

Top tips: How to make a social story to support a child with autism

Making social stories is a really useful way to help children with autism prepare for different situations.

It helps reduce anxiety in the lead-up to any change and also in managing day-to-day situations that children find challenging.

Before you start the social story:

- Remember that every child with autism is unique
- Get to know the child as an individual and avoid making assumptions based on previous experiences of other children with autism
- Consider how the child processes the look, the feel, smell and/or the sound of different situations
- Talk to parents - they know their child best and might be able to offer insight that has been overlooked by anyone else
- Talk to the child and observe their play to help you identify how they perceive the world around them
- Think about the areas where support is needed.



Writing the social story:

- Choose a title, main body and conclusion for your story - sometimes it helps to have the child as the main character
- It needs to be tailored to the interests and stage of development of the child
- A story for a young child should be no longer than 3-12 short sentences (it's best to avoid commas and keep sentences short and descriptive)
- Add coaching sentences that act as a guide to behaviour
- Add repetition, rhythm and rhyme - these are useful for young children who need routine and predictability
- One of the most important aspects of a social story is illustrations - children with autism often find visual images easier to process e.g. you could use photographs, clip art or drawings.

Writing a social story is easy but take a little thought and practice. Have a go and review how it works for the individual child. You can be as creative as you like, if pictures don't work, you could try objects.