

The Halloween Sensory Play Kit

A printable companion to 10 Halloween activities for kids

Print this kit and keep it with the craft box. It gives you the shopping checklist, an age-and-mess reference card, each of the ten setups as a cut-out step card, a prep-ahead timeline and a sheet of storage labels — everything you need to run these activities all October without scrolling back through the article.

Shopping Checklist

Supply	Used for	On hand?
Baking soda (large box)	Foaming spiders, ice ghosts, witch's stew	
White vinegar	Foaming spiders, ice ghosts, witch's stew	
Washing-up liquid	Foaming spiders (makes the foam climb)	
School glue (2 x 5 oz)	Spider slime, monster handprints	
Liquid starch	Spider slime only	
Shaving cream (1 – 2 cans)	Shaving cream ghosts	
Food colouring or liquid watercolour	Foam, dough and pasta colour	
Plastic spiders, mixed sizes	Six of the ten setups	
Googly eyes, mixed sizes	Ghosts, handprints, ice ghosts	
Pipe cleaners (green and black)	Spider legs, pumpkin stems	
Play dough, orange	Play dough pumpkins	
Candy corn or dried pasta	Candy corn bin, witch's stew	
Jelly packet, raisins, plastic eggs	Wiggly monster eyes	
Spaghetti	Witch's stew	
Shallow trays and small bowls	Every single setup	
Tweezers or tongs	Candy corn bin (ages 5+)	

Everything on this list keeps for a year in a labelled box — buy once and next October is already sorted.

Age and Mess Reference Card

Match the setup to the hands in front of you. Offer one band lower than you think you need and the activity will last twice as long.

Setup	Best age	Prep ahead?	Mess
Shaving cream ghosts	2 – 5	No	High
Monster handprints	2 – 8	No	Medium
Fall leaf tree	3 – 9	No	Low
Foaming spiders	3 – 8	Freeze 2 hours	Medium
Candy corn bin	18 mths – 5	No	Low
Witch's stew	3 – 9	Boil the pasta	High
Fizzing ice ghosts	2 – 7	Freeze 1 – 2 hours	Low
Spider slime	5 – 11	No	Medium
Play dough pumpkins	2 – 7	No	Low
Wiggly monster eyes	3 – 10	Chill 2 hours	Low

What Each Age Can Actually Do

Age	They can	Watch for
Under 18 months	Squash, smear, mouth everything	Everything goes in the mouth — edible materials only
18 months – 3	Scoop, pour, bury, sort by colour	Choking shapes — no small parts
3 – 5	Follow two or three steps, name textures	Frustration with tools — skip the tweezers
5 – 8	Build to a plan, help with the prep	Wanting it perfect — praise the mess
8 – 11	Run the setup themselves and measure	Boredom — let them own the recipe

Anything that fits inside a toilet roll tube is a choking risk for a child under three: spiders, beads, googly eyes and candy corn all stay out of reach at that age.

The Ten Setups — Step Cards

Cut along the lines and keep one card on the table for each activity.

1. Shaving cream ghosts	Tray of shaving cream. Scatter googly eyes and plastic spiders. Drag two fingers through to show a trail, then let them lead. Coloured foam makes pumpkins or Frankenstein. Rinse hands at the sink.
2. Monster handprints	Paint one palm and four fingers. Press flat, fingers spread, hold for three, lift straight up. Re-paint between every press. Glue on googly eyes and paper triangles for claws and horns. Glitter the mouth.
3. Fall leaf tree	Collect leaves outside. Draw a bare trunk and three branches. Glue leaves along one branch at a time, overlapping like scales, working up and out. Press flat under a book when dry.
4. Foaming spiders	1/2 cup baking soda + 1/4 cup water into a damp paste. Hide plastic spiders inside, roll the abdomen, add a head. Four pipe cleaner halves per side for legs. Freeze 2 hours. Play in vinegar plus a squirt of washing-up liquid.
5. Candy corn bin	Two or three bags of candy corn into a shallow tray. Add plastic spiders and any small Halloween toys. Set out small dishes, spoons and scoops. Let them scoop, sort and bury. Tip back into a jar afterwards.
6. Witch's stew	Boil, drain and cool spaghetti. Tray of spaghetti, candy corn, spiders and gooey eyeballs plus spoons and bowls. Let them mix and serve. At the end, sprinkle baking soda and pour vinegar for the fizz.
7. Fizzing ice ghosts	1 part water to 2 parts baking soda into a damp paste. Fill an ice tray, press googly eyes on top. Freeze 1 – 2 hours. Play with vinegar and a dropper in a shallow dish. Scoop the slush at the end.
8. Spider slime	Two 5 oz glue bottles + 10 oz water in a bowl. Stir in liquid starch a little at a time until it gathers into one mass. Knead 30 seconds until not sticky. Add plastic spiders. Fridge in a lidded jar.
9. Play dough pumpkins	Orange dough rolled into balls. Press a green pipe cleaner stem into each. Decorate with black beads or pattern blocks. Flatten for a flat pumpkin. Fork ridges for ribs. Swap colour for Frankenstein.
10. Wiggly monster eyes	Make jelly, cool to lukewarm. Stand plastic egg halves in a muffin tin. Fill two-thirds, drop in a raisin for the pupil. Chill 2 hours. Pop out into a shallow dish. Red or green jelly looks best.

Prep-Ahead Timeline

When	What to do	Done
This weekend	Buy the box: baking soda, vinegar, glue, starch, shaving cream, colouring	
This weekend	Collect and press a bag of leaves for the tree activity	
Night before	Mix and freeze the foaming spiders (double batch — they go fast)	
Night before	Fill the ice tray with the baking soda paste and freeze	
Morning of	Make the jelly in the egg halves and chill for two hours	
Morning of	Boil, drain and cool the spaghetti for the stew	
30 minutes before	Put cold dough, frozen spiders and chilled slime out to soften	
10 minutes before	Lay the cloth, set the trays, put the towel and bin in reach	

Before You Start — Ten-Second Check

- The boundary has been said out loud, while hands are still clean.
- A wipeable cloth or boot tray is under every open container.
- A towel is beside each child and the bin is within arm's reach.
- Small parts are out of reach if anyone at the table is under three.
- Coloured foam and dye are away from pale grout and unsealed wood.
- The food activity (jelly eyes) is on a separate surface from the play trays.
- Ingredients have been checked for dye or gelatine sensitivities.
- Spare clothes or an apron are laid out before the shaving cream appears.
- The frozen items have stood out for ten minutes so they are handleable.
- You have decided how much mess is allowed — and you are going to stick to it.

What Keeps and What Does Not

Setup	How to store it	Keeps
Spider slime	Lidded jar in the fridge	1 week or more
Play dough	Rolled into a ball, sealed bag, cool cupboard	1 – 2 months
Shaving cream ghosts	Wipe the tray out and reuse it; the foam is single-use	One sitting
Monster handprints	Flat under a heavy book for an hour, then on the wall	Years
Fall leaf tree	Pressed flat under a book; leaves keep their colour	Months
Foaming spiders	Frozen, unbaked, in a bag — make a double batch	1 month
Candy corn bin	Corn back in a jar, plastics in a small box	Next October
Witch's stew	Nothing survives — tip it all out	One sitting
Fizzing ice ghosts	Frozen ghosts back in the freezer on the tray	1 month
Wiggly monster eyes	Fridge, covered, in the dish	2 days

Storage Labels

Cut out and tape one label to each box or jar as you put it away. A label with a date is the difference between a setup that gets used and one that gets thrown out.

SPIDERS & GOOGLY EYES · put away on _____

PLAY DOUGH · put away on _____

SENSORY TRAYS & BOWLS · put away on _____

FIZZING SUPPLIES (baking soda, vinegar) · put away on _____

SLIME JAR · made on _____

PRESSED LEAVES · collected on _____

This October — Setups We Actually Did

Tick each setup off as you run it and note the date. It is the fastest way to see which textures your children come back to, and which ones are worth skipping next year.

Setup	Date we did it	Did they ask for it again?
1. Shaving cream ghosts		
2. Monster handprints		
3. Fall leaf tree		
4. Foaming spiders		
5. Candy corn bin		
6. Witch's stew		
7. Fizzing ice ghosts		
8. Spider slime		
9. Play dough pumpkins		
10. Wiggly monster eyes		

One last thing worth writing down: the setup they asked for again almost never turns out to be the one you spent the longest preparing.