

HOW TO WRITE A SOCIAL STORY WITH OR WITHOUT VISUAL SUPPORT

Social Stories were first developed by Carol Gray in the early 1990's and have been demonstrated over time to be an effective evidence-based strategy to help students with social-emotional and behavioral challenges. Social Stories increase functional skills across settings and decrease challenging behavior in students from preschool through adulthood. Social Stories can be found online, through books you can purchase, or anyone can make a Social Story. It is possible to create a Social Story anytime, anywhere, in just a few minutes!

A standard Carol Gray Social Story format has 5 different types of sentences, including 1-2 of each type of sentence to create a very short story format. Social Stories can be very simple, or they can be more complex. They can address concrete situations, or complex social dynamics and anything in between.

DESCRIPTIVE/FACTUAL SENTENCE

Sometimes I go to school in a car with my Mom. Sometimes I go to school on the school bus.

PERSPECTIVE SENTENCE:

Sometimes, I get upset when I ride the bus.

When I get upset on the bus, sometimes my body becomes unsafe.

COOPERATIVE SENTENCE:

When I get upset, I can do things to keep my body safe

DIRECTIVE & CONTROL SENTENCES:

When I get upset, I can take 5 Figure 8 breaths.

I can ask a friend to give me space.

I can put on my headphones.

AFFIRMATIVE SENTENCE:

Keeping a safe body on the bus is good.

I feel happy when my body is safe on the bus.

My friends feel happy when my body is safe on the bus.

You can add visual supports if you like through drawings, clip-art, or pictures of the child doing the steps.

READING THE STORY:

Ensure that you find a time when the student is not in an escalated state, or is at their optimal "ready to learn" time. If there are specific strategies listed in a Social Story, be prepared to practice doing them with the child during the reading time or just after reading the story. Make real-world connections. Role-Play a social story, take different roles as you act them out.

STORIES IN-THE-MOMENT:

Social Stories can be written in-the-moment or when an adult perceives that a challenge is going to arise in the near future. A notebook can be kept on-hand and a quick social story created before entering a potentially challenging situation. Read it with the student before entering the new situation. Remind them of the steps they can take to get help.