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Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

FIVE TIPS TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL RELATEDNESS

Michelle Garcia Winner

12/15/2015

We hope you are in the midst of enjoying the wonder and love shared during the holiday season. We thank you being part of our community!

Fundamentally, Social Thinking is all about teaching or offering frameworks and strategies to help people learn to be actively involved members of any community they wish to join. Most of our newsletters are focused along these lines.

Yet, this holiday message is taking us in a different direction. Rather than focus on what we can teach our students to be more actively engaged during the holiday season, we're looking at what you can do to help someone who is not appearing to be showing interest in relating to others. After all, isn't part of the holiday season all about participating in a community that exudes a sense of caring and compassion?

Many of my clients are adults, some live alone – **all** are lonelier than they prefer. All wish to be more successful in whatever situation they have to socially navigate. I try to consider life from their point of view, and what *I* can do to help. It's not always our job to "teach" –some of our time with our clients is about emotional engagement, relaxing together and helping everyone be included. This requires us, the professional, parent, or friend, to think about how we're sharing space with people with social learning challenges, and re-thinking our own personal social assumptions we have that may make it difficult to engage with a person who is not naturally showing interest in us.

Yes, our clients or friends with social learning challenges may struggle to communicate with us, but we also make it harder for them to do so! Given our deeply rooted social presumptions, we likely interpret their behavior as not being interested in talking to us or we may feel insulted that they don't show interest in us! For this reason alone, we reject making an effort to include them in discussions because we think they simply want to be left alone. Or we perceive them as "too selfish" to care about anyone else's thoughts and ideas!

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FIVE TIPS CONTINUED....

I think our lack of social outreach has a lot to do with our own desire to communicate with people who keep us comfortable!

So I was thinking- what if I shared with you what I have learned from my clients that may widen your perspective about why a person who is standing near a group, but not entering the group, really does want to be included!

The following 5 tips encourage you to “put yourself in their shoes”... to go deeper in thinking about life from their viewpoint. Doing so may help you avoid making the wrong assumption at a holiday party, family dinner or community gathering (even a meeting at work) about folks who may be standing or seated near us but don’t seem to be actively relating to people around them. What may their anti-social behavior mean? It may very well mean that they actually are hoping you will go talk to them!

Tip 1: Avoid assuming people don’t want to talk to you or be included in a group!

Every one of my clients and friends with social learning challenges wants to be included, validated, and enjoyed by others.

Every one of my clients wants to make a good impression on others. This may be counter to how you are “reading them” in the moment, but it’s true. In my 30+ years of working with clients, not a single one has told me they like making bad impressions on people.

This means you need to assume positive versus negative social intention! If you know or suspect a person has a social learning difficulty, assume that person has a socially positive intention, rather than a socially negative intention.

If a person has made the (sometimes herculean) effort to be in the community or participate in a scheduled event such as an office party or a holiday event, they **do** want to communicate with you.

Avoid assuming that a person who is looking down or looking anywhere except at people, or is struggling to *keep his body in the group* is deliberately trying to avoid talking to people. It’s probably just not so.

Most of my clients struggle to initiate communication; that doesn’t mean they don’t want to communicate! Keep in mind what my friend Dr. Ross Greene says, “A person would if they could!”

Tip 2: Assume people are more interested in you than they can demonstrate.

It’s so easy to assume that when people are talking to you but not about you, that means they are not interested in you. When talking to folks who are not meeting your social needs, cut them some slack. Listen to what they have to say and then add your own thoughts about who you are and what you enjoy. Don’t wait for them to ask you – help them learn about you! Truly, they are interested in you – they simply didn’t get that intuitive social learning ability that you were likely born with and can call upon so effortlessly.

Continued on page 3.

FIVE TIPS CONTINUED....

Tip 3: Assume people who complain a lot about things going on around them are simply trying to maintain a connection with those who are near them.

Unfortunately, too many of my clients are actively rejected or ignored across the school or work day. They may share space with others and yet not a single person reaches out to communicate with them. Given these clients still have a desire to be acknowledged/validated by others, some of my clients unconsciously discover that if they complain about things or do unexpected negative behaviors, people are more likely to respond to them.

Unfortunately, we tend to respond more quickly to people when they use “unexpected” behavior rather than “expected behavior.” For example, consider the person who complains to you about how bad their day is going. Most of us feel compelled to show interest (empathize) with their negative experience. However, we are not nearly as likely to ask someone to tell us more about their day when they tell us it is “fine.” Our client’s complaints can lead to immediate short bursts of social engagement, which is reinforcing to them so they repeat that behavior. Yet our clients may not notice the pattern developing... that this type of ongoing engagement can wear out their listener who develops compassion fatigue! Bottom line, people who complain a lot may likely experience more people actively rejecting spending time with them. They then feel the rejection which leads them into more circles of complaints.

What can you do? Engage in the positive rather than the negative. Point out what you like about what they are doing, have done, what you remember about them, what they are interested in, etc. Use your best efforts to turn this cycle around by simply attending to someone who seems alone or lonely, before they seek attention through complaint.

Tip 4: Remember that a lot of our clients’ social challenges have to do with how we (you, me or us) interpret their behavior.

Since we all want people to be interested in each of us, we tend to reject people who don’t show us they like us or want to listen to what we have to say. We don’t really stop and think, “Hmm, do they know how to show me this?” Or, “Maybe I’m the one who’s being boring in this conversation?”

We can help a person with social learning challenges develop more pro-social communication skills by being willing to do some of this work ourselves! Let’s get over our own communicative hump by lowering our exceedingly high expectations for how we are to be treated and reach out to connect with a person who is being socially left behind.

During this or any upcoming holiday season be proactive in including a kid, teen, or adult who looks like they are not interested in you. Assume they are interested; start by talking to them about their interests, their ideas. Accept that they may not have the skill to turn the conversation around and show a lot of interest in you once you communicate with them. Let that be okay, and know they are enjoying your attention and in this way you are encouraging them to see that people do want to include them and help them feel good as well.



Continued on page 4.

FIVE TIPS CONTINUED....

Tip 5: Your attention is a compliment and perhaps a gift. Know that your outreach makes a difference in our clients' lives.

Think about it: the biggest compliment we give each other is our attention. This season give the gift of your attention to someone who struggles to give it to you. It's free and it's the kindest thing we do for each other.

Today, tomorrow, throughout the remaining days of this holiday season and throughout the next year, reach out to show you care for someone who by limitations in their neurology, struggles to show you the same. By doing something that for you may be simple, you are providing them with a gift that is person-to-person, shoulder-to-shoulder, and face-to-face: you're validating another's existence. It's priceless.

We hope you and yours have a wonderful holiday season with your friends and family, whether it's this month, during the Chinese New Year, or at some other time...

May we all find peace on earth and goodwill toward mankind.

Michelle

<https://www.socialthinking.com/Articles/>



VIDEO MODELING

What is Video Modeling?

Video Modeling is a visual teaching method that occurs by watching a video of someone modeling a targeted behavior or skill and then imitating the behavior/skill watched. To users, Video Modeling is a simple and effective teaching tool that motivates children to learn through a fun and enticing visual medium.

HOW IS VIDEO MODELING USED?

- The student watches the model demonstrate the skill/skills.
- After watching the video, the student begins to imitate skills from the video. Skills performed can be either new skills learned or changes to existing behaviors.

The student then begins to generalize or utilize that skill in his or her normal environment. This usually requires intervention and practice in the environment.

WHY IS VIDEO MODELING SO EFFECTIVE?

Video modeling has been proven to be a highly effective means of teaching all children, especially children with autism. Children learn through play and **children WANT to play**. Albert Bandura developed the social learning theory that recognized that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. This is known as observational learning or modeling. In his famous Bobo doll experiment, Bandura demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. He identified models of learning through observation, including a symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, television programs, or online media.

WHY USE VIDEO MODELING?

- Insufficient social skills instruction for children is provided in schools. *Ease of use.
- Fun and engaging videos promote a child's desire to interact with the video.
- Children learn in a naturalistic environment.

For more information go to: <http://www.watchmelearn.com/video-modeling/what-is-video-modeling>

HOLIDAY TIPS

The holiday season is a joyful time of the year, but it also can be stressful for kids with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Preparing and planning early for the holidays can help you relieve some of the holiday stress. Members of the Autism Parent Advisory Board at [Children's Hospital Los Angeles, a member of the Autism Speaks Autism Treatment Network](#), partnered with Kathryn Smith, RN, DrPH, nurse care manager in the Boone Fetter Clinic to provide tips every parent and caregiver can use during the holiday season. Creating a visual story (a series of pictures or drawings) before each holiday can help your child prepare for the day's activities. Here are some ideas to help you and your child enjoy the holidays this year and every year.

BEFORE A HOLIDAY EVENT

- Practice sitting at the table with the plates, lighting and music before the holiday gathering.
- Draw pictures about the holiday to help your child prepare for the events.
- Eat holiday foods in advance to determine what your child does or does not like. Help them become more comfortable with the food selection.
- Reflect on your holiday traditions and your child's sensory and behavioral profile and how your child will interact with these traditions.
- Prepare for the family environment. Will you be at grandma's house? Another family member? Consider preparing an area for your child to play, or a space for your child to decompress if they become overwhelmed by the sensory stimulation. Encourage other children or adults to join your child.
- Prepare an activity for your child, if you know they have an aversion to a holiday tradition, like watching football on Thanksgiving Day. Your child may not like loud noises, so take your child outside to play or have the children play games in another room.
- Talk to your occupational therapist for recommendations on how to prepare your child to handle the noise of the holiday season.
- Take your child to a small holiday-themed store so they can look at lights prior to setting up a Christmas tree. Here are some things to think about:
 - Are they attracted to the lights?
 - Do they have an aversion to the lights? If so, do not use lights and add ribbons, paper chains and other festive touches.
 - What is an alternative to having lights on your tree if your child has an aversion?
 - Is your child allergic to pine?
 - If your child likes to pull pine needles off the tree and eat them, consider an alternative, like an artificial Christmas tree or place a small real one on a high table, out of reach.
 - Do you have glass ornaments and is your child safe with these? If not, consider only plastic ornaments.
 - If your child doesn't have fine motor skills, practice opening gifts. For example, have your child wrap little fun objects and open them.
 - Put pictures on the gifts instead of names because your child might not recognize everyone's names.
 - Make a calendar so your child knows when the tree is coming and going to the recycle bin or getting discarded.
 - Count down when the gifts will be opened, "Ten days until we open gifts!"
 - Consider hiding gifts until it's time to open.

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HOLIDAY TIPS CONTINUED....

- Practice any expected behaviors in advance, like shaking hands with a guest, placing a napkin in a lap, etc.



DAY-OF HOLIDAY EVENTS

- Prepare your child's favorite foods and snacks in case the child doesn't like the holiday meal. If you are going to another home, take your child's favorite foods, music and snacks with you.
- Schedule an early dinner or eat in advance to a family get-together.
- Reward your child throughout the event and reinforce positive behaviors.
- Use ABA/floor time techniques: "First, we will do this," "Second, we will do this," etc.
- Assign tasks that you feel your child can manage, so they can participate on some level.
- Keep your eye on your child for signs of anxiety or distress. If your child is very active take them to the park or a place where they can freely move to help them calm down.
- Take great care to be sensitive to your children's sensory issues.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2013/11/19/holiday-tips-kids-autism-spectrum-disorders>

RIDING CENTERS

Bright Horizons has services available for all children and adults. Potential participants are assessed and placed in the appropriate program based on their needs and life goals. Forming a partnership with a thousand-pound animal can offer a tremendous sense of freedom and independence to individuals and can promote feelings of trust and self-confidence. All participants receive services from Certified PATH, Intl. Professionals.

Therapeutic riding:

Therapeutic riding is an equine-assisted activity for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social wellbeing of individuals with special needs. Because horseback riding rhythmically moves the rider's body in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance and muscle strength. Instructors and volunteers work closely with riders to ensure safe riding sessions and are assessed to determine how much and what type of volunteer assistance is needed. Instructors base the learned riding skills on the rider's life goals. Some of the most common special needs served in therapeutic riding: Autism Spectrum, Cerebral Palsy, Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Developmental Delay, Spina Bifida, Downs Syndrome, ADD/ADHD, Visual/Hearing Impairment and Multiple Sclerosis.

1925 E. Logsdon Road Siletz, Oregon 97380 www.brighthorizons.org



Hand in Hand Farm We strive to help whomever needs us. This is sometimes incarcerated youth, elders in long-term care, children or adults with physical or mental disabilities. Many times, a troubled family needs a little help getting back on track, especially those with children with challenging behaviors or disabilities. Often the best way to get through to troubled individuals is through a horse. Many of our participants are also "normal" or high-achieving youth that want to learn our discipline of horsemanship, develop their leadership potential, or hone soft and hard skills to prepare themselves for the workforce and ministry. Participants and/or their parents donate time, materials, and money as they are able to, and we help to find sponsors for participants. We understand that often the people who need us the most have the least to give at the moment, and we strive to remove all barriers for them.

35105 Ede Road, Lebanon, Oregon 97355

www.handinhand.org

(not endorsed by LBLESDD)

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS WITH A CHILD WITH AUTISM

While the holidays are regarded with anticipation and joy for most families, families with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have mixed feelings. It is always best to plan for what you can anticipate and expect the unexpected. The holidays are a time when your child, who thrives on routines and sameness, is out of his or her comfort zone. He or she will be asked to visit unfamiliar places, try new things, be in the company of many people (some of whom are strangers), eat different foods, and... enjoy the sights and smells of the season!

Who are we kidding!!!!!!!

The following are a few ideas to consider:

- There are so many Holiday celebrations! Consider whether to attend all, none, or perhaps arrive for the last part of the holiday party.
- Consider attending the less popular church service, where there will be fewer in attendance.
- Think of ways to incorporate special events around the regular routine.
- Plan for the days ahead and begin to talk about it. Perhaps note on a calendar what you will do, who will be there, what it will be like for each day you have something special planned.
- Dress in comfortable clothes, and bring a change – the excitement can bring on any type of accident.
- Pack a “safety net bag” with your child’s favorite calming toys. These may be stress balls, video games (fully charged), and headphones to muffle sound as well as to listen to favorite music.
- Bring food that you know your child will enjoy. While the holiday treats are favorites for many of us, not all children with ASD enjoy different tastes, textures, and smells. If chicken nuggets are what your child enjoys most, and they are not on the menu, bring some along. This will be one less complication to deal with.
- Is there a quiet place your child can go to regroup and settle down if he or she becomes over stimulated or over excited? Consider having this discussion with your host or hostess before the event so they can make a room or area of their home quiet, safe, and comfortable for your child.
- Plan an exit strategy with your partner. You know your child, and you know how long he or she will last. Try to leave before the meltdown begins!
- Consider taking two cars to every event you attend as a family. This way one parent can leave early with the child who has had enough, while the other stays through dessert and beyond.
- Gifts – less is more. It is much better to give one gift at a time, so not to be overwhelmed with the presents, the packages, a multitude of new toys. If the gift is something your child might not appreciate, such as new clothing, consider not having your child open it. Just have the new clothes available, or present these at another time, perhaps at home.
- Certainly every family has special traditions and expectations. ASD may be a challenge to all of them!

Additionally, writing a Social Story™ — or several Social Stories™ — may be helpful. Below are some ideas to include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Getting dressed in holiday clothes (or not) | 2. Getting in the car |
| 3. Things to do on the way | 4. Picture of the location (outside) of an event |
| 5. Picture of the inside of the place you will be and/or how it will be decorated for the holidays | |
| 6. Pictures of who will be there | 7. Pictures of activities you will do there |
| 8. Pictures of the quiet space to go if feeling overwhelmed | 9. Gifts – open your present and say “thank you!” |
| 10. Saying “goodbye, thank you again,” and getting back into the car for the ride home | |
| 11. Things to do on the long car ride home | 12. Home |

Keeping a notated calendar is also helpful for many children. Make a large copy of the calendar with space for all the events you will participate in during the holiday break from school or services.

1. Note the last day of school
2. Going to holiday services
3. Visiting Grandma for a holiday treat
4. Attending a religious service
5. Shopping at the tie store for a gift for Dad.
6. Inviting a friend to decorate cookies for a special play date.
7. Watching holiday movies

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/celebrating-christmas-with-your-child-with-asd/>

Tips to Help Your Family Enjoy the Holiday Season

From last-minute shopping trips to holiday parties and family gatherings, the holiday season is often a stressful time for parents. But for children with autism spectrum disorder who rely on structure and routine, the hustle and bustle of the holidays can be extremely unsettling. This distress can often impact the entire family. Most of us dream of the last day of break before a holiday. We get to take part in all sorts of fantastic things during the break, like sleeping in, visiting family, playing games, going on getaways and stalking our friends on Facebook at 2 A.M. However, if you are like my family and have a child with autism, it can be a lot different.

My son Andrew is 15 years old and it has taken many years for him to become familiar with Christmas, the celebration of it all, the decorations and the 35 + people who will pass through my house during the two holidays. You see for the past 12 years I have had every holiday at my home for Andrew. Andrew was so much better being in his own home, on his own computer, getting away from our loud families that come and sometimes don't understand how it affects him. It is easier to have the holidays in my home so Andrew can be himself, relax and go to his room when he needed quiet time. Although I would love to be invited over someone's house and not do all the shopping, cooking and cleaning, it gives me a sense of calmness knowing Andrew will be happy.

We often put pressure on ourselves to make the holidays perfect, which is unrealistic. In the end, the most important thing to remember is that the holidays are a time to cherish one another and the joy of being together.

What I try my best to do with Andrew is to:

Do Your Best to Maintain the Current Structure and Routine

Maintaining the current structure and routine for your child may not always be possible during the holidays, but there are ways to help reduce your child's anxiety while increasing your family's enjoyment of the holiday season. As we know, a person with autism thrives on being in a familiar environment with routine and structure. So while children with autism like Andrew may not enjoy every minute of the school day, they take comfort in the structure. He feels safe when he knows what to expect and when and what is going to happen. When you take away that environment and predictability, he feels lost. The seemingly silly tantrums children with autism often throw are often actually their struggle to cope with the changes they see as unsafe. This begs the question, "How do we help our children with ASDs not only to make the transition, but enjoy the holiday break?" While the concept might seem hard, it can be done.

We try our best to do some of the daily routines he does at school like calendar group, weather of the day and some reading. I am amazed how much he has learned over the past few months – lots of geography, learning to sort papers and some daily living skills.

Keep Some Schedules as Consistent as Possible.

Schedules change quite drastically during the holidays, if it's possible to keep some routines consistent. While we try to sleep a little later, we are not rushing out the door. We still keep the same breakfast that he likes, we get dressed for the day and we try to stick to our behavior plan that was developed in school. I use a point board for him to earn points so he can get a reinforcer he wants. This keeps him accountable for his behaviors even though we are not at school. Continue to use behavioral support strategies to help your child during the holidays. Consistency of implementation will help you and your child remain engaged each day.

While you may never be able to duplicate the structure school provides, it helps to maintain the school year's daily schedule, right down to meal times and bedtime, as much as possible. It can be very tempting to let your kids stay up late and sleep in—especially on weekends, when you want to do the same—but in the long run, sticking to the same schedule pays off by keeping your child more comfortable, and hence more cooperative.

Even with the best-laid plans, you may see some regression and worsening behavior over vacation. Give yourself a break for not being able to magically avoid it. And be ready to hold your ground in as calm, firm and consistent a manner as possible.

HOLIDAY CONTINUED....

Listen to Your Child

We like to visit family – even though we don't stay too long, he sometimes enjoys visiting. He likes to walk around someone's house and see what they have! However, listen to your child. If they are not comfortable with a certain holiday activity or begin to show challenging behaviors, decide if it is necessary for them to join in. While you want them to participate in all the joys of the holiday season, decide if it is likely to lead to a meltdown and increased stress for everyone.

Get a Break!

My husband and I plan for a much needed break by getting a sitter going out to eat, going out with friends, a night away and catching up on just us! After all the holidays can be so stressful!

So often, we get caught up in the trappings of the holidays – the tree, the presents, the outings that have to go exactly as planned. It's okay to arrange fun things, but remember that these are only trimmings. They aren't the gift, they're just the wrapping. The gift is your special child. The gift is sharing hope and sweetness with the people you love. Use it to celebrate what your child can do, and use it to feel and encourage compassion for your child's very different way of experiencing the world.

It's the most wonderful time of the year!!

In this post, Autism Speaks staff member and autism mom Denise Bianchi provides tips to help you and your family enjoy the holiday season and make it as fun and as stress-free as possible! Denise is a member of the Autism Speaks Autism Response Team, a team of employees specially trained to connect people with autism, their families and caregivers to information, tools, and resources. Call the Autism Response Team at 888-288-4762 (en Espanol at 888-772-9050) or email them at familyservices@autismspeaks.org!



STORYMOVIES

Introducing Video Social Stories: StoryMovies, Vol. 1

Imagine combining Carol Gray's social stories with the power of video for our visual learners. That is what has happened with the collaboration between Carol Gray, Mark Shelley, and the Special Minds Foundation. This is the first Volume in the planned series, and covers basic social concepts & skills at school. Future volumes will address a broad range of topics and target young children to adults. The foundation has raised donations to help produce these materials so that the cost to the user can be much lower than otherwise possible for the product.

The Social Concepts & Skills volume will not only be valuable for teachers, but also for parents helping prepare their children for school situations. Additionally, some of the situations are issues for both home and school. The product was designed for children with Aspergers and others on the autism spectrum; however it will also benefit any child with limited social skills.

StoryMovies, Volume 1, targets students developmentally 8-12 years old and includes 25 stories based on 9 movies. There are 2 versions: Standard Edition & Professional Edition. Both versions include the main color version DVD of the 25 stories and a user's guide. The Professional version includes a black & white DVD version that is used for children distracted by color; a raw footage DVD that is useful for additional teaching and testing purposes; and a CD with printable pictures and related activities for generalization, practice, & review.

<http://www.dttrainer.com/files/storymovies-handout.pdf>

(This product is not endorsed by LBL-ESD)

“People Files” and Gift-Giving: Help Your Child Think About Others

People files (also known as social files or friend files) are a concrete way for students with autism to 1) understand that others have interests, likes and experiences different from themselves and 2) conceptualize how to remember and use this important information about others to foster relationships. The concept is pretty basic: each of us stores information about family, friends and acquaintances in our minds, in a sort of file. Thinking about it as a file in a file cabinet (or on a computer) gives kids a very simple image to remember and refer back to. In the file, we store information about someone’s Family/friends, Interests, Likes and Education and past experiences. When we see someone, we bring up our people file on that person to help us generate topics of conversation or choose activities that the person would like – a crucial skill for building friendships. For kids who have difficulty remembering the information or understanding the concept at first, a physical file of details about friends can be made and kept in a safe place.

Gift-giving during the holidays is an excellent time to practice creating and using people files. Many children, not just ones with autism, become preoccupied with receiving their own gifts and do not take part in choosing or purchasing presents for others (other than perhaps signing their name on a present someone else bought for them to give). Because people with autism have difficulties taking the perspective of others, you will likely need to guide your child using the following process:

1. Choose a person to give a present to. It is recommended to start with an immediate family member or someone you know well, so you can best support the child’s planning.
2. Make a list of the person’s interests and things they like to do. If your child says, “I don’t know,” don’t immediately give them answers. Prompt their thinking by:
 - Asking leading questions such as, “Dad spends a lot of time in the garage. What does he do in there?” or “What does your brother always do after he finishes his homework?”
 - Investigate family member’s bedroom or other spaces they spend time in to find clues about what they like. Guide your child to look at relevant items (for example, poster of a music group on sister’s wall, sports team logo on father’s shirt, Lego bin in brother’s room).
 - You can also coach your child to ask the person what they like, but do some of the previously-described “detective work” first, to really get them thinking about that person.
3. From the list of interests and likes, generate some possible gifts. Brainstorm whatever ideas come to your minds, but only write down the ones that are actually feasible. Consider presents the child can make (by themselves or with assistance). Warn the child that some ideas may not be possible due to time or expense, but still praise them for thinking of such a thoughtful gift.
4. Have child choose a present to give from the list. For some kids, this much thoughtful planning is enough, and you can buy the present (though have them be involved in wrapping it somehow, or at the very least, let them see it before it is wrapped). Other kids may be able to handle going to the store to help pick it out, or if possible, create a hand-made gift.

If the family member or friend has a wish list, still go through steps 2 and 3. Then look at the wish list and make a choice. Notice if any of your ideas for presents are on the person’s list. If so, give praise for making a good guess about what they want. You may also decide to surprise them by getting something not on their list.

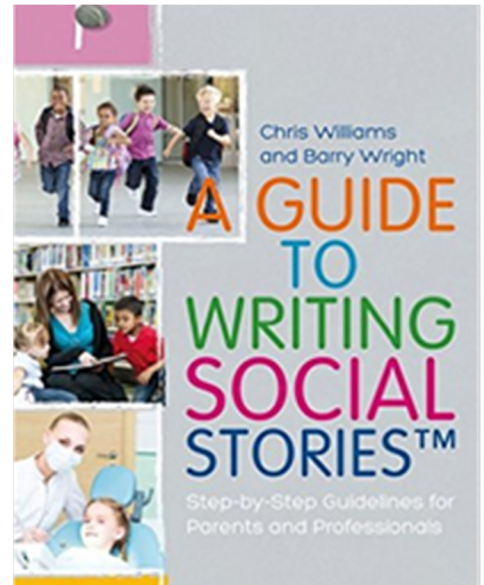
After you choose and purchase the present, encourage further perspective-taking by asking, “How do you think she will feel when she opens it?” or “How do you know he will like it?” Anything you can do to encourage your child to think about the thoughts and feelings of others, and to help them understand that they can make others feel good, will be instrumental in developing their ability to have reciprocal relationships.



A Guide to Writing Social Stories™: Step-by-Step Guidelines for Parents and Professionals

by Chris Williams and Barry Wright

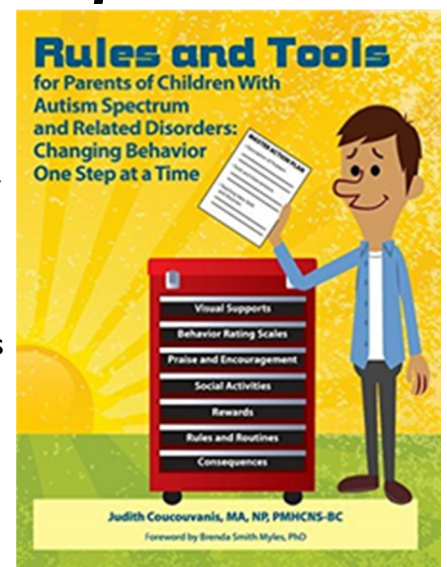
Social Stories™ are a widely used and highly effective intervention for supporting children on the autism spectrum. Social Stories provide clear explanations for social conventions in a rule-based way, thereby 'systemizing' the social world, to render it less confusing. This user-friendly book was developed with the input of parents and professionals, and informed by new Social Stories research. It combines a practical step-by-step guide on creating and using Social Stories™ with real-life examples and a collection of sample Stories.



Rules and Tools for Parents of Children With Autism Spectrum and Related Disorders: Changing Behavior One Step at a Time

by Judith Coucouvanis

Rules and Tools helps parents develop behavior intervention plans for their children on the autism spectrum. Through a simple and structured approach to behavior planning, this book guides parents to understand why behaviors occur, to identify patterns of behaviors, and to use appropriate, evidence-based strategies. In an easy-to-use format, it presents 119 rules and tools regarding visual supports, behavior rating scales, reinforcement, social activities, routines, and consequences. Understanding that social skills deficits are the underlying cause of many challenging behaviors, **Rules and Tools** devotes three chapters to social skills and flexibility, providing skills to address and strategies to teach and practice them. This book is not simply a collection of rules and tools, but a comprehensive and systematic way to effectively and lovingly parent a child with autism.





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VISUALS

<p>ornament</p>	<p>decorate</p>	<p>lights</p>	<p>Christmas tree</p>
<p>nativity</p>	<p>manger</p>	<p>Virgin Mary</p>	<p>We Three Kings</p>
<p>present</p>	<p>give</p>	<p>wreath</p>	<p>Christmas card</p>
<p>Santa Claus</p>	<p>Santa's bag</p>	<p>winter</p>	<p>stocking</p>