

## Tips:

- Use the social stories library to learn how to create social stories specific to your child.
- Your child is likely to need Social Stories throughout life in order to have the best chance at feeling successful in challenging situations. School will not always be able to provide these, so learning how to write and tailor them for your child will be a huge strength for your family.
- Most schools subscribe to a service, 'Communicate in Print', which provides the simple pictures we use to illustrate the text.
- We have also discovered a subscription service for a very similar product called Wigit, which is available privately online for a yearly subscription - go to <https://www.wigit.com/products/wigit-online/index.htm> for more information.
- Social Stories are usually written in the first person, from the child's perspective.
- They should use reassuring language, to answer: Who? What? Where? Why? about the situation or the target behaviour.
- Assess the effectiveness of the story once the it has been used for at least a full week. If children are not yet beginning to exhibit more appropriate behaviours, stories may need to be rewritten or adapted.
- Older children will often enjoy being part of the writing process, perhaps helping to select the pictures or doing their own Internet research of the event or place.

## Social Story Apps:

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/02/11/12-computer-programs-websites-and-apps-for-making-social-stories/>

## Further Reading:



**Revealing the Hidden Social Code**  
Social Stories™ for People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders  
MARIE HOWLEY AND EILEEN ARNOLD  
Foreword by Carol Gray



# Social Stories: A Guide for Parents/Carers

*This leaflet contains information about Social Stories, and how these can be used to support your child at school and at home.*

## What are social stories?

Social Stories™ were created by Carol Gray in 1991. They provide short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, in an accessible and visual format, and include specific information about what to expect in each situation and why.



Social Stories are a type of prompt or script used to help individuals on the autism spectrum understand certain 'unwritten rules' or social conventions they may encounter and therefore plan the appropriate response or behaviour for the situation.

Social Stories and other social scripts are based on the idea that some people on the autism spectrum have difficulty understanding and/or behaving appropriately in certain situations, such as meeting other people for the first time.

Social Stories provide descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and, sometimes, what to do or say in that situation.

Some Social Stories are written on single sheets of paper, others are written in booklets, and some are recorded onto tape or video.

The author of the Social Story may read it to the individual with autism, record it so that it can be played back as required, give it to parents or carers to read with the child, or the individual may read it for themselves.

## What are Social Stories for?

Social Stories can be used to help with:

- Developing self-care skills (eg how to clean teeth, wash hands or get dressed), social skills (eg sharing, asking for help, saying thank you, interrupting) and academic abilities



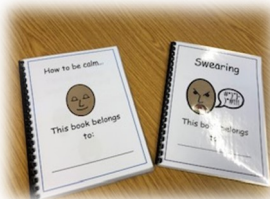
- Understanding or predicting how others might behave or respond in a particular situation
- Understanding the perspective of an autistic person and why they may respond or behave in a particular way
- Coping with changes to routine and unexpected or distressing events (eg absence of teacher, moving house, thunderstorms)
- Providing positive feedback to a person about an area of strength or achievement in order to develop self-esteem
- Behavioural or emotional management strategies (eg what to do when angry or anxious).

### How do Social Stories help?

Social Stories present information in a literal, 'concrete' way, which may improve a person's understanding of a previously difficult or ambiguous situation or activity. The presentation and content can be adapted to meet different people's needs.

They can help with sequencing (what comes next in a series of activities) and 'executive functioning' (planning and organising).

By providing information about what might happen in a particular situation, and some guidelines for behaviour, you can increase structure in a person's life and thereby reduce anxiety.



**How to use Social Stories** Carol Gray developed guidelines on how to use Social Stories effectively.

- Think about ways to aid comprehension - would adding questions help, or replacing some text with blanks for the person to fill in?
- Find ways to support the story, eg create a poster with a key phrase from the story.
- Plan how often, and where, the story will be reviewed with the person.
- Social Stories are not designed to be used after an event which was perceived to be unsuccessful, but to coach for the situation in advance by minimising the unexpected and offering a template of how to respond or behave which allows the event to be a positive experience.
- Present the Social Story to the person at a time when everyone is feeling calm and relaxed, using a straightforward approach (eg I have written this story for you. It is about thunderstorms. Let's read it together now).

- Monitor how well the story is received and whether it is working as intended.
- Keep your stories organised in a ringbinder or computer folder. This makes them easier to find and review, and to develop with new information.

Carol Gray's *The new social story book*, 2015

### In addition, School would recommend:

- Reading the Social Story with your child regularly.
- Taking the Social Story template created by school and adapting it to make it personalised to your child.
- Using photos to supplement pictures if possible.
- Reading new stories frequently, and prior to the challenging situation.



### How are Social Stories used at Joy Lane Primary School?

The school has an on-site Specialist Resourced Provision to support the needs of children with ASD. Social Stories are used, as part of Quality-First Teaching, to support the children in the SRP and within the mainstream.

The SRP has created a Social Stories Library to enable Teachers, Support Staff, and Parents and Carers to browse Social Stories already created and either use them to support their children.

Additionally, Social Stories from our library can be requested electronically and then adapted for a specific child or situation.

The Social Stories Library is currently organised in 10 areas:

In School		About me	
Toileting		Health and Hygiene	
At home		Social	
Emotions		Behaviour	
Appointments		Other	