



Social Stories™10.1 Definition, Criteria, & Sample Stories

- Carol Gray

Social Story™ Definition

A Social Story™/Social Article accurately describes a situation, skill, or concept according to 10 defining criteria. These criteria guide Story/Article development to ensure an overall patient and supportive quality, and a format, “voice”, and relevant content that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience.

#1 Social Story™ Goal

The goal of a Social Story™/Social Article is to share accurate information using format, “voice”, and relevant content that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience. Every Social Story has an overall patient and reassuring quality.

#2 Two-Step Discovery

Keeping the goal in mind, Authors/Educators gather relevant information to 1) improve their understanding of the Audience in relation to a situation, skill, or concept and/or 2) identify the specific topic(s) and type(s) of information to share in the Story.

#3 Three-Parts & a Title

A Social Story™/Article has a title and introduction that clearly identifies the topic, a body that adds detail, and a conclusion that reinforces and summarizes the information.

#4 Four-mat!

A Social Story™/Article has a format that clarifies content and enhances meaning for the Audience.

Places to Sit and Eat at McDonalds®

Sometimes my family eats at McDonalds.

We may sit at a table that looks like this.

We may eat at a table that looks like this.

Or, we may eat at another kind of table. This is okay.

(Or, to add more detail: If someone is already sitting there, we will try to look for another table.)

Waiting to Fly (Easy Edit)

My name is Pete. I am going to ride in an airplane. I will probably have to wait.

People often have to wait at check-in. Many people may need to check their luggage or get boarding passes.

People often wait in the boarding area. They wait for the pilot and crew to get the plane ready to fly.

People often need to wait for the plane to go. They need to wait for the crew to make sure everything is ready for the flight.

People often need to wait for other reasons, too. Waiting happens a lot when people fly in airplanes.

I am going to fly in an airplane soon. I may have to wait often.

#5 Five Factors Define Voice & Vocabulary

A Social Story™ has a patient and supportive “voice” and vocabulary that is defined by five factors:

- 1) *Exclusive use of first- and/or third-person perspective statements (no second person statements);*
- 2) *Positive and patient tone;*
- 3) *Past, present, or future tense;*
- 4) *Literally accurate; and*
- 5) *Accurate meaning.*

A Social Story™ written in the first-person, using past, present, and future tense:

I learned how to button. I learned how to zip.

I am learning how to tie my shoes.

Someday, I will be able to tie my shoes.

The Washing Machine Story

Sometimes we wash clothes.

Mom knows when to wash clothes. The washing machine is on when we wash clothes.

Sometimes we do not need to wash clothes. The washing machine is off. This is okay.

#6 Six Questions

A Social Story™ answers relevant “wh’ questions”, describing the context (WHERE), time-related information (WHEN), relevant people (WHO), important cues (WHAT), basic activities, behaviors, or statements (HOW) and the reasons or rationale behind them (WHY).

When do people do to bed?

Usually, children need to sleep longer than moms and dads. That is why I may go to bed before my mom or dad. My bedtime is at about _____.

My mom usually goes to bed at about _____. My dad usually goes to bed at about _____.

It is okay for me to sleep when mom and dad are awake. They will go to bed soon. They have a bedtime, too.

C. Gray & White, A.L. 2002. My Social Stories Book. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

#7 Seven Sentence Types

A Social Story™ is comprised of Descriptive Sentences (objective, often observable, statements of fact), with an option of any one or more of the following sentence types: Perspective Sentences (that describe

©Carol Gray, 2010. All rights reserved. May not be duplicated via any means without written permission of the author.

the thoughts, feelings, and/or beliefs of other people); Three Sentences that Coach (to identify suggested responses for the individual and/or his or her team – parents, professionals, and peers); Affirmative Sentences (that enhance the meaning of surrounding statements); and Partial Sentences.

Why Do People Wrap Gifts?

Many people wrap gifts.

Wrapping hides a gift. Later, when the gift is opened, it's a surprise. Many people think that nice surprises are fun.

A wrapped gift is pretty, too. There is colorful paper, and maybe a bow or a card. Wrapping is a beautiful way to hide a nice surprise.

Wrapping a gift hides a nice surprise, and makes it pretty and festive.

#8 A Gr-eight! Formula

**The Social Story™ Formula*

One formula and Seven Sentence Types ensures that every Social Story™ describes more than directs:

*Descriptive + Perspective +
Affirmative Sentences =
DESCRIBE*

≥ 2

*Sentences that Coach=
COACH*

**If there are no (0) Sentences that Coach, use 1 in the denominator.*

#9 Nine Makes it Mine

A Social Story™ is tailored to the individual abilities, attention span, learning style (see also Criteria 4), and whenever possible – interests – of the Audience.

#10 Ten Guides to Editing and Implementation

The Ten Guides to Editing and Implementation ensure that the Goal that guides Story/Article development is also evident in its editing and use. They are:

- 1) *Edit*
- 2) *Plan for Comprehension*
- 3) *Plan Story Support*
- 4) *Plan Story Review*
- 5) *Plan a Positive Introduction*
- 6) *Monitor*
- 7) *Organize the Stories*
- 8) *Mix & Match to Build Concepts*
- 9) *Story Re-Runs & Sequels to Tie Past, Present, & Future*
- 10) *Recycle Instruction into Applause*

REFERENCES

- Agosta, E., Graetz, J. E., Mastropieri, M. A. & Scruggs, T. E. (2004). 'Teacher-Researcher Partnerships to Improve Social Behaviour through Social Stories.' *Intervention in Schools and Clinic* 39 (5) 276 – 287.
- Barry, L. M. & Burlew, S. B. (2004). 'Using Social Stories to Teach Choice and Play Skills to Children with Autism'. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 19 (1) 45-51.
- Barry, L. & Burlew, S. (2004). Using Social Stories to teach choice and play skills to children with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 19, 8–16.
- Bledsoe, R., Smith, B. and Simpson, R. L. (2003). 'Use of a Social Story Intervention to Improve Mealtime Skills of an Adolescent with Asperger Syndrome' *Autism* 7 (3) 289-295.
- Brownell, M. (2002). Musically adapted Social Stories to modify behaviors in students with autism: Four case studies. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 39, 117-144.
- Buron, K.D. & Wolfberg, P. (2008). *Learners on the autism spectrum: Preparing highly qualified educators*. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
- Chalk, M. (2003). 'Social stories for adults with autism and learning difficulties.' *Good Autism*.
- Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism. (2001). Family roles. In C. Lord & J.P. McGee (Eds.), *Educating children with autism*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

- Covey, Stephen R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Del Valle, P. R., McEachern, A. G. & Chambers, H. D. (2001). 'Using Social Stories with Autistic Children'. *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 14 (4) 187-197 Practice 4 (2) 3-11.
- Dettmer, S., Simpson, R., Myles, B., & Ganz, J. (2000). The use of visual supports to facilitate transitions of students with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 15, 163–169.
- Erangey, K. (2001). 'Using Social Stories as a Parent of a Child with an ASD'. *Good Autism Practice*, 2 (1) 309-323.
- Fivush, R., Hudson, J., & Nelson, K. (1984). Children's long term memory for a novel event: An exploratory study. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 30, 303-316.
- Gastgeb, H.Z., Strauss, M.S., & Minshew, N.J. (2006). Do individuals with autism process categories differently? The effect of typicality and development. *Child Development*, 77, 1717–1729.
- Gellman, M., & Hartman, T. (1999). *Lost and found*. New York: Morrow Junior Books.
- Gray, C. (1998). The advanced Social Story workbook. *The Morning News*, 10(2), 1–21.
- Gray, C. (2004). Social Stories 10.0: The new defining criteria and guidelines. *Jenison Autism Journal*, 15, 2–21.
- Gray, C. (2008). Social Stories 10.1. Unpublished manuscript.
- Gray, C.A. & Garand, J.D. (1993). Social Stories: Improving responses of students with autism with accurate social information. *Focus on Autistic Behavior*, 8, 1–10.
- Gray, C. (1998a). Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations with students with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism. In: E. Schopler, G. Mesibov & L. Kuncze (Eds.), *Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism?* (pp. 167-198). New York: Plenum Press.
- Grosvenor (Eds) (2001). *Doing Research in Special Education*. London: David Fulton.
- Hagiwara, T., & Myles, B. S. (1999). 'A multimedia social story intervention: Teaching skills to children with autism'. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 14, 82-95.
- Horner, R.H., Carr, E.G., Halle, J., McGee, G., Odom, S., & Wolery, M. (2005). The use of single-subject research to identify evidence-based practice in special education. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 165–179.
- Howley, M. (2001). An Investigation into the Impact of Social Stories on the Behaviour and Social Understanding of Four Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. In R. Rose and I.
- Howley, M., & Arnold, E. (2005). *Revealing the hidden social code*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Ivey, M.L., Heflin, L.J., & Alberto, P. (2004). The use of Social Stories to promote independent behaviors in novel events for children with PDD-NOS (autism spectrum disorder). *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 19, 164–176.
- Jones, D., Swift, D., & Johnson, M. (1988). Nondeliberate memory for a novel event among preschoolers. *Developmental Psychology*, 24, 641-645.
- Klinger, L.G., & Dawson, G. (2001). Prototype formation in autism. *Development and Psychology*, 13, 111–124.
- Kluth, P., & Schwarz, P. (2008). *Just give him the whale!: 20 ways to use fascinations, areas of expertise, and strengths to support students with autism*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Kuoch, H., & Mirenda, P. (2003). Social Story interventions for young children with autism spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disorders*, 18, 219–227.
- ©Carol Gray, 2010. All rights reserved. May not be duplicated via any means without written permission of the author.

- Kuttler, S., Myles, B. S., & Carlson, J. K. (1998). 'The use of social stories to reduce precursors to tantrum behaviour in a student with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*', 12, 176-182.
- Lorimer, P. A., Simpson, R., Myles, B. S. & Ganz, J. (2002) 'The Use of Social Stories as a Preventative Behavioral Intervention in a Home Setting with a Child with Autism'. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 4 (1) 53-60.
- Miller, D. (2002). *Reading with meaning: Teaching comprehension in the primary grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Moffat, E. (2001). 'Writing social stories to improve students' social understanding'. *Good Autism Practice*, 2 (1) 12-16.
- Norris, C., & Dattilo, J. (1999). 'Evaluating the effects of social story intervention on a young girl with autism'. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 14, 180-186.
- Nova Development Corporation. (1995–1998). *Art Explosion*. Calabasas, CA: Author.
- Plaisted, K.C. (2000). Aspects of autism that theory of mind can't explain. In S. Baron-Cohen, H. Tager Flusberg, & D.J. Cohen (Eds.), *Understanding other minds: Perspectives from developmental cognitive neuroscience*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Quinn, P.C., & Oates, J.M. (2004). Early category representations and concepts. In J.M. Oates & A. Grayson (Eds.), *Cognitive and language development in children*(2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Romanowski Bashe, P., & Kirby, B.L. (2001). *The oasis guide to Asperger syndrome*. New York: Crown Publishers. Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of categorization. In E. Rosch & B.B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and categorization*(pp. 27–48). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rowe, C. (1999). 'Do Social Stories benefit children with autism in mainstream primary school'? *British Journal of Special Education*, 26 (1), 12-14.
- Rubin, K. H. & Dunn, K. (2002). *The friendship factor: Helping our children navigate their social world: And why it matters for their success and happiness*. New York: Penguin Putnam.
- Rust, J., & Smith, A. (2006). How should the effectiveness of Social Stories to modify the behavior of children on the autism spectrum be tested? Lessons from the literature. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 10, 125–138.
- Sansosti, F.J., Powell-Smith, K.A., & Kincaid, D. (2004). A research synthesis of Social Story interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 19(4), 194–204.
- Scattone, D., Wilczynski, S., Edwards, R. & Rabian, B. (2002) 'Decreasing Disruptive Behaviors of Children with Autism Using Social Stories' *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. 32 (6) 535-543.
- Smith, C. (2001a) 'Using Social Stories to Enhance Behaviour in Children with Autistic Spectrum Difficulties'. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 17, (4) 337-345.
- Smith, C. (2001b) Using Social Stories with children with autistic spectrum disorders: an evaluation. *Good Autism Practice*, 2 (1) 16-25.
- Swaggart, B. L., Gagnon, E., Bock, S.J., Earles, T.L., Quinn, C., Myles, B. S., & Simpson, R. L. (1995). 'Using social stories to teach social and behavioural skills to children with autism'. *Focus on Autistic Behaviour*, 10, 1-16.
- Wright, L.A. (2007). *Utilizing Social Stories to reduce problem behavior and increase pro-social behavior in young children with autism*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia.

