SOCIAL STORIES

What is it?
- A short simple, usually personalized, story that acknowledges positive behaviors and skills and explains situations that are difficult for the student
- Social stories are not and should not become scripts detailing expected behaviors

For whom is it appropriate?
- Kindergarten and up
- Students who need to learn socially appropriate behavior
- Students who have difficulty expressing feelings and/or understanding how their actions affect feelings and actions of others

Why should I use it?
- Provides concrete, easy-to-understand information about social situations
- Increases independence

Creating a Social Story:
For problem situations:
1. Think and talk to others about when, where, and why the child is having difficulty.

2. Write a short story from the child's perspective ("I") using kid-friendly talk. Older, more advanced children may be asked to help write their own stories. If available, use pictures to accompany the words or draw simple stick-pictures (ex: 1 page with a picture and 2-3 sentences) for younger or non-reading children.

3. Include the following:
   - Describe the situation-Where it happens; Who is involved; What the child and others are doing; Events and reactions to expect
   - Perspectives-Why others are acting as they do; Emotions and thoughts of others; Why child may be acting inappropriately; Emotions and thoughts of the child.
   - Directives-Actions and reactions that are expected of the child and why (positive effects on and feelings of self and others).

For celebrations of positive behavior:
Use the elements listed above to also write stories celebrating a child's successes in social situations.

Using a Social Story:
To be effective, a social story can not simply be written, read once, and put away!

1. Help the child to give the social story to other adults who can encourage use of skills.
2. Read the story prior to a difficult situation. If time is short or emotions are high just prior to the situation, read the story early in the child's day and review the high points just prior to the situation.
3. Parents may be asked to read the story at bedtime.
4. Stories may be taped for child to listen to.
5. Fade the use of the story to every other day, once a week, etc. as needed.
6. Keep stories in a folder where the child and adults can easily find them.