



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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Using Social Stories for Children with Autism

By Wendy Overturf

At your child's IEP meeting you may hear the school staff talk about using Social Stories as a support for your child. For some parents, this term is familiar but not always clearly explained. Social Stories are also referred to as scripted stories. Social Stories are a widely used tool designed to help children better understand social situations, expectations, and changes in routine. When used thoughtfully, they can reduce anxiety, increase predictability, and support a child's ability to participate more comfortably in school, home, and community settings.

Social Stories were developed by [Carol Gray](#) and are based on the idea that many social rules are not obvious or intuitive for children with autism. While some children learn social expectations by watching others, children with autism often benefit from having this information explained clearly and directly. A Social Story provides that explanation in a calm, respectful way, focusing on what typically happens in a situation and why.

A Social Story is a short, personalized narrative written from the child's perspective. With younger children, they frequently include pictures. Social Stories include information about where a situation occurs, who is involved, what may happen, and how the child might feel. Importantly, Social Stories are not meant to tell a child what they "must" do or to correct behavior. Instead, they share information and offer reassurance. For example, a Social Story might explain what happens during a fire drill, how loud noises can feel surprising, and what adults do to help keep everyone safe.

When Social Stories are helpful

Parents often use Social Stories for situations like:

- Going to the dentist or doctor
- Starting school or a new routine
- Handling transitions or schedule changes
- Learning daily routines (bedtime, getting dressed, leaving the house)
- Preparing for social experiences like parties or playdates

If a situation causes repeated stress or uncertainty, it may be a good fit for a Social Story.

How to create a Social Story at home

You don't need special materials or artistic skills. A Social Story can be written on paper, typed on a computer, or paired with simple drawings or photos.

Here are a few basic guidelines:

- Use a calm, positive tone. The story should feel reassuring, not corrective.
- Write from your child's perspective. Use first-person language like "I" or "my."

- Describe more than you direct. Focus on what usually happens rather than what your child “must” do.
- Explain the “why”. Helping children understand the reason behind events or expectations builds understanding.
- Acknowledge feelings. It’s okay to include that a child might feel nervous, excited, or unsure.

Here is an example of a very basic Social Story. “Sometimes I go to the mall with my mom. Stores can be loud and busy. I might feel overwhelmed. If I need help, I can stay close to my adult or take a short break.” Often one would supplement such a story with pictures.

Additional Resources

[Autism Behavior Services, Inc.](#)

Explore this collection of Social Story videos using the search bar to find specific titles or topics. You can also browse through different categories to discover videos that suit your interests and needs. Whether you are looking for guidance on social skills, emotions, or daily routines, this categorized collection has something for everyone.

[Autism Little Learners](#)

This site offers a wide range of free, community-based stories, including going to the dentist, haircuts, and safety, such as holding hands.

[Free Social Work Tools and Resources](#)

This site provides printable stories on managing anger, trying new foods, and not hitting.

[Social Stories for Autistic Children – The Ultimate Guide](#)

Be sure to check out this guide for more information on how to write and use Social Stories.

HOME LEARNING



Weather Related Read-Alouds

Have fun reading these weather themed books with your child. There are some suggested follow-up activities that help promote learning.

[Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs](#) – A fun and imaginative video on weather and storytelling.

Activity Ideas:

- Make a Silly Menu: Draw or write foods you’d want to fall from the sky.
- Story Retelling: Use play food to retell the story events.

[Get Ready for Weather](#) –An informational text for older children about the weather and weather terms.

Activity Idea:

There are many new vocabulary words in the text. Write down some of these words and see if your child can define them or use them in a sentence.

[What Will the Weather Be Like Today?](#) – Rhyming journey through different weather types.

Activity Ideas:

- Weather Wheel: Create a spinner showing sun, rain, wind, clouds.
- Sentence Starter: “Today the weather is _____.”

[May I Come In?](#)– A story about finding shelter during a thunderstorm.

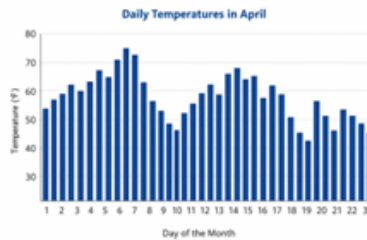
Activity Ideas:

- Shelter Building: Build a small “shelter” with blankets or blocks.
- Discussion Prompt: “How can we stay safe in a storm?”

Graph Daily Temperature for April

A bar graph helps kids learn by making numbers visual, concrete, and easier to understand. Make one of your own with your child and have them color in a bar each day. Try to use the same time of day to get the temperature which is easily retrieved from your phone. You can use the completed graph to ask your child questions.

- What day had the highest temperature?
- What day had the lowest temperature?
- Is there a difference in the temperatures toward the end of the month as compared to the beginning of the month?
- Is there a five-day period when the temperatures were about the same?



Earth Day - April 22, 2026

Earth Day is an important day set aside to inspire appreciation for and awareness of the earth's environment. It is celebrated by people in different countries, all over the world, all sharing an appreciation of the planet and a dedication to protecting its natural resources.

Explore the [Recycle City website](#). This site has several interactive games, as well as other activities and resources about reducing waste and energy use.



Spring Fun for Kids

Spring is here, bringing with it warmer temperatures and lots of blooming nature. There are so many [simple ways](#) to get outside and enjoy spring with your children.

[100+ Spring Outdoor Activities for Kids](#)



WI FACETS EVENTS

[Family and Youth Engagement in Transition](#)

Date: April 8, 2026

Presenter: Shelley Burke Otto, TIG

[WSEMS Cómo manejar desacuerdos en el IEP: Conoce tus opciones](#)

Date: April 9, 2026

Presentadora: Nelsinia Ramos, WI FACETS

[Transition IEP Checklist](#)

Date: April 14, 2026

Presenters: Ann Zielke and Lisa Stewart, WI FACETS

[Birth to 3 and Me: Maximizing your Experience and Understanding/ Programa De Nacimiento A 3 Años: Aprovechando al máximo tu experiencia y conocimiento](#)

Date: April 15, 2026

Presenters: Aryn Slack, Birth to 3 and Melissa Vélez, Portage Project

[Autistic Learners and Bullying](#)

Date: April 22, 2026

Presenter: Chelsea Budde, Chelsea's Vocation

[A New Perspective on Pathological Demand Avoidance \(PDA\): The Element of Praxis](#)

Date: April 29, 2026

Presenter: Cassie Wilcox, OT

[Prepárate para el futuro: ¡Guía para padres en juntas de transición del IEP!](#)

Date: April 30, 2026

Presenter: Nathaly Silva, WI FACETS

UPCOMING STATE EVENTS

[Circles of Life Conference](#)

Dates: May 14-15, 2026

Location: Holiday Inn Stevens Point Convention Center, Stevens Point, WI

Circles of Life is Wisconsin's annual conference for families who have children with disabilities and the professionals who support them.

[2026 WI FACETS Endless Possibilities Conference - Save the Date](#)

Date: August 7, 2026

Topics: Advocacy in Education and Beyond

Location: Waukesha County Technical College ([AJN Center](#)), Pewaukee, WI

The annual Endless Possibilities conference invites families and professionals who support students with disabilities to learn and grow together. We encourage open dialogue between families and professionals to discuss positive solutions for all our students with special needs in Wisconsin. Please join us!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Transition Transmission

As noted in a previous newsletter, funding for this project was discontinued. However, Tim Markle is now sharing this exciting news. The [Wisconsin Autism Transition Demonstration Project](#) (WAuTD) has decided to continue to offer the Transition Transmission. If you would like to receive updates from the WAuTD project, you can [sign up](#). You will notice a change in the Transmission. They will be including a section for the Janesville partners as the project will have an initial imprint in Janesville as they work to improve integrated transition. You can register for the Transition Transmission News by visiting: https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1a016H69hwbxd4 or email Tim at tmarkle@wisc.edu.

[Autism Society of Wisconsin](#)

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin and the Autism Society of South Central Wisconsin are coming together to form one statewide organization - the Autism Society of Wisconsin. The goal of this partnership is to strengthen their impact by sharing resources, expanding support, and amplifying advocacy for autistic individuals and their families across the state. If you'd like to learn more, please visit the [Autism Society of Wisconsin FAQ webpage](#).

[Resource Reminder: Wisconsin Wayfinder](#)

Wisconsin Wayfinder supports families of children with delays, disabilities, special health care needs, and mental health conditions. Children's resource guides are helpers who assist families, caregivers, professionals, and organizations in finding a wide array of supports and services available through the Children's Resource Network. Their services are free and confidential.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)

This site has an extensive list of links to information on autism. Also be sure to check their [Facebook page](#) for information related to autism.

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\) – Disability Category of Autism](#)

The website includes disability category criteria for autism, information about trainings, and links to archived webinars. This site also has a link for more information on the Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation process.

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\) – Inclusive Strategies to Address the Behavioral Needs for Students with IEPs](#)

This professional learning series provides resources and strategies to help adults address the behavioral needs of students with IEPs in educational settings.

[Autism Society of Wisconsin](#)

The Autism Society of Wisconsin is dedicated to improving the lives of all who are impacted by autism by providing information, resources, and support, while raising awareness and acceptance in our community. They do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the autism spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research, and advocacy.

[Autism United of Wisconsin](#)

The mission and passion of Autism United is to improve the quality of life for each child, teen, and adult on the Autism Spectrum — as well as their families — while teaming with caregivers and educators to enhance every individual's unique needs, skills, and goals.

[Autism Navigator](#)

This website features a unique collection of web-based tools and courses that integrate the most current research in autism with an interactive web platform and video footage showing effective evidence-based practices. It is intended for professionals as well as families.

[Autism Source](#)

The Autism Source™ Resource Database, a product of the Autism Society of America, is the most comprehensive database of its kind. Autism Source employs a nationwide network of affiliates and collaborates with other autism organizations and professionals throughout the U.S. to ensure that the database continues to grow and is kept current with reliable resources for information related to autism.

[Autism Speaks](#)

Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. They do this through advocacy and support; increasing understanding and acceptance of people with autism; and advancing research into causes and better interventions for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions.

[100 Day Kit for Young Children](#)

The days after an autism diagnosis can be overwhelming. The Autism Speaks "100 Day Kit" helps families of children ages four and under make the best possible use of the 100 days following the diagnosis. [A 100 Day Kit for school-age children is also available.](#)

[MyAutismTeam](#)

MyAutismTeam is the social network for parents of children with autism. The site provides emotional support from other parents of children with autism. Parents may gain practical advice and insights on managing treatment or therapies for autism. Parents can also share daily ups and downs in a judgment-free place.

[IRIS Center Modules](#)

The [IRIS Center](#) is a national center dedicated to improving education outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities birth through age twenty-one, using effective evidence-based practices and interventions. The first module provides information on the early signs of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as an overview of the difference between a medical diagnosis and an educational determination of ASD. The second module highlights strategies that have been shown to be effective in teaching appropriate behaviors and skills and decreasing inappropriate behaviors with children and youth with ASD.

[Scripted Stories \(Social Stories\) for Children with Autism](#)

Scripted stories, also known as Social Stories, are written to help individuals, particularly those with autism, understand and navigate various social situations or routines. "[Cleaning up my Toys](#)" and "[I Can Follow the Family Rules](#)" are two examples of social stories from the [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations website](#).

[Supporting Neurodiverse Students](#)

The Supporting Neurodiverse Students Professional Learning System (SNS) provides adults with information they need to implement evidence-based improvement strategies to support students with significantly divergent social and emotional learning needs. The SNS supports a district level grant (ES3) with coaching and technical assistance so that school teams enhance their system to better support students with IEPs.

RESEARCH

The Effectiveness of Social Stories among Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Meta- Analysis

Disorders: Meta- Analysis

Saad, M. A. E. (2016). *The effectiveness of social stories among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders: Meta-analysis. Online Submission*, 5(2), 51-60.

[Read Full Article](#)

Social stories are individualized short stories used to assist children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders in understanding social situations by describing and explaining appropriate behavior and providing examples of appropriate responses. The purpose of this paper is to explore social stories when used with children and adolescence with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This behavioral intervention is frequently used within the ASD population to address their difficulty understanding and interpreting situations, or others' thoughts, feelings, or emotions. Results suggest that social stories have been utilized to improve many types of behaviors including prosocial behavior, social communication, conversational skills, on-task behavior, out-of-seat behavior, reciprocal interactions, decreasing "socially inappropriate" and undesirable behaviors, acceptable verbal greeting initiations, self-regulation, and overall social skills among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders. Social stories seem to be a promising practice that warrants future research. Results will be discussed and future directions for research will be addressed.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

[Upcoming Newsletter Topics](#)

May: Mental Health

June: ADD / ADHD

July: Speech and Language

To submit contributions of articles, events, or resources you may use the [Word document](#). Send submissions to [Wendy Overturf](#). If you are unable to access the form, you may send the information in an email.

Material appropriate for the monthly newsletter include web links to family involvement/parent leadership resources, advertisements for statewide trainings for parents, youth or parent/educator audiences, information about statewide parent agencies, recent research pertaining to family engagement, and family engagement success articles.

This monthly update is provided by Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS) to share statewide information regarding parent leadership and family involvement. If you would like to receive this monthly update or if you would like to have your name removed from the distribution list, please email [WI FACETS](#).

The WI FACETS Family Engagement E-Newsletter can be found online: www.servingongroups.org/newsletter



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