

## Settling back into school: using social scripts video transcript

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[Katrina] Hello, I'm Katrina Brooks. I'm an educational psychologist and part of the family learning and support hub, which is part of the Bristol Autism Team.

[Josie] And I am Josie Ball. I'm also part of the family hub and I'm an experienced mummy of two children with autism and a lot of autism in the family. So, we're hoping we can help.

[Katrina] We've been talking to quite a few parents in the last few weeks, who've said that their children are having trouble settling back into school after some quite long times at home. It's totally understandable isn't it, because they've been very used to being at home and being with people that know them really really well. So, it can be quite difficult for them getting back into the swing of things at school. So, we wanted to put together a few short videos that just give some ideas that parents have found helpful that can help their children settle back in.

And this video is going to be focusing on using social scripts to help support our children.

So, the idea of a social script is to think about explaining those kinds of unspoken rules of the things that are going on throughout the day that they might not quite understand, or they might not be totally sure of what they're supposed to do in a certain situation. They might have different feelings and they're not really sure what to do with those different feelings. And so, some parents find that putting it all down in black and white in a script can be really helpful for them. We're going to show you a few examples of different social scripts so that you can have a look and see whether you think it might help.

It's helpful to personalise it to kind of make it feel like it's relevant to your children so there's lots of examples online of different social scripts that might help. You can get some ideas from that and then make it personal to your child.

See if you can work out which bit of the day is particularly tricky for your child. Is it

the separating in the morning? Is it the worry about what to do at lunchtime now? Is it when they have to go and wash their hands in certain slots of the day? Can you get to the bottom of which bit it is? So that you know which bit you want to support with a bit of the script. So, if you can talk to school to get a bit of a joint understanding about what's going on, a bit of a joint plan, then that might be really helpful.

This is just a few ideas just to get you started. There's lots more ideas on the link here which is on the Bristol Local Offer. If you just type in "coronavirus support and autism" on the Bristol Local Offer, then lots of

ideas will come up that Tanya Rawlinson put together after the first lockdown.

So, we'll talk through some examples. Everybody is in different places at the moment. I think parents have got very different energy levels; I think lockdown has taken its toll on everybody so please don't feel like you should be doing all of these things. There's just a few ideas, that if some of them you think "okay that might work" and give it a try but please don't feel like you should be doing everything, it's just throwing out loads lots of ideas.

So, this is an example of a social script to help a boy called Dylan. He's a year four boy that that particularly this was written for. And what he was struggling with was with saying goodbye to Mummy in the morning and going into school. And that was kind of getting him quite wound up from even when he was leaving the house. So, what we did is we tried to work out, right what can he do to make himself feel better at those times when he's feeling a little bit wobbly? And we put them all down in a script so that he can read it and have a look through it with his with his Mummy or his Daddy in the morning, to just remind himself what he can do.

So, I'll just read through this example. We put some pictures at the side to just make it feel a bit more personal to him:

"My name is Dylan and I love playing Minecraft"

"This year things have been different because I've been a lot doing a lot of my learning at home and schools have been closed."

"Schools are open again now."

"I might feel a bit worried in my tummy in the morning when it's time to go to school because I'm not used to it."

"I will look at my timetable to remind myself of what to expect when I get to school."

"If I feel a bit worried, I will try to tell my Mummy or my teacher that I'm worried, either by saying "I'm worried" or using my worried card."

(We'll talk about that a little bit more in the session we're doing about feelings.)

"I will try to take deep breaths and fiddle with my Minecraft squishy when I walk into school."

"This often makes me feel calmer."

"When I've been back at school for a few weeks I would probably feel calmer because I'd be used to it again."

So, the idea is we're helping Dylan work out what to do when he feels a bit wobbly, what he can draw on, and also hopefully helping him think 'okay I need to get through a few weeks of this and then it's going to be back to normal and I'm going to feel okay again'.

There are official social stories which are put together by Carol Gray and, if you have a look at her website that will give you lots of ideas as to the type of structure that she suggests you put when you're doing a formal social story. This doesn't follow exactly that structure, it's more of a script to help a young person work out what to do. So, if you want more information, that reference is on this PowerPoint.

[Josie] So, using a social script for an unfamiliar situation is also really good for your child. We're in this time at the minute where there's COVID, we've never been here before, they're not going to know what's coming up next, 'what is this test I have to do?' We've never done this before, so, it's a great way of visually seeing and talking through with your child that actually there's steps to this. It may feel like this, you know, it's helping them explore all their thoughts and their feelings that they can't necessarily say to you. It's a way of putting it down on paper and being able to see it and go through it with them [to] really reduce that anxiety.

This example is for Charlie. I'll go through this with you. But if your child doesn't relate to this exact one with Charlie and pictures of a different child getting it done, there's lots of other examples online. And if they need that real direct 'actually you know I'm not going to believe it unless it's mummy or daddy', you could always piece together your own one - take some pictures with a cotton bud or something up your nose, but you're really showing it in this script way and breaking it down for them

So, this example is: 'Charlie's having a COVID test at home'. These are the instructions he needs to follow:

“One: blow your nose”

“Two: cough into a tissue”

“Three: open your mouth”

“Four: a soft cotton bud goes to the back of the throat four times on each side. This might be a strange feeling.”

(Okay, so you're also including not only the breakdown of the steps, but what this might feel like.)

"The cotton bud goes up the nose and is turned 10 times. This might be a bit tricky or uncomfortable."

(So again, putting in the expectations for your child that they may be thinking and getting anxious about.)

"Six: have a drink."

“And Charlie is finished. Well done Charlie. He'll find out his test results in about 30 minutes.”

So, it's also a great way of showing that there is an end to something, and this is exactly how it goes. And this is as we said earlier a widget online, it's just another great way of showing it doesn't have to be those exact pictures. You can use symbols, there's lots of different websites out there that you can use. But we put this one together to show a child that needed to understand where and when they wore their mask and making it very

clear for them so it was showing at home there's no mask, you don't wear a mask, on that minibus you need to wear the mask, and once you get to school you then take the mask off.

So again, it's really breaking it down for them and helping clarify it.

[Katrina] Thank you. There should be a few more videos that go along with this one in case you want any support around using visuals or exploring emotions a little bit. Thanks.

[Josie] Bye.