



The shaded sections are to do with ASD.

<p><b>Mindblindness</b></p> <p>Can they see others' points of view or understand feelings and needs of others in this situation? Do they realise they need to communicate their needs to someone?</p>	
<p><b>Getting the gist</b></p> <p>Does the child understand the social meaning of the situation? Do they know what to expect and how to respond to this social situation? Do they need help with this?</p>	
<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>Do they understand the need to communicate, what to say and why? Do they need help to explain their actions, which may be very plausible to themselves?</p>	
<p><b>Imagination</b></p> <p>Does the child think imaginatively? Does this affect their ability to play? Have they interpreted something literally? Is the problem to do with lack of ability to plan?</p>	
<p><b>Sensory experiences</b></p> <p>Is the problem associated with sensory experiences (the smell, sound, feel, taste, colour or look of something)? Are they frightened or in pain? Are their preoccupations interfering with learning?</p>	
<p><b>Preoccupations and routine</b></p> <p>Is it to do with a need for routine or habits? Is there a need to be in control? Has there been a change of routine at home or at school?</p>	
<p><b>Situations and settings</b></p> <p>Where does it happen?</p> <p>Where does it not happen?</p> <p>Who is around when it happens?</p>	
<p><b>Triggers and timings</b></p> <p>When does it happen? What are the timings in relation to other things? When does it not happen? What is the trigger? Is it related to anxiety or the child's temperament? Is there anything that might be upsetting the child (e.g. memories, illness, tiredness, boredom)?</p>	
<p><b>Responses and reinforcers</b></p> <p>How have others responded? Does something happen after the behaviour that is important? How does it affect the behaviour in the future? What are the benefits of this behaviour? For you? For the child? (Rack your brains, there usually are some.)</p>	

3. What does the child or young person need help with?

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Now that you have a better understanding of why the child might be behaving in this way you can decide what he or she needs help with. For example, refusing to put shoes on might be because the shoes are the wrong colour, have buttons on, etc., or because they prefer the routine of getting dressed first or having a specific person to help them with their shoes, or the shoes hurt, or they don't see the point of wearing shoes, etc. The list is endless! Having discovered the reasons why the behaviour occurs will help you to be clear about your aim.

4. *What* specifically do you hope will change?

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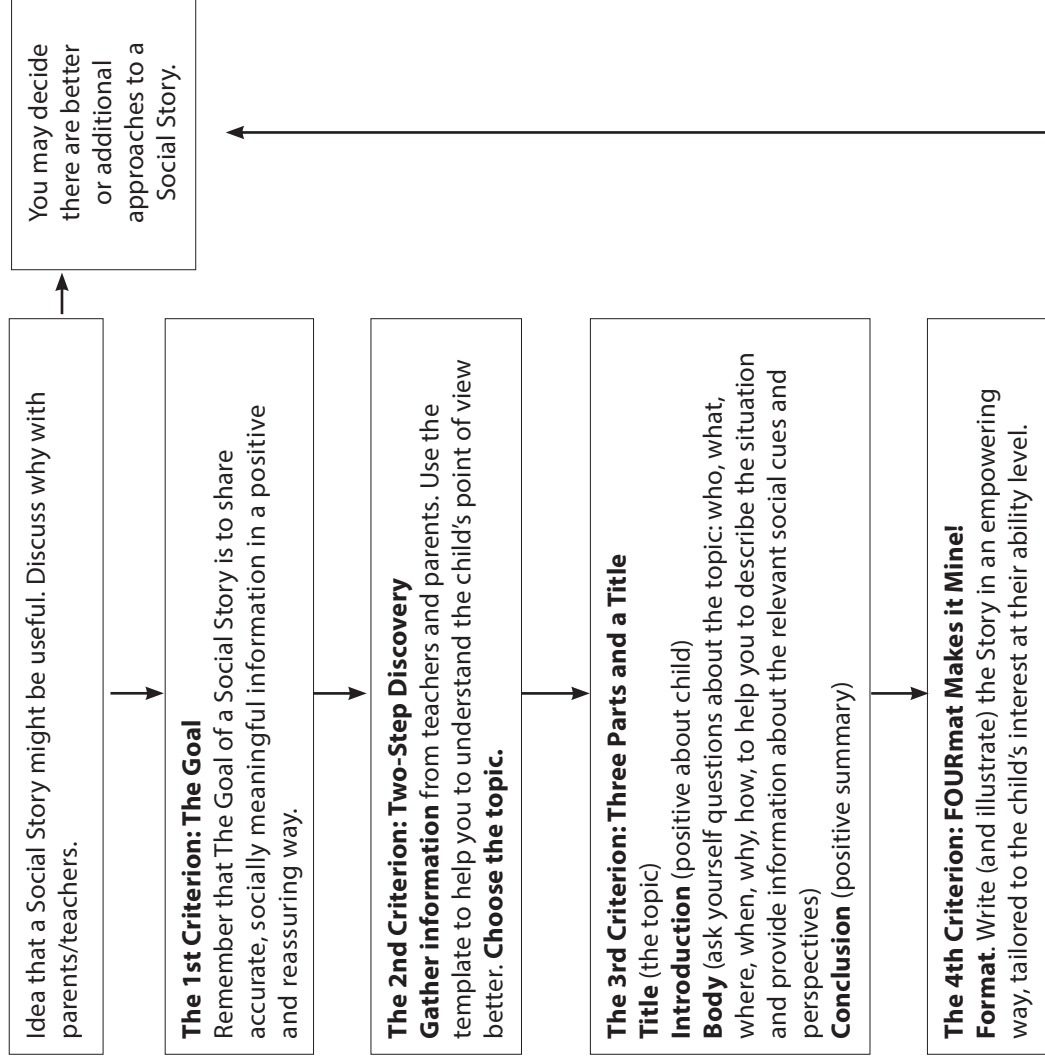
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Will the child benefit, or you, or both? You are preparing the child for the future as well as dealing with the present. Does it meet the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time limited)?

# STEP-BY-STEP FLOWCHART



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**The 5th Criterion: Five Factors Define Voice and Vocabulary**

Factors to keep the Story positive and accurate:  
pronouns: are all sentences written in the first and/or third person?  
ensure it has a positive and patient tone (no negatives)  
use relevant information from the person's past, present or future  
is every sentence and word literally accurate?  
is every verb selected to be closest to its intended meaning?



**The 6th Criterion: Six Questions Guide Story Development**  
**Answer questions relevant to the topic.** Who, what, where, when, why and how



**The 7th Criterion: Seven is About Sentences**

**Sentence types** in Social Stories:

**Descriptive:** describe information factually, objectively or that everybody knows and describe the thoughts, feelings or beliefs of people and reinforce points in the Story

**Coaching:** describe or suggest responses, e.g. 'I will try to eat quietly'



**The 8th Criterion: A GR-EIGHT Formula!**

To keep the balance of Sentences correct, add up all the Descriptive Sentences and divide that number by the number of Coaching Sentences. It can be called a Social Story if the answer is greater than or equal to 2.



**The 9th Criterion: Nine to Refine Refine.** Use the checklist.



**The 10th Criterion: Ten Guides to Implementation Implement.** Edit, prepare and read the Story. Then review it.

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# CHECKLIST

A Social Story follows certain 'rules'. Many people think these are complicated. They are not. They are very simple and designed to make sure that the Social Story is a positive experience for the child or young person. Another way of looking at this is that they are a checklist for making sure that your Social Story has a good chance of being helpful and nurturing to the young person. There are two versions; the first five-page version offers more detail.

## 1. The Goal

- ✓ **Does your Social Story share accurate social information?**
- ✓ **Does the Story have an overall patient and reassuring quality?**

## 2. Two-Step Discovery

- ✓ **Have you discussed this with a parent/carer?**
- ✓ **Have you discussed this with another person who knows the child well?**
- ✓ **Have you made at least two observations of the child in the relevant setting (as objective onlooker and from the perspective of the child)?**
- ✓ **Is there one clear focus or topic?**
- ✓ **Is this for the child's benefit?**

## 3. Three Parts and a Title

Does the Story have the following?

- ✓ **title**
- ✓ **introduction**
- ✓ **body**
- ✓ **conclusion**

## 4. FOURmat Makes it Mine!

Are the text and illustrations written and presented in a way consistent with the child's ability, talents and interests so that will enhance its meaning and engage the child?

- ✓ **learning style**
- ✓ **attention span**
- ✓ **level of understanding**
- ✓ **language**

- ✓ **interests**

## **5. Five Factors Define Voice and Vocabulary**

- ✓ **Are *all* sentences written in the first (I) and/or third person (she, it, they)?**

‘You...’ (second person) statements can make the Story too directive, so are not used.

Where it is necessary to explain negative behaviours always refer to the third person (not to the child). Use a ‘learning vantage point’ such as ‘Sometimes children may speak whilst someone else is still talking. This is called interrupting. With practice children learn when to talk and when to listen.’

The first person is never used in reference to a negative, ineffective or undesirable behaviour. For example, rather than using ‘I should not interrupt the head teacher when she is speaking in assembly,’ instead use ‘Children try to listen when the head teacher is talking to the group in assembly.’

- ✓ **Does the Story have a positive and patient tone?**

Avoid negative phrasing and negative verbs, for example:

- should/shouldn’t
- supposed to/mustn’t
- ought/ought to know better
- bad/naughty
- never/always
- can’t/don’t.

- ✓ **Have you used relevant information from the child’s past, present or future?**
- ✓ **Is the Social Story literally accurate (every word, phrase or sentence can be interpreted literally without changing the intended meaning)?**
- ✓ **Are verbs carefully selected to be closest to the intended meaning?**

Try to be accurate in meaning, especially when using verbs. For example, ‘Jane will get the food from the supermarket’ – a better sentence would be ‘Jane will buy the food from the supermarket.’ N.B. Analogies and/or metaphors or idioms may be used if they are known to be understood by the child.

## **6. Six Questions Guide Story Development**

- ✓ **Does the Story answer questions relevant to the specific topic?**

## **7. Seven is About Sentences**

- ✓ **Does your Social Story have at least one Descriptive Sentence?**

Ensure that the balance of Sentences is correct. Add the number of Descriptive Sentences and divide that by the number of Coaching Sentences. The answer should be greater than or equal to 2.

## 8. A GR-EIGHT Formula!

- ✓ **Does your Social Story have very few Coaching Sentences (less than a third of the total number of sentences)?**

The reason for this is to 'describe' the social situation rather than telling the child what to do. Social Stories have a reassuring tone.

## 9. Nine to Refine

- ✓ **Has there been more than one draft of your Story (to show you are editing and revising)?**

## 10. Ten Guides to Implementation

Preparing to present the Story

- ✓ **Does the child understand the Story?**
- ✓ **Have you prepared carefully the way in which the Story was to be presented?**

Discuss the practicalities of presentation, including:

- Who will introduce it to the child?
- Who reads it with the child?
- Where (include any changes or adaptations in the environment)?
- When?
- How?
- How often?
- Confidentiality.

Reading the Story

- ✓ **Was the Story consistently presented in a confidential, comfortable setting with a positive tone?**

When you deliver it ensure you have:

- prepared the child for the Social Story (before it is used)
- made sure that the child is ready and receptive (e.g. in a good mental and physical space) so they will enjoy the Social Story or get something positive from it
- used checklist item 10 regularly, checking and reviewing with colleagues that the Story is helping and adapting as necessary.



# CHECKLIST (SHORT VERSION)

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- ✓ learning style
- ✓ attention span
- ✓ level of understanding
- ✓ language
- ✓ interests

## **5. Five Factors Define Voice and Vocabulary**

- ✓ **Are all sentences written in the first (I) and/or third person (she, it, they)?**
- ✓ **Does the Story have a positive and patient tone?**
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