

Make Trick or Treating a Hearing Loss-Friendly Experience for Your Deaf Child!

Alaine: [00:00:00] Welcome to Raising Deaf Kids. I'm your host, Elaine Jacobs. It is that time of the year again, the holiday season. First up on deck is trick or treating. It's definitely a kid favorite holiday, but it can also be a little difficult to navigate hearing while running around outside, hopped up on candy, and dodging other parents and kids.

Alaine: If your kids are like mine, then the whole thing goes by really fast. So today we're going to chat about some quick tips to make trick or treating more hearing loss friendly. Let's discuss!

Alaine: Hey, welcome to Raising Deaf Kids. Are you tired of spending your precious time after the kids go to bed googling and scrolling Instagram for answers like, how do I learn sign language? Do you feel overwhelmed by all of the decisions that you have to constantly make for your child? Hey, I'm Elaine. I'm a mom of three littles, two of whom are deaf.

Alaine: I remember what it felt like to learn that my child [00:01:00] was deaf for the first time. It felt like the rug got torn out from under my feet, and I was falling without a net in sight. How did I get through those crazy early years of learning new ways of life without completely going insane? By creating solid foundations for my child of communication strategies, academic skills, and routines at home.

Alaine: And I can't wait to share it all with you. Together, we're going to build a strong foundation that will support your child and help them thrive. So put down that to do list, close out that ASL app for now, and let's get started.

Alaine: Did you know that I have a free community of parents just like you? Busy parents who want to parent their child with more confidence while still getting all of the things done in the house each day. In our community, we share strategies to help our kids learn language faster, a no sweat approach to the IEP, and we lean on each other for [00:02:00] support and encouragement in this up and down journey of hearing loss with your kids.

Alaine: If you haven't found your community yet, then welcome home. Come join us at facebook. com slash group slash raising deaf kids.

Alaine: Welcome back to Raising Deaf Kids. And it is the holiday season. And, you know, I'm going to be that person that's like, I can't believe the holidays are already here. Which is true. It seems like we wait all year long for the holidays and then they come up fast and furious and they're upon us all of a sudden.

Alaine: And I'm excited. I love this time of year. Fall all the way through New Year's. So I'm kind of like built for this. This is, this is my time, guys. Yeah, so I'm really excited about it. And so first on deck, of course, is trick or treating. Halloween is coming up. And probably most of us, you know, take our kids trick or treating because who doesn't love a night full of Halloween?

Alaine: Of being hopped up on sugar and candy, [00:03:00] it feels like it's a childhood rite of passage. So because that is first up on deck, it also tends to be one of the holidays that also is the most difficult, I would say for. Kids and people with hearing loss, because you are outside in a bigger space, there are lots of other kids and parents running around.

Alaine: So, you know, if you're like our neighborhood which really puts on a big trick or treating thing and other people from other neighborhoods come. So our neighborhood gets packed with cars and people way more than obviously, usually are all out at one time. So the neighborhoods are packed. You know, you've got people going out, getting candy kids eating candy as they go, so they're getting hopped up on sugar and getting that sugar rush as they're running around the neighborhood.

Alaine: Maybe that's just my kids, but that is how our [00:04:00] typical Halloween goes at this point. And it's a lot of fun, but not a great environment conducive to good hearing ability. So, what I want to go over today is a few tips that we use as a family to kind of help mitigate some of the hearing loss issues while we're outside running around.

Alaine: And while my kids are usually. A fair amount running in front of me and going to the next house to get candy. And so your kids are also further away from you and not always like right beside you because they're excited and that's fun, you know, and this is a fun time to be a kid. And we want our kids to have fun experiences, but we also want them to hear when we tell them to come back or stop or don't run in front of the car on the road or something like that.

Alaine: So here are the things. That I just want to go over real quick for you guys in case you're newer to hearing loss. [00:05:00] You know, this is your first trick or treating experience, or you've done trick or treating, but in the past you're like, I'm not sure, like, we had fun, but I'm not sure if it was the best, like, hearing environment.

Alaine: And that's okay. We'll do better again this year, right? And we just do the best we can. With the information that we have at the time, but I'll just give you some tips real quick three tips about what my family personally does to kind of make this day a little bit more hearing loss friendly for our kids.

Alaine: So, number 1 and this is something I actually do before we leave the house just in general, but especially on Halloween night. is I establish with our kids while everybody's sitting down on the couch calm, the calm before the storm. I establish our route around the neighborhood and our rules.

Alaine: During trick or treating. So establish your route around the neighborhood. Which way around your neighborhood are you going? So [00:06:00] everybody who's involved knows how you're going through the neighborhood and which houses you're going to hit at what time on the neighborhood. So if anybody gets lost, you know, everybody knows the route and knows where they're more or less supposed to be going ahead of time.

Alaine: And then also establish the rules that you want your kids to abide by. Okay, so do you want them to be right next to you at all times? Do you want them to wait on the sidewalk for you after they go get a piece of candy and before they start moving on to the next house? Do you want them to wait for their siblings and everybody to group back up and then all move to the next house together?

Alaine: Are you splitting up, which is something that me and my husband do a lot just because our kids get excited and it just ends up happening that way, you know, or like you and a partner or a spouse? splitting the kids up. If so, who's taking what kid, and each kid needs to know who their parent is and who they need to [00:07:00] stay with.

Alaine: Okay, so you need to think through, like, what are the rules that we want for our kids to abide by on Halloween night, and which direction around the neighborhood are we going? And this is really important because going ahead and establishing these things, as I've learned over the years, which I did not do our first Halloween, and now I do do it, is because this actually mitigates a lot of the talking and yelling that you have to do to your kids.

Alaine: Because remember, this is like a busy night. It's a lot of kids and adults are out. It can be loud and you don't want to be constantly yelling at your kids like, wait, Stop. Stay right there. Don't move on to the next house because they're excited. They're also like hyped up and excited and they're on adrenaline and they probably are not going to pay attention to you as well once they're out and about.

Alaine: Okay. And so that means the whole night it's stressful for you. Once again, I've been here, so I know it's stressful for you because every [00:08:00] house you're having to like grab a kid or yell at them to come here and they're not hearing you and or they're not listening to you. They're moving on to the next house because they're excited and it just ends up being really stressful and it relies on your kids to have to pay attention to hearing you even more during a time when hearing.

Alaine: Is a little bit more of a chore and so it's making them basically like use their hearing even more than they need to. So going ahead and establishing the route and the rules. You know, helps the family know how you're going to move about the neighborhood and what are the rules to moving around the neighborhood that everybody can abide by and we'll cut down on a lot of the yelling and your stress and you can actually like, enjoy the trick or treating number 2 essential part of this is wearing the mini mics.

Alaine: Go ahead. And, you know, fire those things up if you [00:09:00] have a mini mic or roger system, you know, whatever you use this is essential for Halloween night because all the reasons that we just talked about, you're outside in a bigger area, there are other people and kids running around and it's loud. Your kids are running around excited and hopped up on candy and they're not listening as well.

Alaine: Okay, and so we want to get the hearing to them as well as possible if they have hearing aids or cochlears, right? Because it's also a safety issue, which is my opinion with my kids. It's a safety issue if they can't hear me tell them to stop or tell them to wait. Or remind them not to run out in the street in front of this car or to look both ways before they cross the street.

Alaine: It's a safety issue for me in this situation for them to not be able to hear me. And so for them to be able to hear you at a long distance, cause remember if your kids are like my kids, they're probably running ahead of you to the next [00:10:00] house as well. So they're further away from you in all this chaos.

Alaine: Having that mini mic or that microphone, whatever you use that. Puts that sound straight into their devices will be very helpful and so that they can hear you and hear your instructions and it will really be a good safety practice as well so that you can talk directly to them and you're not having to yell and yell, which they won't hear.

Alaine: So this just. You know, it concentrates your voice directly to them, which is health. And number three is leave off the face mask from yourself. Now, I, me and my husband are not like dress up parents. Okay. We don't dress up in the costumes. Our kids do. We're not like costume parents, but I think it's great if you do family costumes and a lot of people out there do.

Alaine: So I challenge you, even though it may be a cool part of your costume, you as the parent, to Don't wear any [00:11:00] sort of face mask or anything that would cover your face because, of course, our kids with hearing loss rely on, you know lip reading a lot or being able to see visually our expressions in us talking.

Alaine: Okay, now, why do I say don't demand that everybody on Halloween not wear a face mask? Because that is not practical, okay, so it's really, it's not practical, every person that you meet on the street, every adult to tell them, don't wear a face mask, remove your face mask, I mean, you certainly can if you have friends or, you know, you're interacting with people and you see that your child is having like a hard time communicating, then certainly you can ask them to remove their face mask, explain that your child, you know, has hearing loss and relies on you know, looking at facial expressions and lip reading, okay?

Alaine: To communicate, but it's, you know, it's just not practical to demand that [00:12:00] every single person not wear a face mask, but you as the parent need to not wear the face mask. And we don't allow the siblings to wear face mask either. Okay, so no one in our family, including my deaf kids, wear a face mask. We just don't do the face mask so that we can all see each other's face clearly, okay?

Alaine: And that's the important part is just can your child see your face and your sibling's face because they need to be able to recognize you so they can find you because once again, it's like a crowded, chaotic time of the night. And there's a lot of people around and a lot of people with similar costumes around.

Alaine: That's why they also need to be able to see your face. I think this is a safety concern for all kids, whether they have hearing loss or not. So a lot of people with the same or similar costumes, and if you're all wearing face masks,

it's hard to tell who your parent is if you're a kid, right? And that's a safety issue because you might like go off with the wrong family, not realizing it.

Alaine: I mean, kids, you know, they, they. you know, sometimes [00:13:00] don't pay attention and don't know and they wouldn't mean to, it wouldn't be their fault. I'm not a big fan of like face masks in general, but leave them off of your face so that at least your child can you know, pay attention to your expressions and listen to what you're saying because you're like ultimately the authority on this night for your family.

Alaine: Those are my three tips. Okay, so why did I not say use sign language is one of my three tips. So the reason why we don't rely on sign language for our family during this time is because A, my kid who signs can also hear with cochlear implants. So that makes it a little easier to rely more on the cochlear and the mini mic at this time.

Alaine: Also my kid who does sign is, is my kid running away from me from house to house and is like hyped up on candy and adrenaline. So So [00:14:00] he is not paying attention to me whereas like at home, he, he usually would be, he's not facing me. He's not paying attention. He's not going to see a sign that I do if his life depended on it.

Alaine: But he will hear me say stuff through his mini mic. And so that's why for us on Halloween, signing isn't. Practical because mostly our kids are faced away from us and they're not paying attention to us. So being able to put our voices basically into their cochlears and so that they can hear us more clearly is our strategy for Halloween.

Alaine: Now, this strategy may be different for your family if you have a child who's not aided and does rely on sign language for their primary communication. You know, certainly, yeah, use sign language and then put that in the rules of the night. You know, in the rules of the night, you have to stay with us. And you have to be looking at us, you know, because we are signing and maybe most kids who [00:15:00] rely on signing and not on hearing as much already know that inherently you know, I'll let you determine that for your family.

Alaine: Okay. So signing for us doesn't work on that day, but signing for you and your family might work better depending on how your kids act and behave on trick or treat night. And if you want to put that into the rules. before you go out trick or treating and factor that into the night that you're going to have.

Alaine: And that's it. And those are my three to four tips on making Halloween and trick or treating a little bit more hearing loss friendly for our kids. And I hope you guys have a wonderful, wonderful time. This week is a fun time. I don't know about you, but my kids are off of school the next day they're doing parent teacher conferences that day, but no kids are going to school.

Alaine: And I just think that's so fun that schools do that because, [00:16:00] you know, Halloween was on a Thursday night this year, so they get Friday off, which means you know, they just get to go have fun and be kids. And not worry about it. And then, you know, we get up the next morning, we can sleep later and you can just have like a night to, you know, just kind of enjoy being a kid and running around the neighborhood.

Alaine: So I think it's really cool that they do that actually. And I think it's less stress on the parents because after a night of. Trick or treating you're not going to get your kids to bed at the normal time. There's just no way they're going to be way too excited. And then they have to like get them up for school.

Alaine: The next morning is really hard. You know, when they're tired and probably got to bed later. So bless the schools who do that. I really appreciate them. And I hope you have a wonderful, fun trick or treating day. And I will see you next week when it is November and we get to continue talking all things.

Alaine: communicating language and the holidays. I will see [00:17:00] you on Tuesday. Bye.

Alaine: Hey, I hope this episode today blessed you big time. If so, would you take 30 seconds and leave a quick review for the show on Apple Podcasts? It lights me up to know that this podcast is helping you and leaving a review helps other parents to find this podcast too. If you have a friend who needs to hear this podcast episode today, be a pal and text it or share it with them.

Alaine: Now go check off the rest of your to do list and I'll meet you here every Tuesday and Thursday for podcast episodes to support your whole family in language learning and parenting your deaf and hard of hearing child with confidence. Adios!