



— A CO-PARENTING BRAINSTORM • HALLOWEEN

Let's Make *Halloween Amazing*

A Guided Brainstorm for Two Parents, Two Homes,
and One Very Excited Kid

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READ THIS FIRST

Before You Start

This is not a custody worksheet. Nobody is keeping score on these pages.

It is a brainstorm — the kind you would do with a co-worker on a whiteboard, except the project is one night in October and the client is a child who does not care even slightly about the adult logistics underneath it.

Kids remember the year they got to be a dragon. They do not remember which house the dragon slept at.



TWO WAYS TO USE THIS

Sit down and fill it out together if you can. If that is not where you are yet, fill in your side first, then send it over — most of these pages are built so one parent can start and the other can finish. Starting alone is not a failure. It is just how a lot of good plans begin.

ONE RULE FOR THE WHOLE PACKET

In the brainstorm sections, **nobody says no**. Not “we can’t afford that,” not “you know he’d hate that.” All of that comes later, in Part Five, where it belongs. Ideas first, filtering second. Mixing the two is what kills a brainstorm and most co-parenting conversations.

THE INVITATION

If you are the one starting, this is the message to send. Short is better than perfect.

COPY AND SEND

“I put together something for Halloween planning — it’s a brainstorm sheet, not a legal thing. I filled in my half. Would you take a look and add yours? I’d rather build this with you than around you.”

OI | PART ONE

What Does Our Kid Actually Want?

Both parents answer. **Answer for your child, not for yourself.**

If our child could design Halloween from scratch, they would want:

PARENT A

PARENT B

The part of Halloween our child loves most is:

The costume, the candy, the scaring, the decorating, the being out at night, the friends, the pumpkins, the movies

PARENT A

PARENT B

What went sideways last year:

PARENT A

PARENT B

What our child has already told us they want this year:

One thing we both know our child needs that has nothing to do with candy:

“ Look at what you both wrote. Nine times out of ten there is more overlap than either of you expected.
Start the rest of the packet from the overlap.

02 | PART TWO

The Big List — No Vetoing

Set a timer for ten minutes. Each parent writes five ideas. Bad ideas welcome. Expensive ideas welcome. Ideas the other parent will hate, welcome.

PARENT A'S FIVE

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

PARENT B'S FIVE

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

STUCK? STEAL FROM THIS LIST.

Trunk-or-treat at a church or school lot

Candy scavenger hunt with clues through the house

A costume runway show with whatever is in the closet

Spooky slime and sensory bins

Visiting a nursing home in costume so residents hand out the candy

A boo basket

Pumpkin carving

A monster-movie night with the lights off

Decorating one house together

Baking something orange

A neighborhood walk with just two or three familiar houses

Handing out candy instead of collecting it



NOW CIRCLE EVERY IDEA THAT APPEARS ON BOTH LISTS

Those are free. Do them.

Then each of you pick one idea from the *other* parent's list that you would be willing to make happen. Write it here:

Parent A will make happen: _____

Parent B will make happen: _____

“ That last step is the whole exercise. Your child gets to see each of you build something the other person thought of. They notice. They always notice.

03

PART THREE

Two Homes, One Holiday

Two homes is not a problem to be minimized. It is two chances at a good night, if you plan it that way instead of splitting one night in half.

	HOME A	HOME B
Our Halloween happens on (date)		
What we're doing		
Who's there		
Start and end time		
What our child brings with them		
What stays here		

THINGS THAT TRAVEL BETWEEN HOUSES – AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Costume: _____

Candy bucket / bag: _____

Comfort item: _____

Pumpkin or craft made at the other house: _____

Candy haul — split, shared, or stays where it lands? _____

The handoff:

Where, what time, and how we make it feel like a beginning rather than an ending.

“ Small thing that matters enormously: when a child arrives at the second house, the first words should be about their night, not about the schedule. “Show me everything” beats “did you have your dinner.”

04 | PART FOUR The Costume Conversation

This is the number one avoidable Halloween argument, and it is almost always about logistics rather than money.

What our child wants to be: _____

One costume or two?

Two events, two homes, and a child who wants a different costume for each is normal. So is one costume worn twice.

Who is buying or building it: _____

Budget we're both comfortable with: _____

If we're splitting the cost, how: _____

Where the costume lives between events, and who transports it:

Backup plan if it rips, gets wet, or gets refused at the door:

“ *The costume is not a competition and a child can tell instantly when it has become one. If one of you is building it, the other gets to be the one who is loudly, genuinely amazed by it.*

05 | PART FIVE The Whole Family

Halloween is rarely two parents. It is grandparents who want to see the costume, cousins who want to go together, and a step-parent or partner figuring out where they fit.

Who on each side wants to be part of this year:

PARENT A'S FAMILY

PARENT B'S FAMILY

How each of them gets their moment:

A video call in costume, a porch visit, a photo, a separate afternoon, coming along to the event, handing out candy at their house

PERSON	WHAT THEY GET	WHEN	WHO ARRANGES IT

Grandparents who cannot travel or are in care:

A costumed visit is one of the best hours of their year. Who arranges it, and when?

New partners:

If there is a step-parent or partner in the picture, name their role now rather than at 6 p.m. on the 31st.

“ A child's circle is allowed to be bigger than the distance between the two of you. Nobody has ever been harmed by too many adults who were thrilled to see them in a costume.

06 | PART SIX

The Photo Plan

Photos are where good Halloween nights go wrong, and it is worth ten minutes now.

THE COSTUME PORTRAIT – BEFORE ANYTHING GETS DIRTY

Where: _____ Who takes it: _____ What time: _____

How we share:

Shared album, text the same night, cloud folder – pick one and put the link here.

Same-night rule: whoever has the child sends photos to the other parent that evening, unprompted, with no commentary attached. Just the pictures. Both agree?

A _____ B _____

PUBLIC POSTING

Decide this once and you never argue about it again.

Do we post our child publicly at all? _____

If yes, faces shown or not? _____

Do we tag or name the location? _____

Does either of us need to see it before it goes up? _____

Are we asking family not to post? _____



THE PHOTO WITH BOTH PARENTS IN IT

If you can manage one picture with both of you and the child, take it. You do not have to be friends to stand next to each other for four seconds. Your child will find that photo when they are twenty-five.

Are we doing this? _____ Who's holding the phone? _____

Photos our child actually wants:

Ask them. Kids usually have a specific idea and it is rarely the posed one on the porch steps.

07 | PART SEVEN The Regulation Plan

For any child who runs hot on big nights — and especially for a neurodivergent child, where a costume, a crowd, and a doorbell can stack up faster than anyone expects.

What overwhelms our child:

The early signs we both watch for:

What actually helps in the moment:

Our exit plan, and who we tell when we use it:

Accommodations that make the night work:

Noise protection, shorter duration, no mask, familiar adults only, a visit to the venue in advance, food from home, a quiet room, leaving before the crowd peaks

If the night ends early, we both agree that is a success and not a failure.

A _____ B _____

“ Ending at house four with a happy kid beats finishing the street with a wrecked one. Neither of you should have to defend that call to the other.

o8 | PART EIGHT

The Night-Of Sheet

Fill this in together. Both parents keep a copy. **This is the page that goes on the fridge.**

TIME	WHAT'S HAPPENING	WHERE	WHO'S WITH THEM

Both of us have: | the address | the timing | each other's phone on



IF PLANS CHANGE LAST MINUTE

The person with the child texts the other within the hour. Not to ask permission. Just so nobody is surprised.



WRAP-UP

What We Decided

Write the three things you agreed on. Keep it short. Keep it where you can both find it.

1

2

3

One thing we're each doing that the other person suggested:

A

B

We'll check in about how it went on (date): _____

Initials A: _____ B: _____ Date: _____



MAKE IT LAST BEYOND THIS OCTOBER

Anything you agree on here is worth carrying into the parenting plan itself. Holiday paragraphs in North Carolina orders routinely name Thanksgiving and Christmas and skip October 31 entirely – which is exactly why you are holding this packet. What you sort out on paper this month can become permanent with a consent modification, without anybody setting foot in a courtroom.



WHEN IT GETS HARD

If You Got Stuck

Some of these pages are easy and some of them are not, and getting stuck on one does not mean the whole thing failed. It usually means you have found the real issue — the one underneath Halloween.

That is workable. Collaborative family law in North Carolina is a private, out-of-court process where both parents and both attorneys agree in writing to build the answer instead of litigating it. It is confidential, it is governed by statute, and it produces parenting plans far more specific than anything a judge has time to write — including holiday rotations by name, sensory accommodations, photo-sharing expectations, and how extended family fits in.

If Halloween is the hard conversation this year, it will be Thanksgiving next. Better to build the plan once.

CAPE FEAR FAMILY LAW

Bring this packet with you — even the parts you couldn't finish. Especially those.

Schedule a confidential consultation with Cape Fear Family Law.

SCHEDULE A CONFIDENTIAL CONSULTATION