



# Carol's Club

*Custom Social Stories™ Resources  
Created by Carol Gray for Members*

 CAROL GRAY  
SOCIAL STORIES

## When Parents Go and Kids Stay Home: There's a Social Story for That!

A request from Carol's Club member *DaytonMom* sent me running to one of my earliest boxes of past Social Stories. Here's DaytonMom's letter to me (edited and paraphrased);

*Hi Carol, I hope you can help me. My husband, Josh, and I and two of our closest friends were married in 2008. During our senior year we frequently talked about having a joint destination wedding in Hawaii. That didn't happen for a number of reasons. We were married in separate weddings in Ohio about a month apart. However, we agreed that on our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversaries we would go to Hawaii for a second honeymoon together - just the four of us. No kids allowed.*

*It's 2018 - time to make Hawaii happen this time and our friends want to book airline tickets and the hotel. I am hesitant to go. I feel more comfortable staying home with Aiden, our eight-year-old son with autism. Josh disagrees. He wants to go to Hawaii. The plan is to go for two weeks.*

*We have never left Aiden for more than one night with my parents. If we go to Hawaii, Aiden and his brother, Zach will stay at the homes of grandparents, aunts and uncles, rotating for a few nights in each home. I think it's too many changes for Aiden. I think Aiden will be frequently upset.*

*Do you have a Social Story for this? I am happy to write one myself but I need some ideas to get me started. There are so many different people and homes involved! That's a lot of stories! I hope that you can help us.*

*Thank You, DaytonMom.*

## THE PROJECT

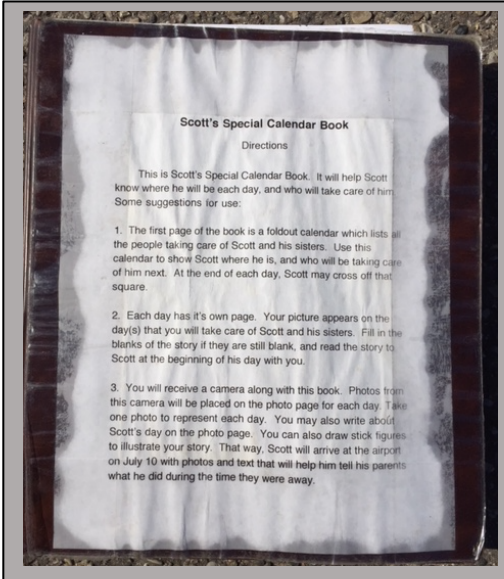
First and foremost, congratulations to Josh and DaytonMom on their 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! I have often thought that for every ten years of marriage there should be a standard pin that couples are awarded - in which case my husband Brian and I would have four!

Reading DaytonMon's request takes me back to the spring of 1999. I was working as a consultant for students with autism. Scott, about eight years of age and diagnosed with autism was on my caseload. Scott's mom and dad were members of their church choir. They were excited that their choir was invited to go on a concert tour of Germany. Scott's parents had many concerns about how Scott might handle their absence and mentioned that they probably would not be going on the trip. They asked the same question as DaytonMom: If they did go on the trip, is there a Social Story that might help? "Sure, there is," I said. I had no idea what it might look like!

Every Social Story begins with gathering information - and this Story was beginning to look a little complicated. The choir tour was two weeks long. Scott and his three sisters would have seven different caregivers from their church family. Each caregiver would have the option of using their own home or the home of Scott's family. And every caregiver had a back-up person to call if for any reason they were suddenly unable to care for Scott and his sisters.

What we needed was a Social Story with an inherently flexible structure and format. Our goal was to build in predictability for Scott, while at the same time allowing for the addition of details or the accommodation of unforeseen changes or events. We also wanted the Story to help Scott tell his parents about his activities during their absence after they returned home.

I told Scott's parents we were developing a three-ring notebook that would house Scott's Story and other resources. While I developed the Social Story, I suggested that they create a detailed list of information about Scott to share with his caregivers - what he likes to eat, clothing preferences, favorite activities, any Scott related rules, expectations and suggested strategies if problems occur - a detailed guide to Scott and his care. Lists like this are best developed over time to include as many details as possible. The list was placed in the front pocket of the notebook along with the tour schedule, emergency information (Scott's dentist, doctor), etc.



Scott's Book

## The Cover

On the cover of Scott's book (pictured above) is a note to his caregivers:

### *Scott's Special Calendar Book*

*This is Scott's Special Calendar Book. It will help Scott know where he will be each day, and who will take care of him. Some suggestions for use:*

*1. The first page of the book is a foldout calendar which lists all the people taking care of Scott and his sisters. Use this calendar to show Scott where he is, and who will be taking care of him next. At the end of each day, Scott may cross off that square.*

*2. Each day has its own page. Your picture appears on the days that you will take care of Scott and his sisters. Fill in the blanks of the story if they are still blank and read the story to Scott at the beginning of his day with you.*

(cont. on next page)

\*See Appendix A: Social Stories 10.2 Criteria for the current definition of a Social Story and each of the criterion.

3. You will receive a camera along with this book. Photos from this camera will be placed on the photo page for each day. Take one photo to represent each day. You may also write about Scott's day on the photo page. You can also draw stick figures to illustrate your story. That way, Scott will arrive at the airport on July 10 with photos and text that will help him tell his parents what he did while they were away.



### The Calendar

As described on the notebook cover, Scott's book begins with a calendar of caregiver family photos. The photos start four days prior to Scott's departure to allow time to introduce the book to Scott and to teach him to cross off each day as it ends. Scott's calendar closes with his last caregiver. In case of a caregiver cancellation, the photos of back-up caregivers are in the pocket of the notebook ready to be pasted onto the calendar over that of the originally scheduled caregiver. If I were to create this calendar for Scott today, I'd add a few days after his parents' return to show that with each passing day Scott is closer to reuniting with his parents.

### The Story

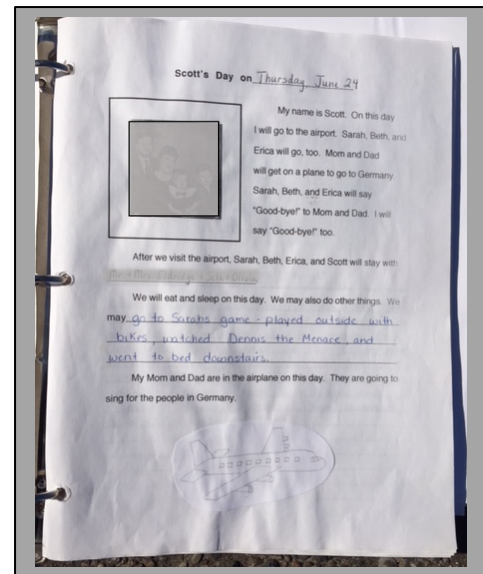
Scott's Social Story is written in a repetitive fill-in-the-blank format. This makes it possible for caregivers to complete their part of the Story with important details about who is in charge and the day's activities and events. Repetitive

text builds a reassuring and predictable quality into the Story, which is why repetition - and also rhythm and rhyme - are frequently used in early childhood literature. In Scott's case, the text and activities dictated by the text stress that which is similar from one day to the next, despite the changes in caregivers and context. If I were to write this Story today, I'd have the Story pages begin along with the calendar, a few days prior to his parents' departure, to acquaint Scott beforehand with not only the use of the calendar, but also the Story and its activities.

### Opening and Closing Days

Scott's parents left on Thursday, June 24. That's the opening day of his Story. Below I have copied the text from Scott's book (right) exactly as the original. Lucinda Caligraphy font is used for the caregiver's handwritten words. Judging from the caregiver's use of past-tense phrasing, I believe these initial entries were made in Scott's book in the evening instead of the beginning of the day (note: Sarah, Beth, and Erica are Scott's sisters):

#### Scott's Day on Thursday, June 24



*My name is Scott. On this day I will go to the airport. Sarah, Beth, and Erica will go, too. Mom and Dad will get on a plane to go to Germany. Sarah, Beth, and Erica will say "Good-bye!" to Mom and Dad. I will say, "Good-bye," too.*

*After we visit the airport, Sarah, Beth, and Erica will stay with Mr. and Mrs. Walker and Parker and Ellie.*

*We will eat and sleep on this day. We may also do other things. We may go to Sarah's game - played outside with bikes, watched Dennis the Menace, and went to bed downstairs.*

*My Mom and Dad are in the airplane on this day. They are going to sing for the people in Germany.*

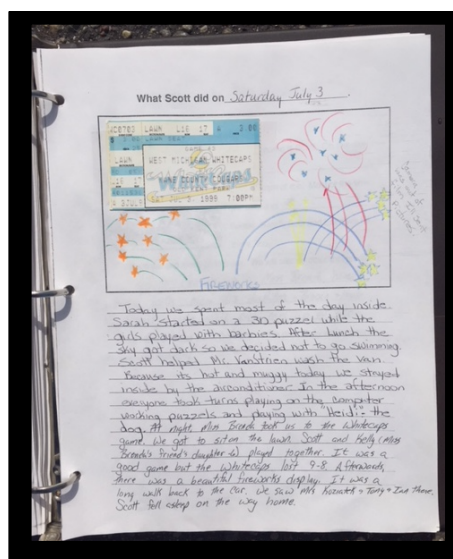
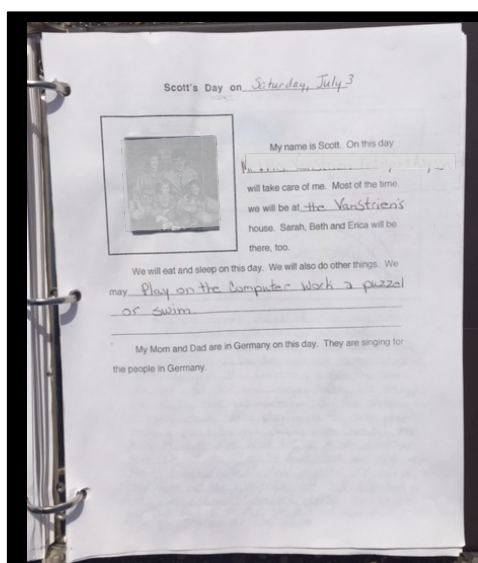
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Today, in line with the Social Stories 10.2 Criteria, I'd revise the text about saying 'good-bye' to place events in correct sequence (Mom and Dad say 'good-byes' *before* getting on the plane) and reduce pressure on Scott during what may be a stressful time: *After a time for good-bye, Mom and Dad will leave to get on the plane.*

The closing day includes a description of going to the airport to meet Scott's parents. While the opening and closing Story pages include mention of the departure and arrival of Scott's parents respectively, they are very similar in sequence, format, and content to all of the other pages in Scott's Story.

### Interior Pages of Scott's Story

Two pages are used for each day of Scott's Story. The first identifies the day and date, caregivers for the day and activities, with a statement that Scott's parents are in Germany. Early in the day, the page is reviewed with Scott. In the evening, details of the day are recorded with text and illustration on a separate piece of paper.



The text on the interior pages is almost identical to those that open and close the Story (minus any reference to the airport). In fact, it's so close, please pardon the repetition. First page:

### Scott's Day on Saturday, July 3

*My name is Scott. On this day Mr. and Mrs. Lyndstrom, Katie, and Alison will take care of me.*

*Most of the time we will be at the Lyndstrom's house. Sarah, Beth, and Erica will be there, too.*



*We will eat and sleep on this day. We will also do other things.*

*We may play on the computer, work a puzzle, or swim with an adult.*

*My mom and dad are in Germany on this day. They are singing for the people in Germany.*

The second page for each day is titled with the day and date, with space to draw or paste tickets or photos, and plenty of room to write about the events of the day.

When Scott's parents returned, he had a visual journal to share with them what he did while they were away.

### Final Thoughts

A parent's decision to travel without the children is one that involves consideration of many personal factors. I would never assume that I have much to offer in making that decision, especially from a distance. What I can say, is that in 1999 I wrote a Social Story to allow two parents to tour with their church choir through Germany. His parents and caregivers were thrilled with its success. I think the real achievement was Scott's, who confidently sailed through the week. His parents reported that he was proud of being on his own, competent outside of their supervision.

My warmest congratulations once again to DaytonMom as she decides with her husband, Josh, whether a trip to Hawaii with close friends is just around the corner. I wish them the very best.

## Appendix A: The Social Story 10.2 Definition and Criteria

### Social Story Definition

*A Social Story accurately describes a context, skill, achievement, or concept according to 10 defining criteria. These criteria guide Story research, development, and implementation to ensure an overall patient and supportive quality, and a format, 'voice', content, and learning experience that is descriptive, meaningful, respectful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Story audience (a child, adolescent, or adult).*

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### Criterion 1: The Social Story Goal

*Authors follow a defined process to share accurate information using a content, format, and voice that is descriptive, meaningful, and physically, socially, and emotionally safe for the Audience.*

### Criterion 2: Two-Step Discovery

*Keeping the Goal in mind, authors gather relevant information to 1) improve their understanding of the Audience in relation to a situation, skill, or concept and/or 2) identify the specific topic(s) and the most critical information (focus) of each Story. At least 50% of all Social Stories applaud achievements.*

### Criterion 3: Three-Parts & a Title

*A Social Story/Article has a title and introduction that clearly identifies the topic, a body that adds detail, and a conclusion that reinforces and summarizes the information.*

### Criterion 4: Four-mat Makes it Mine!

*The Social Story™ format is tailored to the individual abilities, attention span, learning style and - whenever possible – talents and/or interests of its Audience.*

### Criterion 5: Five Factors Define Voice & Vocabulary

*A Social Story has a patient and supportive “voice” and vocabulary that is defined by five factors:*

- 1) Exclusive use of first- and/or third-person perspective statements (no second person statements);*
- 2) Past, present, or future tense;*
- 3) Positive and patient tone;*
- 4) Literally accurate; and*
- 5) Accurate meaning.*

### Criterion 6: Six Questions Guide Story Development

*A Social Story™ answers relevant ‘wh’ questions that describe context, including place (WHERE), time-related information (WHEN), relevant people (WHO), important cues (WHAT), basic activities, behaviors, or statements (HOW), and the reasons or rationale behind them (WHY).*

### Criterion 7: Seven is About Sentences

*A Social Story is comprised of Descriptive Sentences and may also have one or more Coaching Sentence (s). Sentences adhere to all applicable 10.2 criteria.*



- *Descriptive Sentences* accurately describe relevant aspects of context, including external and/or internal factors while adhering to all applicable Social Story Criteria. They are free of assumption or bias, judgment, devaluation, or unidentified opinion
- *Coaching Sentences* gently guide behavior via descriptions of effective Team or Audience responses, or structured Audience Self-Coaching, adhering to all other applicable Social Story Criteria.

#### #8 A Gr-eight! Formula

*The Social Story™ Formula ensures that every Social Story describes more than directs.*

$$\frac{\text{Total \# of Descriptive Sentences}}{\text{Total \# of Coaching Sentences}} \geq 2$$

*\*If there are no (0) Sentences that Coach, use 1 in the denominator.*

#### Criterion 9: Nine to Refine

*A story draft is always reviewed and revised if necessary to ensure that it meets all defining Social Story criteria.*

#### Criterion 10: Ten Guides to Editing and Implementation

*The Ten Guides to Implementation ensure that the philosophy and Criteria that guide Story/Article development are consistent with how it is introduced and reviewed with the Audience. They are:*

- 1) *Plan for Comprehension*
- 2) *Plan Story Support*
- 3) *Plan Story Review*
- 4) *Plan a Positive Introduction*
- 5) *Monitor*
- 6) *Organize the Stories*
- 7) *Mix & Match to Build Concepts*
- 8) *Story Re-runs and Sequels to Tie Past, Present, and Future*
- 9) *Recycle Instruction into Applause*
- 10) *Stay Current on Social Story Research and Updates*

