



Social Story

CHEAT SHEET

What is a social story ?

A social story is an individualized, descriptive short story that uses simple language and visuals to explain specific occurrences, behaviors, social interactions, concepts or skills in a way that's easy for children with developmental challenges to understand.

SOCIAL STORIES HELP KIDS

- ✓ Gain insight into the perspectives of others
- ✓ Gain self-awareness
- ✓ Learn how to acquire new skills
- ✓ Process emotions
- ✓ Understand how their behavior impacts others
- ✓ Normalize emotions

Social stories have 7 key components:

- 1. Descriptive sentences.** Describe the who, what, where and why of the situation.
- 2. Directive sentences.** Include instructions on how your child can appropriately respond to the situation and/or give the steps for acquiring a new skill.
- 3. Perspective sentences.** Describe how your child might be feeling about the problem/ given situation.

4. Affirmative sentences. Validate and encourage.

5. Cooperative sentences. Describe how you (or his teacher, people around him etc.) will help your child.

6. Control sentences. Provide strategies to help your child feel safe and in control.

7. Partial sentences. Include a "partial" sentence to encourage your child to make a guess about the next step- "I will feel _____ when I go pee pee in the potty."

**For every control or directive sentence, aim for at least two descriptive and/or perspective sentences.*

Example:

My name is Billy and I'm five years old. I'm starting Kindergarten soon (descriptive). Kindergarten is at a new school called Bonita Canyon. I'm going to have a new teacher named Mrs. Templeton and I'm going to meet new friends (descriptive).

I'm also going to have a new morning routine. When I was in preschool, we didn't have to leave the house until 8:30am, but for Kindergarten, we'll have to leave at 7:30am. That means I have to wake up, eat breakfast, brush my teeth, get dressed and be ready to leave a whole hour earlier! (descriptive) Mommy and daddy will help me with the morning routine so we can make it to school on time. I can help by listening and being cooperative (directive).

I have mixed feelings about starting a new school. One feeling is that I'm excited because my best friend, Ryan, is going to be in my class. Another feeling is that I'm nervous because everything is going to be new (perspective). Lots of kids feel nervous about starting kindergarten (perspective). It's ok to have different feelings (affirmative).

If I'm nervous on the first day, I can chew on my chewy necklace, play with my fidget or I can ask my teacher for help (control). I've already met Mrs. Templeton and she knows all about me. She knows that I love learning about snakes and I love doing math problems (affirmative). She also knows that sometimes new things make me feel nervous and when I feel nervous I might cry (perspective). She will be there to help me if I feel like crying (affirmative).

Kindergarten is going to be fun! I'm going to learn lots of new things and I'm going to make lots of new friends (affirmative). I will feel proud of myself for going to Kindergarten and mommy and daddy are going to be proud of me too (affirmative).

Keep in mind that social stories:

- Are positive and play on your child's strengths.
- Are not strongly directive
- Use clear, simple language and visuals
- Are written in the first person and present tense

For a list of common social story topics, visit: www.sensorymom.com