

Preschool Field Officer Service

Integrated Child, Family and Youth Services



Social Stories™

What is a Social Story™?

A Social Story™ is a scripted story to assist children to understand social situations, interactions, expectations, social cues, a script of unfamiliar activities, and/or social rules. As the title implies, they are brief descriptive stories that provide information regarding a social situation. When children are given information that helps them understand the expectations of a situation, their problem behaviour within that situation is reduced or minimised. Parents, educators and carers can use these simple stories as a tool to prepare the child for a new situation, to address challenging behaviour within a setting or situation, or to teach new skills.

How to write a Social Story™

- Determine the behaviour you want to change or develop.
- Select one behaviour at a time.
- Write according to the child's development skill level.
- Write the story in the first person eg "I like to run, it is fun to go fast".
- If possible include drawings or photographs of the social event.
- Ideally, have the child participate in the development of the social story.
- Explain why a behaviour is unacceptable by describing the desired behaviour.
- End the Social Story™ with a description of the desired behaviour.

There are three types of sentences used in writing a Social Story™:

1. **Descriptive Sentences:** define anticipated events where a situation occurs, who is involved, what they are doing and why, eg "When people are inside, they walk"
2. **Perspective Sentences:** describe the internal status of the child/ren involved, their thoughts, feelings, or moods, eg. "Running inside could hurt me or other people"
3. **Directive Sentences:** an individualised statement of the desired response stated in a positive manner. They may begin "I can try..." Or "I will work on..." Try to avoid sentences starting with "Do not", or definitive statements e.g. "I will try to walk inside"

Tips for creating your own Social Stories™:

- Use your iPhone or iPad to take photos of your child, or the relevant setting, eg where they put their bag, the educator, the kinder, the park, or the relevant environment.
NOTE: Please respect others privacy, and only include another child or adult in a photo if you have their permission.
- Save the template of the story you have written, you may be able to use it to make another story in the future.
- Share the story with others involved in the care of your child.
- Consistency is important, read the story regularly to your child, in particular prior to the event or situation, eg commencing school or kinder or the relevant situation.
- A variety of Apps are available to assist in developing Social Stories™ at a range of prices, there is also a wealth of information available on the internet.

Example of a Social Story™

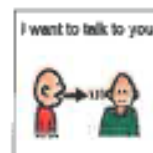
Saying Excuse Me



Mummy talks to a lot of people.

Mummy likes talking to other people.

Sometimes when Mummy is talking to other people I want to talk too.



I can say "Excuse me!" to see if Mummy can talk to me.

Sometimes Mummy will answer me right away.



Other times Mummy is talking about something very important.

When she is talking about something important she cannot answer me right away.

If I say "Excuse me" and Mummy doesn't answer, I can wait until she is done talking.

This will make Mummy very happy.



At Kinder we are polite and wait until people are finished talking.

I am going to try to be very polite.

