



## Social Stories

### What is a social story?

Social Stories are short stories that inform and advise about a social situation. They describe what may be obvious to us, but not those with different social understanding. They can help to develop appropriate behaviour, as it is easier for a pupil to comply if they understand the logic behind a social situation.

### A social story may help with;

- processing relevant information request. Pupils with autism are faced with challenges in everyday situations:
- reading other people's emotions
- seeing the 'bigger picture'
- predicting what might happen next

Social stories are usually written specifically for a child and will mention the child's name and age. Social stories can be written for a variety of situations at school or home, for example shouting out in assembly, or being slow to get dressed in the morning.

### Why use social stories?



Studies have shown that social stories help children with social and communication difficulties to have a better understanding of social situations and behaviour, and the stories are used to develop appropriate behaviour. The stories can be used to help prepare your child for a new experience e.g. moving school / class, and to help your child accustom themselves to a situation, and to respond appropriately.

The stories are particularly successful for children aged between 3 and 14.



## **How do I use social stories?**

The story should initially be read approximately 4 times until you believe that the message in the story has been conveyed to your child. Some personal judgement is required and you may wish to read the story either more or less than 4 times, depending upon the age and ability of your child. It can be read to the child either at school or at home.

The story should be kept (we recommend that you laminate the story if possible) and read again if required. For example a social story about not always being first in line may be successful for several weeks but your child may then begin to repeat the old behaviour. In this case the story should be read immediately, or as soon as practicably possible, after the repeated behaviour.

## **How do I write my own social story?**



A social story should consist of 2 types of sentences as detailed below:

### **Descriptive sentences:-The 'backbone' of the story.**

These sentences describe the current situation and behaviour. The 1<sup>st</sup> sentence should introduce the child's name, age, school (if appropriate), the following sentences can begin to describe the behaviour or social situation. For example:

*My name is James. I am 8 years old and I go to St.Joseph's school.*

*On Mondays we have assembly, Sometimes in assembly I shout out if my class don't win house points.*

### **Coaching Sentences:-The 'heart' of the story.**

Coaching sentences are in most stories and describe the point of view of others. They can give the child an idea of what to do in a social situation.

*This makes my Mum and Dad upset.*

*This makes my teacher upset and my teacher may be cross with me.*

### **Ending:**

The story can be finished off with an idealistic ending which can include some further positive coaching sentences. For example:

*If I go to my room to calm down Mum and Dad will be happy.*

*My little sister will be happy.*

*Everyone will be happy.*

It is recommended that pictures are used to help explain the story wherever possible, as it is considered that children with social and communication difficulties respond particularly well to visual stimuli.

**Recommended reading:**



Writing & Developing Social Stories by Caroline Smith - this book and many others are available from the library collection at CASADT

The New Social Story Book-Carol Gray ,2015, Future Horizons.

**Recommended website:**



[www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk) - this is the website for the national Autistic Societ

[carolgraysocialstories.com](http://carolgraysocialstories.com) - Carol Gray's website