and avoid stereotypes?



Commercialism can dominate your child's Halloween and impact your influence as a parent. Some tips to help:

- ◆ **Work with your child early** to help develop an idea.
- ◆ **Look for positive role models** - without weapons.
- ◆ **Ask your child's school to plan for a nonviolent Halloween.** Some schools announce a theme for their celebrations: characters from literature, period costumes, circus.
- ◆ **Be creative!** Face paints, felt, and paper maché can let loose the inner artist!

What about Superheroes?

- ◆ Many children enjoy playing out scenes they have seen in movies or on TV. What attracts them to the character?
- ◆ For many kids, it's the character's abilities or powers that are so compelling. What are the positive aspects of that Superhero that you can emphasize? How might a Superhero be powerful and peaceful?
- ◆ Talk with your child about the way the Superhero addresses challenges. Could you and your child create a Superhero who solves problems nonviolently?

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Peaceful Pretending Halloween Costume Ideas

Animals: Ears can be taped to a headband and a tail can be pinned to some pants.

Nature: butterflies, insects, flowers, pumpkin, cactus

Food: banana, cupcake, hot dog, cereal box, grapes, candy bar, taco

Career: Doctor, Rock Star, Astronaut, Soccer Player, Firefighter, Dancer, Chef

Mythical, fairytale, or storybook characters

People from history

Famous landmarks or buildings

- Have you checked the back of your closet lately? You may find something inspiring! Thrift stores also save you money and help you and your child create something unique.



Should you “go to war” over a Halloween costume? We'd say no.

But have a heart to heart over your misgivings? Yes.

And you could try working out some compromises to modify some aspects of the costume, including protecting younger audiences. Remember that your child learns from your modeling of how to solve problems, too.



Looking for more information?

Beyond Banning War and Superhero Play: www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/Levin_1.pdf

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood: www.commercialfreechildhood.org

Center for Media Literacy: www.mediaandvalues.org

Raising Children to Resist Violence: www.apa.org/helpcenter/resist-violence.aspx

Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment: truceteachers.org

What do Halloween costumes say? www.tolerance.org/lesson/what-do-halloween-costumes-say