Is the story in your hand a Social Story™?
Ask Team Social Stories.

It's NOT a Social Story if…
A preliminary screening instrument

It's Not a Social Story if… is designed for any parent, caregiver, or professional who works on behalf of children, adolescents, or adults. It is a 26-question *initial* screening instrument that identifies stories that *do not* meet the current Social Story definition and 10.4 Criteria. Just one 'no' response in the first section (questions 1-16) or one 'yes' response in the second (questions 17-26), and a story is not a Social Story. While this instrument may convince you to discard a story, it may also be helpful in reviewing a story draft to identify problems and make improvements.

Important Note: This document cannot screen for all of the required Social Story Criteria. For this reason, it is feasible to have all 'yes' responses in the first section, and all 'no' responses in the second section, and still have a story that is not a Social Story. Similarly, this instrument cannot definitively tell you if a story *is* a Social Story. More detailed information would be required to make that determination.

Directions: Select a story for screening. Answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions. To clarify some terminology: The 'Audience' is the person (of any age) who reads the Story. You will notice a number in parentheses following each item, like this: (3). This is the number of the related Social Story Criterion or Criteria.

A 'no' response to any question 1-16, it is not a Social Story.

_____ 1. Were the parents/caregivers contacted and consulted as part of gathering information for the story, and prior to its introduction to the Audience? (1, 2)

_____ 2. Was information gathered from a variety of sources to determine if a Social Story is indicated or if an alternate solution provides a better course of action? Examples of information sources include but are not limited to observations, consults with team members, reports, photos, videos, online resources, arranging an experience, and if possible, consultation with the Audience. (1, 2)

_____ 3, At least 50% of all Stories praise the Audience for achievements, talents, kind gestures, participation in helpful activities, etc. You have a story for a specific Audience. Do 50% or more of the stories for this Audience systematically meet this requirement? (1, 7)

For item 4, answer only one, either 4a or 4b, according to the story topic.

____ 4a. If this is a story that shares information about a challenging situation, skill, or concept, was consideration given to the perception/vantage point of the Audience, in an effort to identify information that the Audience may be missing or misunderstanding, or interpreting differently than others? (1, 2, 5)

____ 4b. If this is a story that praises the Audience, was consideration given to the Audience perception/perspective/interpretation to add affirming detail that the Audience may have missed? As an example, if the story is about losing a baseball game, does the Audience understand that everyone is so proud because the Audience played fair, and handled the 6-5 score with genuine sportsmanship? (1, 2, 4, 5, 7)

____ 5. Did the author consider all relevant 'wh' questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how) and use them as guides to the Story content? (1, 6)

____ 6. Social Stories have a solid story construction. Does this story have an introduction that presents the topic, a body that adds detail, and a conclusion? In other words, do you see three well-constructed paragraphs? Note: A paragraph may be one sentence long. (1, 3)

____ 7. Does the story have a title that represents the story content well? (1, 3)

____ 8. Is the story within the attention span of the Audience? (1, 4)

____ 9. Is the story within the comprehension ability of the Audience? (1, 4)

____ 10. Was consideration given to incorporate Audience talent(s) or interest(s) into the story, and if determined to be beneficial, was it done? (1, 4, 5)

____ 11. Was consideration given to including story elements to support generalization across settings and time? (1, 4)

____ 12. Was consideration given to tying related past, present, and future information into the story? (This supports concept formation and generalization) (1, 5)

____ 13. Is the story likely to be meaningful for the Audience? (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

____ 14. Does the story have a patient, reassuring, and respectful tone throughout? (1, 5)

____ 15. Will the review of the story be tailored to the abilities of the Audience? (1, 4, 10)

____ 16. Will the story consistently be reviewed in a comfortable and positive context, and never as a consequence for misbehavior? (1, 10)

The screening instrument continues on the following page.

A 'yes' response to any question 17-26, it is not a Social Story.

_____ 17. Is there anything in the story text, illustration, or plan for implementation that in any way, from both the Author and Audience perspective, may threaten the social, emotional, or physical safety of the Audience? (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10)

_____ 18. Does this story contain (or imply) any biased, unreliable or inaccurate information, or anything that is unwise, poor judgment, unsound, a faulty decision / course of action, or bad idea? (1, 2, 5)

_____ 19. Are there any second-person statements? Examples: *You may like going out to recess* (playtime) or *You've nothing to worry about.* (1, 5)

_____ 20. Are there any personalized descriptions of a negative Audience response or behavior, written in either the first- or third-person voice? Examples: *Jaime* (our Audience) *hit Christopher yesterday,* or *I often miss the directions to assignments,* or *I'd have more friends if I'd just stop pointing out their flaws.* (1, 5)

_____ 21. Is there anything about the text or illustration that may insult or diminish the self-esteem of the Audience, either via direct statement or illustration? (4, 5, 8)

_____ 22. Does the story contain any judgmental vocabulary or overall tone? Examples of forbidden Social Story vocabulary (there are more): should, shouldn't, must, mustn't, ought, ought to, bad, naughty, inappropriate, etc.) (1, 5)

_____ 23. Is the story accurate from the perspective of its Audience? Literal accuracy is required in a Social Story unless the Author is sure that the Audience will readily understand an implied meaning, metaphor, or analogy in the story. (1, 2, 5)

_____ 24. Is there any vocabulary that could cause Audience anxiety where another word might be used in its place? (1, 5)

_____ 25. Is the Story intended to replace supervision? Example: A story about crossing a street safely. Social Stories never replace supervision. (1, 2, 6)

_____ 26. Is the Story Rating greater than or equal to 4? If you are familiar with the Social Story Formula, and the importance of the number in the quotient (referred to as the Story Rating in the current Social Stories 10.4 Criteria), use the formula to determine your Story Rating. If the number is less than 4, or if there is more than one Sentence that Coaches the Audience, it is not a Social Story.