

## Using Social Stories for Children with Autism

### What Are Social Stories?

Social stories are short, structured narratives that help children with autism understand social situations, behaviors, and expectations. Developed by Carol Gray, these stories use simple language and visuals to explain concepts in a clear, predictable way.

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### Benefits of Social Stories

- ✓ Helps children understand social norms and expectations
  - ✓ Reduces anxiety by preparing them for new or challenging situations
  - ✓ Supports the development of self-regulation and appropriate responses
  - ✓ Encourages independence and confidence in social settings
  - ✓ Can be personalized to fit individual needs and experiences
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### How to Create an Effective Social Story


1. **Identify the Situation** – Choose a specific social skill or event (e.g., going to the doctor, sharing toys, asking for help).
  2. **Use Simple, Positive Language** – Write in first-person perspective (e.g., "I can say 'hello' when I see a friend.").
  3. **Include Visuals** – Use pictures, symbols, or drawings to enhance understanding.
  4. **Describe Expected Behaviors** – Clearly outline what the child can do in the situation.
  5. **Reinforce Positive Outcomes** – Explain the benefits of following the expected behavior.
  6. **Keep It Short and Direct** – Focus on essential details without unnecessary complexity.
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### Example Social Story: "Taking Turns with a Toy"

 **Title:** Taking Turns with a Toy

◆ **Text:** "Sometimes, my friends and I want to play with the same toy. I can wait for my turn. Waiting can be hard, but I can take deep breaths. When it is my turn, I can play with

the toy. My friend will feel happy when I share."

 **Visuals:** Picture of two children taking turns with a toy.

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### Tips for Using Social Stories

- ✦ Read the story **before** the situation occurs.
  - ✦ Use a calm and positive tone while reading.
  - ✦ Review the story multiple times for reinforcement.
  - ✦ Pair the story with real-life practice.
  - ✦ Adapt stories as needed to fit individual preferences and experiences.
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### Where to Find Social Stories

- ◆ Create your own using apps like **Story Creator** or **Pictello**.
  - ◆ Find pre-made social stories online through autism support websites.
  - ◆ Work with therapists or educators to develop personalized stories.
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### Final Thoughts

Social stories are a powerful tool for helping children with autism navigate social interactions with confidence. By using clear, structured narratives, caregivers and educators can support children in understanding and responding to everyday situations in a way that feels safe and manageable. 💙