

Using Social Stories to Support Changes in Routine

WHAT IS A SOCIAL STORY?

Through the art of storytelling, social stories can be used to teach appropriate behaviour, social norms and routines in a relatable way. Social stories can be used as a proactive strategy before encountering new situations or for situations that are known to be challenging for your child.

WHY ARE SOCIAL STORIES USEFUL?



Social stories can:

- Promote self-awareness and self-calming
- Be tailored to your child's age, ability and interests
- Include your child, favourite activities and characters to capture their attention
- Help your child predict outcomes and remember sequences of events
- Provide an opportunity to practice reading individually or as a family

HOW TO WRITE A SOCIAL STORY:

1. Set the social story's goal (e.g., accepting change)
2. Answer six questions about the scenario: who, what, when, why, and how
3. Choose between a book format for younger children, or a comic book format for older children
4. Create the story:
 - a) Write the story in the perspective of your child using "I" statements or his/her name
 - b) Describe your child's goal (e.g., I will remain calm when the bus is late)
 - c) Include a title, introduction, body and conclusion
 - d) Write descriptive sentences that explain the context, and coaching sentences to guide your child's behaviour
 - e) Individualize the language to your child's age and ability (e.g., short sentences with pictures for earlier learners)



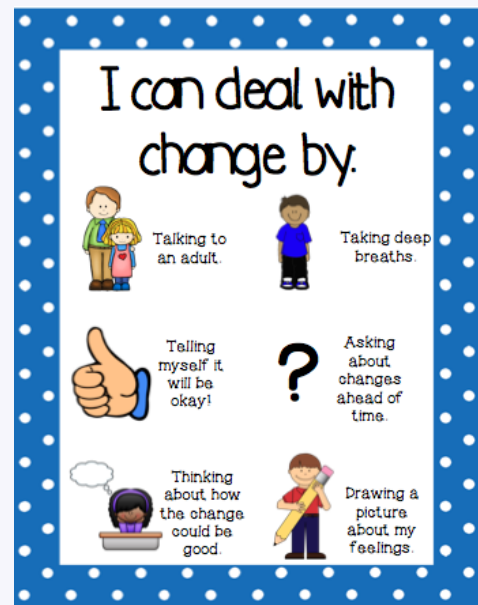


HOW TO USE A SOCIAL STORY:

1. Read the social story with your child before facing the situation. Do this when your child is calm and before challenging behaviour occurs
2. Promote your child's understanding by asking questions or fill in the blanks
3. Role play using the strategies with them
4. Keep the story in a place where the child can easily access it and refer back to it
5. As your child has success, read the story less often, or phase it out

PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS

1. Set expectations for behaviour by describing what your child should do, not what they shouldn't do
2. Aim for improvement not perfection by using statements such as "I will try..." Any attempt to adjust would be a positive attempt
3. Include an interactive element to your social story, such as adding behaviour choices for your child to choose from (e.g., "when I get upset I will try to: take 5 deep breaths, squeeze a pillow, or listen to some happy music")
4. If your child is not interested in books or comics, consider making a simple story using a smart device. Take pictures that are relevant to your topic and simply type on top of the images. Your child might be more interested in the content if it's on a device



RESOURCES

Social Story Templates

- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/templates-personalized-teaching-stories>

Library of Social Stories:

- http://www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.com/main/library_social_stories.html

COVID-19 Social Story:

- <https://www.apsva.us/special-education/parent-resource-center/office-special-education/covid-19-school-closure-resources/corona-virus-social-story-for-kids/>

