

Social stories are narrative descriptions of specific activities, events, or situations. They include key information to illustrate what you can expect in these scenarios and why. They should contain real photographs and simple language which represent the different steps or factors involved in this specific situation for the child. For example, a photograph of the settings garden, meal table, the child's peg, ensuring that each stage is something relevant to the situation and the child.



Why use social stories?

Social stories can support children to develop an understanding and familiarity with situations which are new to them. By supporting children's understanding of specific situations, we are better preparing them to feel comfortable to participate. They can be used to build confidence in new situations, support life transitions such as starting nursery/school, new siblings or moving house. Social stories also support embedding expectations and boundaries as they model what is expected of the adults and children during different situations.



Top tips for using social stories

- Use photographs relevant to the child and situation.
- Keep the language clear and simple.
- Include all key steps.
- Read regularly, especially during the activity or transition they find challenging to understand or participate in.
- Share with the family so that they have a copy at home.

Using a social story in practice:

Jeremiah has recently started attending the setting and you, his key person, have noticed that he won't come to the table during snack time and gets very upset if a practitioner brings him to the table and asks him to sit down.

You create a simple social story using real photographs of the steps during snack time, including washing his hands, finding his placemat, the bowl and cup in which snack is served and some of the regularly occur snack food and drinks offered.

During snack time you take the story to where Jeremiah is playing, let him know snack time has begun and read him the story. Initially Jeremiah pays little attention to you reading to him. You repeat this during each snack time he is present and he begins to show interest in the book, once he shows an interest in the story you are able to encourage Jeremiah to finish his task and join you to read the story during snack time, each session you move closer to the snack table to read the story and begin pointing to the table and his friends participating during parts of the story.

By taking your time and moving at Jeremiah's pace you are able to build his understanding of what is expected and eventually he is ready to sit at the table to read the story and participate in snack which is a great success which you enjoy celebrating together!

Social stories can also support families at home, for example with getting ready for bed, going to the shops or to the park! Remember to share this method and support parents in how to create and use social stories when they may benefit a child with different challenges in their life.

For our video on social stories, [click here](#).

