

The Pumpkin Decorating Planner

A printable companion to Pumpkin Decorating Ideas for Kids

Print this planner and keep it with the craft supplies. It gives you the six projects as step cards, the age-and-skills chart, the supply checklist, the paint and sealer guide, the display and storage table, a four-week rhythm planner and a design sheet for each child — everything you need to run a no-carve pumpkin afternoon without scrolling back through the article.

The Six Projects at a Glance

1. Finger-painted	Tape a shape onto the pumpkin with painter's tape, let the child cover the surface in finger paint, then peel the tape away once dry. Best first project for a toddler. 20–40 min.
2. Tissue-paper collage	Brush a thin coat of craft glue over the pumpkin, let the child place overlapping circles of tissue paper, then seal with a second coat. Hard to get wrong. 30–45 min.
3. Puffy-paint pattern	Draw rows of dots, stripes or chevrons straight onto the surface and let them dry raised. Paint a solid base colour first for a more finished look. 20–30 min.
4. Mesh wrap	Stretch black fishnet or patterned mesh over the pumpkin, let it shrink back around the top and bottom, trim the excess. Two minutes, best on a pale pumpkin. 10–15 min.
5. Stencil transfer	Scribble over the back of a printed design with soft pencil, press it onto the pumpkin and trace with pressure. The outline transfers and the child paints it in. 20–30 min.
6. Handprint keepsake	Trace a small hand onto card, cut it out and use it as a stencil. The one to do with a baby, and the one you will still have in ten years. 20–30 min.

Age and Skills Chart

Age	What they can do	Best project	Skip this
Under 2	Hold, pat, smear, taste-test everything	Finger painting with edible paint	Glue, small pieces, markers
2 to 3	Scribble, dab, place large pieces with help	Finger painting, large tissue circles, sponge stamping	Fine stencils, blades, small beads
3 to 4	Place pieces deliberately, follow one instruction	Tissue-paper collage, sponge painting, sticker faces	Freehand drawing of a set design
5 to 7	Draw a planned shape, use a stencil, work alone 20 min	Stencil painting, marker faces, puffy-paint patterns	Projects needing drying between stages
8 to 11	Plan a design, mix colours, work for an hour	Anything here, plus the science experiment	Tasks designed for a four-year-old
12+	Design and execute a whole look	Mesh wrap, monogram stencil, puffy-paint pattern	Being told it is for little kids

Give an older child a real job — the camera, the paint mixing, the design for the whole family's set — rather than a harder version of the same task. Being needed keeps them in the room.

Supply Checklist

- Pumpkins — one per child, plus one spare. Check each for soft spots before you start.
- Acrylic craft paint in three or four colours, decanted into shallow dishes
- Washable children's paint for anyone under five
- Clear craft glue and a wide, flat brush for the collage
- Tissue paper, cut into circles in three or four colours
- Painter's tape for the finger-painting stencil
- Puffy paint pens for raised detail
- Permanent markers for the final outlines
- Sponges for stamping
- Clear matte sealer for anything going outside
- A plastic tablecloth or shower curtain, taped down at the edges
- A rimmed tray under every pumpkin
- A bowl of warm water and a towel on the floor beside the table
- Kraft paper or newspaper for the drying area

Paint, Sealer and Weather Guide

Paint	Use it for	Outdoors?	Notes
Acrylic craft paint	Indoors, all ages 5+	Only with a sealer	Dries fast, covers well, two thin coats
Outdoor acrylic	Front-step pumpkins	Yes	Flexes with temperature changes
Washable children's paint	Under-fives	No	Will not survive a single rain shower
Spray paint	A solid base colour	Yes, once cured	Light coats outdoors; cure a full day
Puffy paint	Raised detail only	With a sealer	Not a base coat and not a sealer

Two things kill a painted pumpkin: a wet surface and a thick coat. Wipe and dry the pumpkin completely, then build the colour in two or three thin coats rather than one heavy one.

Display and Storage

Where it sits	How long it lasts	Watch out for
Indoors, on a shelf	4 – 6 weeks	Radiator heat dries and shrinks it

Where it sits	How long it lasts	Watch out for
Covered porch, on a step	3 – 5 weeks	Water pooling around the stem
Open porch, in shade	2 – 4 weeks	Wind knocking it over
Direct sun all day	1 – 2 weeks	Scorched paint, split skin
On bare soil or grass	1 – 2 weeks	Ground moisture rots the base
On a metal or stone step	2 – 3 weeks	Condensation underneath

Raise every pumpkin off the ground on a tile, a wooden block or an upturned saucer. It is the cheapest thing you can do for a porch display and it adds a week or more.

Four-Week Pumpkin Rhythm

Week one — gather and choose

Week two — the big project (the messiest one)

Week three — the quick wins (wrap and puffy paint)

Week four — the keepsake and the display

Buffer — the last few days, nothing planned

Do not plan all six projects. Two or three across the month is a better October than six in one weekend, and the buffer week is what makes the plan survive real life.

Design Sheet

One sheet per child. Sketch the design, note the colours and the project number, and tick it off when it is finished.

Child's name _____ Project no. _____ Colours _____

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Project Log

Date	Project	Who made it	Where it lives now

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