



Writing the story

When writing the story, it is important to:

- Make sentences as clear and concise as possible
- Write in the first person and normally in the present tense
- Avoid terms like 'always' – use 'usually' or 'sometimes'
- State directive sentences positively, describing desired responses instead of describing problem behaviours e.g. 'I will work on staying calm when someone changes their mind'.



Who to contact

Educational Psychology Service

County Hall
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP20 1UZ
Tel: 01296 383219
Email: eps@buckscc.gov.uk

Educational Psychology Service

Council Offices
King George V Road
Amersham
Buckinghamshire
HP6 5BY
Tel: 01494 732187
Email: eps@buckscc.gov.uk



educational psychology
in buckinghamshire



Social Stories

Information for schools
and parents



Who

Social stories have been found to be effective for children with Social Communication Difficulties. Each social story can be adapted to meet the needs of the child.

What

A social story is a brief description of a social situation. When a child is having difficulties with a social situation, social stories can provide a guide for the child to follow. Examples of behavioural targets could include: knowing the appropriate behaviour when lining up, coping with change, using eye contact appropriately etc.

When

Ideally the child should have the opportunity to read or listen to the story on a daily basis. It may be beneficial for the child to have the story kept on their desk. It often takes time for the child to get used to reading their story everyday. However, once reading the story becomes part of their routine, further alternative social stories can be created to address other issues.

How

Social stories are composed of four different types of sentences: descriptive, perspective, directive and control sentences.

Descriptive sentences:

Describe what is happening in the situation and why e.g. 'When a child is sitting on the carpet and wants to ask the teacher something they put their hand up'.

Perspective sentences:

Give students insight into feelings of others in the situation e.g. 'My teacher will be pleased when I put up my hand because she can hear each child speak without other children interrupting'.

Directive sentences:

Tell the student what is expected of them as a response to the situation (written in first person) e.g. 'When I want to say something to my teacher, I will try to put my hand up when I am sitting on the carpet area'.

Control sentences:

Are written with the student and they identify strategies which the student will use to recall relevant information e.g. 'I will try to remember to put up my hand by looking at the picture card in front of me'.

The descriptive and perspective sentences should outnumber the directive and control sentences. This ensures that the student gains enough information about the social situation and is not overloaded with desirable responses or appropriate strategies.

When using directive sentences, it is useful to phrase them 'I will work on...' or 'I will try to...' rather than 'I will' or 'I should'.

Why

Social stories can be particularly effective for a number of reasons.

They:

- Can teach routines
- Address a wide variety of behaviours
- Present information in a non-threatening format
- Can be used for non readers by presenting the story visually, or by recording on a cassette
- Promote inclusion
- Can support a child in a variety of situations (a book can be created with a social story for each social situation).