



SOCIAL STORIES RELATED TO ILLNESS OR DEATH

Social Stories™ describe an event or situation with the intent of explaining the circumstances, perspectives, and expected behaviors that occur during the event or situation. To be effective, Social Stories™ should be highly individualized. Usually, they are written in the first-person, from the point of view of the child. They can be particularly helpful when preparing for an out of the ordinary situation, such as a serious illness, death, or attending a funeral. Once created, a Social Story™ should be read to the individual many times until the expectations conveyed in the story are well understood.

The Social Story™ should include photos or pictures. This can be done fairly easily using a digital camera. There are even iPad® apps designed to help families write Social Stories™.

To prepare your child for issues related to the death of a family member or close friend, consider the following ideas for Social Stories™:

- Picture of the individual healthy and well
- Picture of the individual noting illness
- Picture of the family without the individual who died
- Picture of the house of worship, the funeral parlor, or graveside, noting where the funeral was held (if your child will be attending the funeral or memorial service, you may want to create a separate social story conveying expected behaviors and what to do if your child feels overwhelmed during the service)
- The family at the ceremony
- Perhaps a picture of the grave
- Find a way to show that over time, life resumes and takes on a new normalcy without the person who died (perhaps depict by showing the change in seasons, if your child can understand this concept)

Related Articles:

- [Life Cycle Events](#)
- [Coping with Death](#)

The Center for Autism Research and The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia do not endorse or recommend any specific person or organization or form of treatment . The information included within the CAR Autism Roadmap & trade; and CAR Resource Directory & trade; should not be considered medical advice and should serve only as a guide to resources publicly and privately available . Choosing a treatment, course of action, and/or a resource is a personal decision, which should take into account each individual's and family's particular circumstances .