



MACARTHUR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL CLINIC



Specialists in Speech & Language Pathology, Psychology, Occupational Therapy

Social Stories

What are Social Stories?

The concept of Social Stories was developed by *Carol Gray*. Social Stories are short descriptive stories that address expectations and routines of specific social situations. Social Stories can be a useful tool in teaching or maintaining appropriate behaviours and responses.



Social Stories are individualised for each client and include a combination of visual and written information.

The Theory and Idea Behind Social Stories:

Children with Autism often have difficulty interpreting social cues and have difficulties understanding other people's perspectives, desires and beliefs- this is called "theory of mind". Thus, social situations can often be seen as unpredictable, confusing and difficult. Social stories serve as a medium to promote social understanding of what is expected and provide the child with the positive/expected behaviour.



How to use Social Stories:

Once the story is written for the individual child, the story needs to be read to the child. This needs to be done in a consistent manner prior to the child participating in the specific social situation. Once the story has been read to the child on numerous occasions, the child should review the story themselves. It is often good practice to have the child explain the story to you.

Once the child has been exposed to the social situation, the use of social story can be minimised.

Tips for creating and implementing Social Stories:

- Establish a *specific* goal- the social story should only have one single skill/behaviour focus. This can include "Driving in the car", "What to do when I get cranky", "Visiting my speech therapist", "My day at preschool", "How I can be a good friend" etc.
- Write the story from the *individual's* perspective, using 1st person language.
- Maintain a positive tone to the story by talking about what is expected of the individual. This maintains a single focus in the story and assists in alleviating the unpredictable and confusing nature of situations.
- Include the perspective of others.
- Use visual stimuli in the story to support the individual's understanding of the story. The more relevant the pictures the more relevance the story will have for the individual ie. Try and use pictures of the individual where possible.
- Incorporate the social story into as many facets of the child life as possible.



Ipad/ iPhone applications for creating social stories:

'Social Stories Creator and Library for Preschool, Autism and Special Needs'

by Touch Autism

Cost: Free

Device Availability: Ipad and iPhone (available on the Application Store).



Description: This easy to use app allows you to create individualised social stories with the ability to include: text, pictures, and recordings. No Internet connection is required for the creation of the stories. Pre-made stories can also be purchased.