

# Autism & PDD<sup>TM</sup>

## Intermediate Social Skills Lessons

Middle School

Pam Britton Reese  
Nena C. Challenner

Skill Areas: Social Skills/Language

Ages: 8 through 12

Grades: 3rd through 7th



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# About the Authors

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## Acknowledgment

We would like to thank all the wonderful parents and professionals who responded to our e-mail request for information on the special challenges facing preteens with autism.

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### ***Initial Behavior Analysis***

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*another (new)* pages 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 25, 45  
*between* page 16  
*different* pages 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 27, 43, 44  
*mistake* page 33  
*when* pages 17, 27, 30  
*where* pages 20, 27

# Introduction

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A few years ago, we were working together to facilitate the inclusion of several children with autism in elementary classrooms. Behavior problems often occurred due to breakdowns in communication. Although the classrooms had been structured to aid inclusion, inappropriate behaviors repeatedly interrupted both social and academic learning. Typical behaviors included climbing on desktops, darting, squirting glue on tables, screaming, and having tantrums at breaks in routines.

We learned of Carol Gray's success with stories describing social situations to teach children with autism (*The New Social Story Book*, 1994). Based on those, we began writing shorter, one-page lessons with each sentence supported by one or more pictures. Our lessons targeted typical needs of preschool and early primary students.

As parents began to see how the lessons worked at school, they requested lessons concerning behaviors at home and in the community. In addition, the lessons were used successfully with children with other disabilities and with typically-developing children. *Autism & PDD: Primary Social Skills Lessons* (1999) was the culmination of the work we did with teachers and families of these students. This set of social skills lessons was followed by a set written for the needs of adolescents (*Autism & PDD: Adolescent Social Skills Lessons*, 2001).

We then began to hear over and over from parents and professionals we met at schools and conferences that we were leaving out a very important group of children: preteens. In an effort to target the needs of this age group, we used the Internet to solicit problems and specific social topics experienced by parents and professionals that needed to be taught to this age group. We had a tremendous response and many of the social skills lessons in these books are a result of those responses.

## About the Books

The lessons are grouped into five separate books:

- Communication
- Controlling Behavior
- Healthy Habits
- Middle School
- Special Events & Activities

In each book, we have included two types of lessons: instructional and behavioral. The instructional lessons are intended to teach preteens what they need to say or do in social situations that are sometimes overwhelming (e.g., *New Bus Route*, page 12). The instructional lessons can be used as part of a social skills curriculum with small groups. The behavioral lessons target specific social problems that need to be stopped (e.g., *Let the Teacher Talk*, page 29).

The lessons are not intended to be used in the order presented, but chosen according to the needs of a particular individual.

One of the most difficult things for students who are included in general education classrooms is understanding the many unwritten school rules. Preteens have the added challenge of moving to new middle schools or junior high schools as well as coping with new teachers, schedules, and social situations. Students with autism need direct instruction to help them transition into their new surroundings. The lessons in this *Middle School* book are designed to teach the skills that often hamper successful inclusion of children with autism.

### Modifying the Lessons

No two people are the same! Although the lessons are ready for use as they appear in the books, it will undoubtedly be necessary to make changes in some lessons to fit each preteen. For example:

- Use a photograph of the preteen in place of the generic preteen in the books.
- Edit text if necessary to make the lesson fit the individual situation.
- Fill in the blanks provided to individualize the lesson.
- Use pictures from the picture index at the back of each book, photographs, line drawings, or computer-generated art to modify lessons as needed.

### Using the Lessons

Identify the skill to be taught. No student will need every lesson. Search for the source of the problem. Is it sensory? Is it a communication breakdown? Is the preteen sick? Some problems can be solved by ignoring the behavior or changing something in the environment. Limit the number of lessons presented at one time. Start with one or two. Wait until they are learned before introducing more lessons.

Choose the appropriate lesson and change the story as needed. Make two copies. Place one copy of the lesson in a notebook for the student. As skills are presented and learned, use the notebook for reviewing lessons and for sharing the lessons with other teachers, parents, and caregivers.

Use the second copy for direct instruction as follows:

1. Identify the time and place the social situation occurs. The *Tracking Multiple Behaviors* form, page 50, and/or the *Initial Behavior Analysis* form, page 52, will help you.
2. When you teach a new skill, the social lesson should immediately precede the targeted situation. For example, before an emergency drill, read *Emergency Drill*, page 20.
3. Present the lesson. Sit with the student one-on-one in a quiet area and read the lesson aloud. Point to the pictures for emphasis. Read the lesson again. (You might also want to copy the lesson onto a chart for group instruction at a later time.)

4. A common error is reading through the lesson too quickly. Allow adequate processing time. Pause after reading each line. Wait and observe the student's reaction before proceeding.
5. Give the student a copy of the lesson. Keeping a notebook of lessons presented allows the student to review each lesson repeatedly and to refer to it when needed.

Document the lesson(s) taught using the *Record of Progress*, page 54, and/or the tracking forms on pages 56-59. These records can serve as documentation for IEP objectives and behavioral intervention.

### Special Considerations

Pronouns can be difficult for some people with autism. We have used "I" extensively throughout the books as a way to help teach the pronoun. If pronoun use prevents comprehension of the lesson, substitute names in the text and/or use photographs in place of the "I" symbol.

Be sure to use words that the student is familiar with (e.g., *gym* vs. *P.E.*).

The lesson and pictures on one page may be overwhelming for some students. You can use a blank sheet of paper to mask the rest of the lesson as you read each line. The lessons can also be used to make a small book. Cut the lesson into sentence strips. Place each sentence with its accompanying pictures in the center of a sheet of paper. Staple the pages together to make a book.

These lessons can be easily adapted to a student's language and comprehension level. If necessary, delete words to shorten sentences. Some students may also need fewer pictures per sentence.

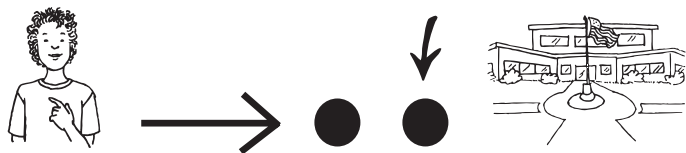
We hope that you will find these social skills lessons as effective as we have.

Pam and Nena





# Leaving Elementary School



I am going to a new school in \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
(number\*)



I will have \_\_\_\_\_ classes.  
(number\*)



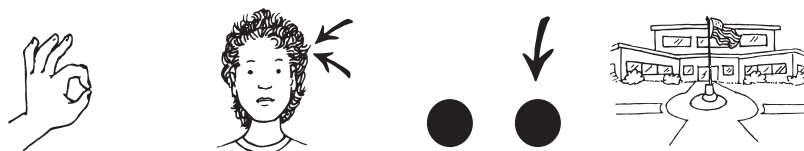
I will have \_\_\_\_\_ teachers.  
(number\*)



Each class will have different students.



I might know some of the students.



It is okay. I can learn at my new school.

\*Indicate number of days on the calendar.

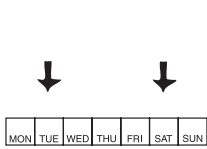
# Leaving for School on Time



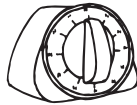
I need to leave for school at \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(time\*)



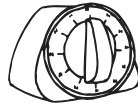
If I am not ready, then I am late for school.



Sometimes I take too long to \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(morning activity\*\*)



I can use a timer to help me get ready on time.



I will set the timer for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.  
(number)

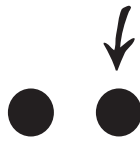
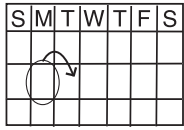


When the timer goes off, I need to be ready to go to school.

\*Draw in clock hands to show appropriate time.

\*\*Indicate any morning activity (e.g., take a shower, eat breakfast) that the child does that takes a lot of time.

# New Bus Driver

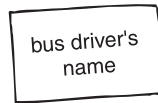
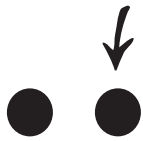


Tomorrow I will have a new bus driver.



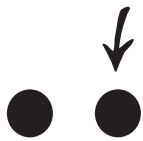
\_\_\_\_\_ will drive a different bus.

(former bus driver's name)



My new bus driver's name is \_\_\_\_\_.

(new bus driver's name)



My new bus number is \_\_\_\_\_.

(number)



\_\_\_\_\_ will take me to school and back home.

(new bus driver's name)



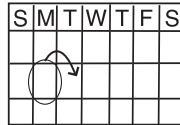
I will watch for bus \_\_\_\_\_.

(number)

# New Bus Route



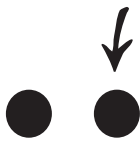
I ride bus \_\_\_\_\_ to school and back home.  
(number)



The bus will go a different way tomorrow.



The bus will go on different streets.



It is okay. I will learn the new way.



Bus \_\_\_\_\_ will still take me to school.  
(number)

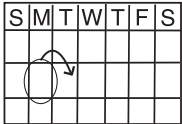


Bus \_\_\_\_\_ will still take me home.  
(number)

# New Seating Arrangement



I sit \_\_\_\_\_ in my class.  
(location\*)



Tomorrow I will have a different place to sit.



Everyone will have a different place to sit.



\_\_\_\_\_ will show me where to sit.  
(teacher)



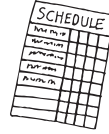
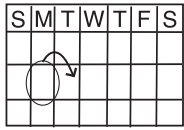
It is good to sit in a different place.



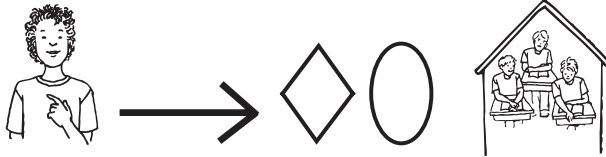
I can make new friends.

\*Indicate where the child sits (e.g., near my teacher, behind Charlie, under the clock).

# Schedule Changes



Tomorrow I will have a different schedule.



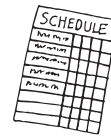
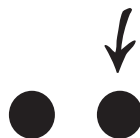
I will go to different classrooms.



Some of my teachers might be different.



My classes might be at different times.



\_\_\_\_\_ will give me my new schedule.

(person)



My schedule will show me where to go.

# Leaving and Coming Back to the Classroom

---



I leave class for \_\_\_\_\_.  
(activity\*)



Other students are still working.



I will try to leave the room without talking.



When \_\_\_\_\_ is finished, I will go back to class.  
(activity\*)



I will try to come back into the room without talking.



It is important to leave and enter the classroom quietly.

\*Indicate why the child might leave the classroom  
(e.g., speech therapy, counseling, etc.).

# Bathroom



Sometimes I need to use the bathroom at school.



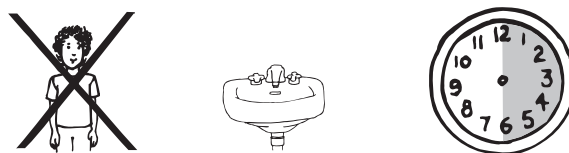
I can go to the bathroom between classes.



I need to hurry. I only have \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.  
(number)



I will use the toilet, flush, and wash my hands.



I will try not to stand at the sink too long.



I will try to be on time to my next class.



# Hallway Crowds

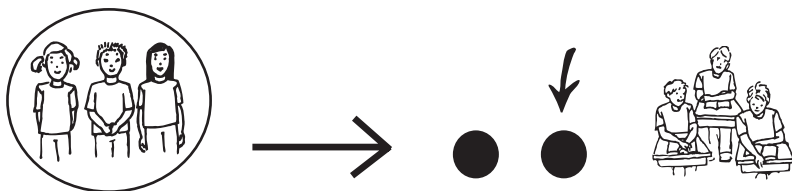
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The bell rings to tell me when to go to another class.



There will be a crowd of people in the hallway.



Everybody is going to another class too.



I need to walk toward my class.



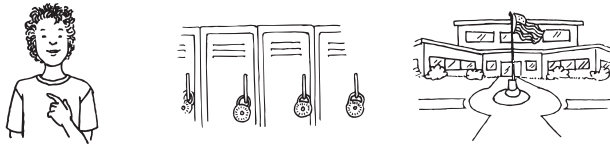
I will try to walk on the right side of the hallway.



People may bump me, but it is okay.

# Lockers

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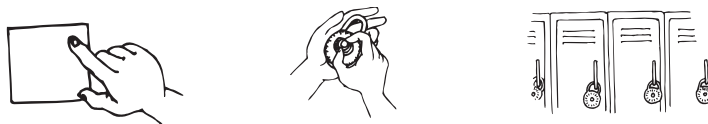
I will have a locker at school.



I will keep my books and backpack in my locker.



My locker will have a lock.



\_\_\_\_\_ will show me how to open the locker.  
(person)

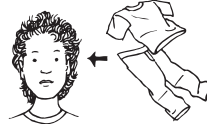


I might have to share my locker with another person.



It is okay. We can both use the locker.

# Dress Code



My school has rules about which clothes to wear to school.

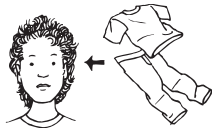
dress code

This is called a "dress code."



dress code

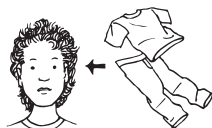
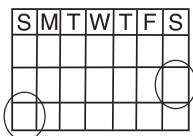
I will try to follow the dress code.



I need to wear \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to school.  
(item of clothing) (item of clothing)



I will try not to be upset.



On the weekend, I can wear \_\_\_\_\_.  
(favorite clothes)

# Emergency Drill



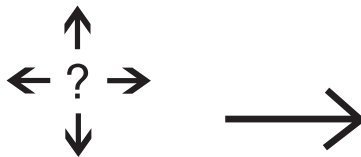
Sometimes at school I hear a different bell.



It is the \_\_\_\_\_ drill bell.  
(type of drill\*)



It is okay. There is not really a \_\_\_\_\_.  
(type of drill\*)



My teacher will tell us where to go.



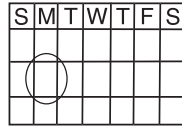
We will practice what to do if there is a \_\_\_\_\_.  
(type of drill\*)



When the bell rings again, we can go back to class.

\*Indicate the type of drill (e.g., fire, tornado).

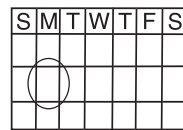
# Substitute Teacher



My teacher is not at school today.



It is okay. \_\_\_\_\_ will come back again.  
(teacher's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ will be my teacher today.  
(teacher's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ is a substitute teacher.  
(teacher's name)



The substitute teacher will give me directions in class.



It is important to listen to the substitute teacher.

# Speech Therapy\*



I work with \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

(therapist's name)

(days/times)



\_\_\_\_\_ is my speech therapist.

(therapist's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ helps me talk better.

(therapist's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ is my teacher too.

(therapist's name)



I will listen and follow directions.



I will try to work with \_\_\_\_\_.

(therapist's name)

\*Use pictures from the picture index to change lesson to occupational or physical therapy.

# Counseling

---



I work with \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

(counselor's name) (days/times)



\_\_\_\_\_ is my counselor.

(counselor's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ helps me learn to work with others.

(counselor's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ is my teacher too.

(counselor's name)



I will listen and talk with \_\_\_\_\_.

(counselor's name)



I will try to work with \_\_\_\_\_.

(counselor's name)

# Social Skills Buddy



\_\_\_\_\_ is my buddy.  
(peer's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ tells me what to say to others.  
(peer's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ tells me how to know what others are thinking.  
(peer's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ helps me learn social skills.  
(peer's name)



I will try to listen and watch with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(peer's name)



I will try to practice with my buddy.

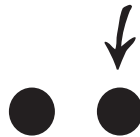


# Inclusion

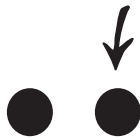
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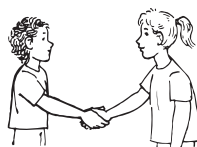
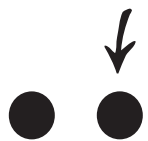
I have learned a lot in \_\_\_\_\_ 's class.  
(teacher's name)



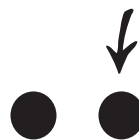
Now I need to learn more from other teachers.



I will go to new classes.

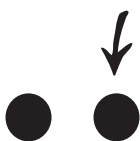


I will meet new students.



\_\_\_\_\_ will help me with my new classes.

(new teacher/teacher's aide name)



I will try to learn in my new classes.

# School Rules



At school there are rules.



\_\_\_\_\_ will show me the rules.

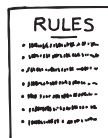
(person)



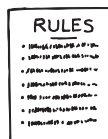
Everyone tries to follow the rules.



Sometimes people don't follow the rules.



When people don't follow rules, they get in trouble.

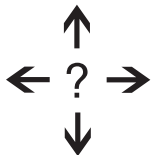


I will try to follow the rules at school.

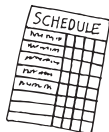
# Class Schedule



I have a schedule at school.



The schedule shows me where my classes are.



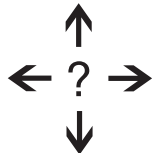
The schedule shows me when my classes start.



I have \_\_\_\_\_ different classes.  
(number)



A bell will ring when it is time to go to the next class.



A schedule helps me know where to go at school.

# Raising My Hand



Sometimes the teacher asks the class a question.



I know the answer. I want to say it.



Other people know the answer too.



They want to answer the question.



I will try to raise my hand and wait quietly.



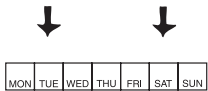
When it is my turn to answer, the teacher will call my name.

# Let the Teacher Talk

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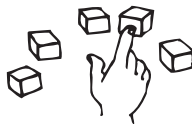
The teacher needs to talk to everybody in the class.



Sometimes I talk while the teacher is talking.



When I talk, no one else can hear the teacher.



It is not a good choice to talk while the teacher is talking.



This is important.



I will try to listen when the teacher is talking.

# Homework



Sometimes my teachers give me work to do at home.



Work I do at home is called "homework."



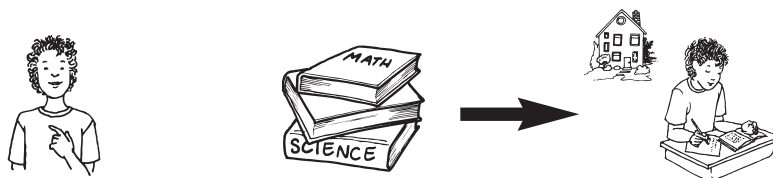
My teacher will tell me what to write in my assignment book.



My assignment book helps me remember what to do when I get home.



It also shows me when to take the homework back to school.



I will try to take books home to do my homework.

# I Forgot My Homework



Sometimes I get upset when I forget my homework.



It is okay. Everybody forgets homework sometimes.



I might forget my homework again.



I can tell the teacher "I forgot my homework."



I can take my homework to school (on) \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(appropriate day\*)



I will try not to get upset when I forget my homework.

\*Indicate when homework can be brought in.