

Emotional Health & Wellbeing: Social Stories

The student will learn a variety of social stories to help them succeed in common social situations.

Suggested Materials

Below are 2 sample social stories, along with suggested images you can use from the Language Builder Card Sets. The full-text stories are followed by a list of additional social story ideas that you can build out yourself, or visit www.stageslearning.com/social-stories-for-autism for full text of the listed social stories with suggested images. These lists are just suggestions to get you started. Create social stories that are relevant to the student and to your classroom and school.

Starting School

I am going to school! I might feel a little sad or angry that I have to leave my parents in the morning.

- ★ LB3 9-16 (Sad); LB3 17-24 (Angry)

I might get to ride the bus!

- ★ LB1 192 (Bus)

There will be lots of nice people to help me at my school.

- ★ LB2 014 & 015 (Bus drivers); LB2 064 & 065 (Librarians); LB2 057 & 058 (Janitors); LB2 101 & 102 (Teachers)

I get to take my backpack and lunchbox.

- ★ LB1 292 (Backpack); LB1 293 (Lunch box)

I will get to do lots of fun things at school.

- ★ LB3 058 (Putting together a puzzle); LB3 062 (Writing in school); LB3 065 (Cutting paper); LB3 067 (Gold star for good work); LB3 068 (Chemistry experiment); LB11 199 & 200 (Teaching)

At the end of the day, I go home to mom and dad. This makes me happy.

- ★ LB3 1-8 (Happy)

School is fun!

Getting a Haircut

My hair is too long.

I am going to get a haircut.

This may make me feel sad or nervous.

- ★ LB3 9-16 (Sad)

I will sit in a tall chair and wear a cape.

The hairdresser is nice. They will use scissors or clippers to cut my hair.

- ★ LB2 008 & 009 (Hair dressers); LB1 290 (Scissors)

I am safe.

When the haircut is all done the hairdresser will brush my hair.

- ★ LB1 1 20 (Brushing); LB2 008 & 009 (Hair dressers)

I see myself in the mirror. I feel happy!

- ★ LB3 1-8 (Happy)

Other Common Social Stories

★ New sibling

★ Riding the bus

★ Going to the doctor

★ Going to the dentist

★ Riding a plane

★ Bed time

★ Community/street safety

★ Going potty

★ Brushing teeth

★ Washing hands

★ Getting dressed

★ Taking a bath

★ Going to the grocery store

★ Going to a restaurant

Student:

Projected activities for: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Notes

Lesson Focus

The student will learn a variety of social stories to help them succeed in common social situations.

Lesson Format

The primary lesson is designed for 1:1 instruction with a teacher or therapist.

Location

This lesson is intended to start as an indoor, classroom activity in which the teacher and student are seated across from each other at a table.

Preparation

Prepare social stories based on common social situations where the student needs support. Select images from any of the Language Builder sets that represent parts of your story. You can download social stories to use with Language Builder images at www.stageslearning.com/social-stories-for-autism.

Procedures

1. Sit in a chair at the table next to the student.
2. Make sure you have the student's attention.
3. If you are using pictures or written materials, place the materials in front of the student.
4. Give an instruction asking the student to listen to the social story. Choose the instruction to which the student responds best. A few options include:
 - a. "Let's read a story."
 - b. "We're going to read about..."
 - c. "Let's learn a story."
 - d. "Listen to my story."
5. Tell the student the social story, and refer to images or written materials as you do so.
6. Reinforce the student for good listening.
7. Once the student has heard the story several times and seems familiar with the story:
 - a. Ask the student questions about the story.
 - b. Ask the student to tell the story to you.
 - c. Create situations to practice the story.
 - d. Utilize the story as a reference when the actual social situation comes up organically.

Prerequisites

Lesson 68: *Social Stories* is an intermediate skill. Prerequisites include:

- ★ **Lesson 44:** *Social Responses*
- ★ **Lesson 67:** *Expressive Basic Emotions*
- ★ **Lesson 79:** *Following a Schedule*

Standards

Head Start

- ★ P-SE 3

Common Core

- ★ ELA.SL.K.1

ABLLS-R

- ★ Q15

VB-Mapp

- ★ T 15-e, T 15-f, IP 15-c, IP 15-e

Record Keeping

Data Sheet

- ★ *Communication-Based Lessons*

Home Communication Sheet

- ★ *Communication Skills*



Teacher Tip

The New Social Story Book by Carol Gray is an excellent resource for over 150 social stories designed specifically for children with autism or who have challenges understanding social situations. In addition to using this book as a resource, you or a parent/caregiver can record social stories so that the student can listen to them.

I am going to school.



I will take my backpack.



I will do fun things at school.



Lesson Progression

Select scenarios about which you will create a social story. Possible reasons to use social stories include:

- Developing important self-care routines, such as washing hands before dinner or brushing teeth before bedtime.
- Curbing a problem behavior or a self-stimulatory behavior.
- Building social skills and a repertoire of appropriate social language, gestures, and behaviors for various daily events.
- Understanding how others may react to various circumstances, and interactions.
- Helping the student cope with changes in routine, unexpected events, or stressful situations.
- Helping the student process their own emotions or handle uncomfortable personal circumstances.

In her book, *The New Social Story Book*, Carol Gray states that in order to write a good social story, you need to picture the goal, gather information, and tailor the text.

- Picture the goal: What is the story's purpose? What are you trying to teach the student? What information do they need to achieve the goal? For example:
 - » The goal is to teach the student not to hit.
 - » In order to achieve this goal, they need to identify the behavior and when it sometimes happens. "Sometimes when I am frustrated I want to hit another person."
 - » What information could help them achieve this goal?
 - › Knowing that when they hit another student it hurts the student's feelings and their bodies.
 - › Having a list of alternative behaviors: e.g., walk away, take a deep breath, go put your head down on your desk until you are more calm, tell the other person why you are frustrated, etc.
 - » Gather information:
 - › Gather information about the people involved: Ages, abilities and challenges, interests, skills, attention span, etc.
 - › Gather information about the subject of the story: Where and when does it happen? Who is usually involved? What generally precipitates the situation? What is the typical outcome? How long does the situation last?
 - » Tailor the text:
 - › The story needs a title, an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
 - › The language should be supportive and not punitive.
 - › The language should be tailored to the student's age and comprehension abilities.
 - › The text should avoid any words or phrases that cause the particular student anxiety.
 - › It should answer the 6 questions: Who, What, When, Why, Where, and How.
 - › It should include:
 - › Descriptive sentences that set up the details of the situation.
 - › Coaching sentences that guide behavior or suggest alternatives.
- Introduce 1 social story at a time.
 - » Choose a topic that is meaningful to the student and where you or others in the student's life have noted a specific need.
 - » Wherever possible, use photos, illustrations, and/or written words to help the student visualize the situation.
 - » Read the story to the student and praise them for good listening.
 - » Once the student has heard the story several times and seems familiar with the story:
 - › Ask the student questions about the story.
 - › Ask the student to tell the story to you.
 - › Create situations to practice the story.
 - › Utilize the story as a reference when the actual social situation comes up organically.
- When the student understands 1 story and has begun to appropriately incorporate it into their daily behaviors, introduce a 2nd social story, following the above procedure.
- Continue introducing social stories that are appropriate to the student's needs and abilities. When new situations or behaviors occur, write a tailored social story, and introduce it to the student to help guide them through the new circumstances.

Generalization

Once the student begins to recognize and understand social stories:

- Have the student listen to, discuss, and recite social stories with another staff member.
- Have the student answer questions about the social stories.
- Have the student add language and phrases to the social stories to personalize them.
- Have the student practice the social stories with a peer.
- Create circumstances for the student to practice acting out the social story, first in a scene that you set up and control, then in the real environment.
- Communicate with parents and home staff using the *Communications Skills Home Communication Sheet*. Provide parents with a list of social stories with which the student is familiar, so they can discuss the social story at home or in other environments outside of school. This will help the student reference known social stories in real life circumstances.

Whole-Child Lesson Ideas

Social Stories and Emotions

Once social stories are familiar, extend the lesson to include a discussion on emotions. Draw or print emojis that the student recognizes. You can laminate the pictures so they are easy to reuse. Glue or tape the emojis to Popsicle sticks. As you and the student read the social story together, ask the student for the emoji that makes sense for that situation. Pay special attention to changes in emotion that might happen over the course of the story. You can prompt reflection for the student by asking how the main character might feel at the beginning of the story and how they feel at the end.

Prompting

Different prompts will be needed depending on which phase of the *Social Stories* lesson you are working on.

When you are reading the story to the student:

1. Point to the social story pictures to help then pay attention and follow the story.
2. If you lose their attention, stop the story, and regain their attention before beginning again.
3. Enlist the help of another adult to keep the child's attention on you while you tell the story.

When you are asking the student questions about the story:

1. Point to the picture that will help them answer the question.
2. Give the first sound or first words of the appropriate answer.
3. Give a full verbal prompt of the appropriate answer for your student to repeat.

When you are asking the student to tell you the story:

1. Point to the pictures to help them remember the story.
2. Give the initial sounds or the first word of the story to get the student started.
3. Give a full verbal prompt of each phase of the story and have the student repeat it back to you.

When you are incorporating the story into a real scenario:

1. Have the pictures available as a visual prompt for what the student should do.
2. Pause and remind the student of parts of the story.
3. Leave the situation and go through the full social story with the student, then if possible, return to the situation and have the student try again.

Next Steps

Once the student has mastered

Lesson 68: *Social Stories*, move on to:

- ★ **Lesson 122:** *Receptive ID of Complex Emotion Scenarios*



Communication-Based Lessons

DATA SHEET



LESSON NUMBER

LESSON TITLE

STUDENT'S NAME

DATE

Instructions or Stimulus Provided: _____

Desired Response: _____

Target Words or Utterances to Practice: _____

Typical Setting for Communication: _____

Each time you practice this communication activity, record notes on success of communication, behavior, pronunciation, prompting, or any other information which will be useful to other instructors practicing this communication activity with the student.

Date:	Time:	Setting:	Instructor:

Date:	Time:	Setting:	Instructor:

Date:	Time:	Setting:	Instructor: