



## About the Social Narrative

This information is being share from the Autism Society of North Carolina - <https://www.autismsociety-nc.org/social-narratives-guidelines/>

### **Social Narratives Support Individuals with Autism**

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Social narratives are simple stories that visually represent social situations and appropriate social behaviors. The social narrative connects the important details of a setting or social situation to support the person with ASD in understanding the social context and in developing a new social skill. While most individuals generally understand social norms and conventions, individuals with ASD may need explicit instruction to understand these norms.

The social narrative focuses the individual's attention on only the key details of a situation. It can support understanding and performance. The narrative typically tells the individual what the appropriate behavior is (i.e., what it looks like in concrete terms), when the behavior should be displayed, and for some learners, why this is the appropriate response.

A social narrative *might* include the following parts:

- A brief description of the situation
- What the individual with ASD thinks, feels, does, or says in this situation
- What others may think, feel, do, or say in this situation
- Description of appropriate response or behavior in that situation
- Explanation of why that response or behavior is appropriate
- How the better behavior/appropriate response will benefit the person with ASD

### **Some basic guidelines for creating social narratives**

Focus on one sub-skill or issue at time. Do not overwhelm the individual by targeting too many concepts or skills in one social narrative.

Embed visual cues as needed. While some individuals read and retain written information easily, *many* with ASD will need pictures to support comprehension. You can obtain images

from Google images, personal photographs, hand-drawings, and various online and subscription-based applications. Highlighting, underlining or bolding certain words can also draw attention to the most important parts.

For those with limited reading skills, include both written information and pictures. Limit written text and use only key words and phrases.

Positively frame the narrative. Instead of emphasizing what *not* to do, emphasize what *to do*. Describe the *appropriate* behavior. For some with ASD, it is important to also convey why it is appropriate.

Personalize the story. Use the individual's name or photograph in the story, or write the story in first person.

Reading the narrative once will not be enough. Social narratives are most effective when used within a broader framework of high quality, direct instruction that involves repeated practice and reinforcement. For some, role-play may be appropriate. For example, if you are reviewing a narrative about what will happen on the first day at a new middle school, it is also important for the individual to actually practice going to a locker and transitioning from class to class, before the first day.

Read the narrative just before the individual is expected to apply that skill. This is called priming. For example, review a narrative about sharing swings at the playground just before the individual goes to the park.