

Tip Sheets

Social Scripts

What is a Social Script?



Scripted stories, sometimes referred to as Social Stories™, personal stories, or personal narratives are

tools that can be used for teaching social skills to children. The goal of a scripted story is to:

- Describe a social situation that is difficult for the child to understand or confusing.
- Increase understanding of the situation.
- Provide suggestions for appropriate behavior.
- Support the child in understanding the thoughts, feelings and behavior of others.

When to Use a Social Script

Prepare for New Events and Experiences

A scripted story can be used to prepare a child for a new event by describing what will happen and what the child can do. It can also be used to help a child deal with a situation in which he or she is fearful of or tends to dislike. Examples include:

- Asking a peer to play
- Going to the doctor
- Visiting a new location

Teach Positive Behavior

Scripted stories can be used to help a child learn appropriate behaviors in different situations, like:

- Asking for a toy
- Keep hands to self when waiting
- Being polite (using please and thank you)

Teach a New Skill

A scripted story can be used to teach a child a new skill by breaking the skill down into a step-by-step process, such as:

- Getting dressed for outdoor play
- Washing hands
- Taking turns when playing a game

Creating a Social Script

Scripted stories are generally developed for an individual child based on the child's needs and developmental level. The following are the basic steps to writing a scripted story:

- Break down a task step by step (task analysis).
- Select a visual support for each step that will increase the child's understanding.
- Describe each step using the visual support (the text of the story).

The challenging situation, new experience or skill is described with much detail. Focus on the social information such as how others think, feel or act. Make suggestions for how the child might behave or respond.

Writing a Social Script

The social script is written from the child's perspective, in present tense, first person ("I") and using positive language. The goal is to teach the child what he or she "can" do rather than what not to do. What not to do should *not* be included in the story.

Types of Social Script Sentences

Descriptive Sentences

Explain the situation by answering the “wh” questions (where, who, what, when and why).

Perspective Sentences

Describe the emotions, thoughts and reactions of others in the situation.

Affirmative Sentences

Enhance the meaning of other sentences (“This is okay”).

Cooperative Sentences

Identify what others will do to help the child.

Directive Sentences

Suggest what the child can do. These sentences are stated in a positive way.

Control Sentences

Identify strategies that the child can do to remember what to do. The child can help to add this sentence after first reviewing the story.

Reviewing a Social Script

The story is then reviewed with the child on a daily basis until it becomes familiar. Introduce and practice the story before the event or situation. Provide the child with opportunities to practice the steps of any new skill being learned. Keep in mind that learning new skills take time.

Additional Resources

Carol Gray Social Stories™

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>

*For more information, visit
<http://www.inclusivechildcare.org/>.*

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