

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

## Intermediate Social Skills Lessons

### Special Events & Activities

Pam Britton Reese  
Nena C. Challenner

Skill Areas: Social Skills/Language

Ages: 8 through 12

Grades: 3rd through 7th



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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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<i>after</i>	page 25
<i>change</i>	page 27
<i>different</i>	pages 12, 13, 19, 26, 30
<i>live</i>	pages 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26, 32
<i>off</i>	page 29
<i>on</i>	page 29
<i>party (fun)</i>	pages 25, 36
<i>turn</i>	page 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., *Going to a Wedding*, page 25). 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., *Waking Up at Night*, page 24).

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

The lessons in *Special Events & Activities* address two different types of social challenges faced by preteens. The first set of lessons are about changes in the family structure, such as a new baby, a divorce, or a death. The other lessons teach about special social communication events, such as going to a movie, playing a team sport, or staying in a hotel.

### 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 51, and/or the *Initial Behavior Analysis* form, page 53, will help you.
2. When you teach a new skill, the social lesson should immediately precede the targeted situation. For example, before eating, read *Table Manners*, page 41.
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 55, and/or the tracking forms on pages 57-60. 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



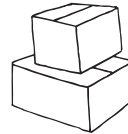
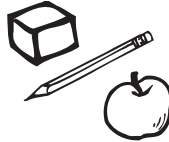


# New House

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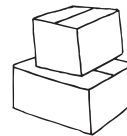
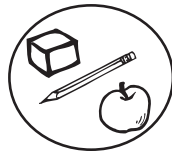
We have a new house.\* We won't live in our old house anymore.



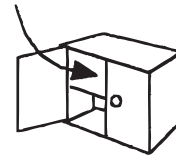
People will come and put our things in boxes.



They are helping us move to the new house.



When we get there, everything will be in boxes.



It is okay. We will unpack and put our things away.



We will live together in the new house.

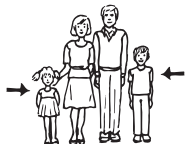
\*Insert photo of child's new house.

# Getting Ready for a New Baby

---



Mom is going to have a baby.



I will get a new brother or sister.



Mom and Dad will love the baby.



\_\_\_\_\_ will love the baby.

(other family member)



I will love the baby.



It is okay. Mom and Dad still love me too.

# Living with a New Baby

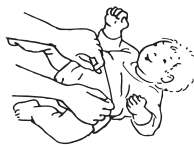
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We have a new baby at home.



It is important to take care of the baby.



We will feed the baby and change its diapers.



Sometimes the baby cries a lot.



It is okay. \_\_\_\_\_ will stop crying.  
(baby's name)



I can help take care of the baby.

# New Mom

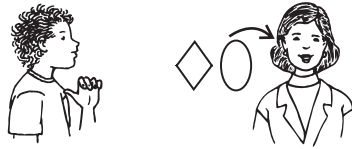


My dad is going to marry \_\_\_\_\_.

(woman's name)



They will live together.



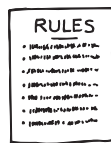
\_\_\_\_\_ will be my stepmother.

(woman's name)

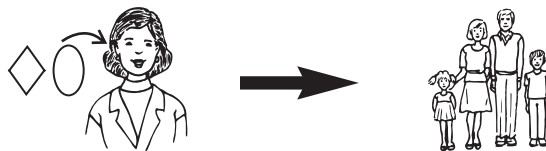


\_\_\_\_\_ and my dad are my parents.

(woman's name)



I will try to follow their rules.



\_\_\_\_\_ will be part of our family.

(woman's name)

# New Dad

---



My mom is going to marry \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(man's name)



They will live together.



\_\_\_\_\_ will be my stepfather.  
(man's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ and my mom are my parents.  
(man's name)



I will try to follow their rules.



\_\_\_\_\_ will be part of our family.  
(man's name)

# Grandparent Comes to Stay



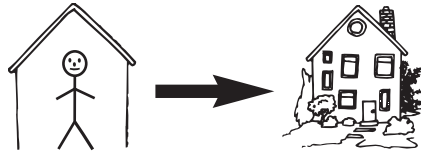
\_\_\_\_\_ can't live at home anymore.

(grandparent's name\*)



We will help take care of \_\_\_\_\_.

(grandparent's name\*)



\_\_\_\_\_ will come and live at our house.

(grandparent's name\*)



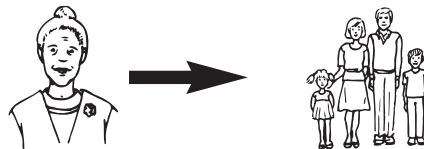
\_\_\_\_\_ will sleep in \_\_\_\_\_.

(grandparent's name\*)

(room in house)



We will eat together.



\_\_\_\_\_ will be part of our family.

(grandparent's name\*)

\*Write in what the child calls his or her grandparent (e.g., Grandma, Nana, Grandpa, Poppa).

# Older Sibling Leaves Home



\_\_\_\_\_ graduated from high school.  
(sibling's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ is going to \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(sibling's name) (place\*) (time\*\*)



He/she will not live at our house anymore.



I will miss \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(sibling's name)



It is okay. \_\_\_\_\_ still loves me.  
(sibling's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ will come and visit sometimes.  
(sibling's name)

\*Indicate where the sibling is going (e.g., college, a new apartment).

\*\*Indicate when the sibling is leaving (e.g., next week, in August).

# Death in the Family

---



died.

\_\_\_\_\_ (person)



We will not see \_\_\_\_\_ anymore.

\_\_\_\_\_ (person)



We are all sad. We miss \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ (person)



It is okay to feel sad inside.



I will feel happy again.

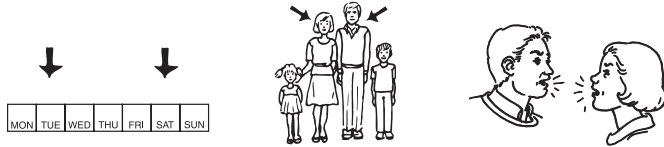


We can remember \_\_\_\_\_ and tell stories about him/her.

\_\_\_\_\_ (person)



# Parents Divorce



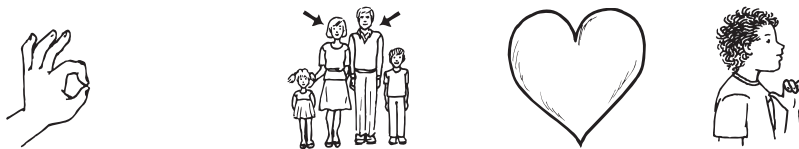
Sometimes Mom and Dad argue.



They are not mad at me.



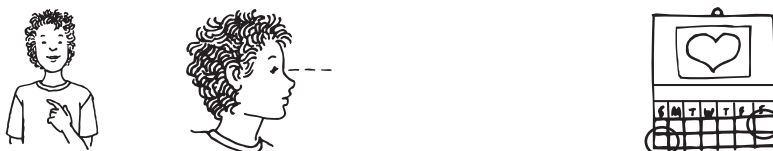
Mom and Dad are not going to live together anymore.



It is okay. Mom and Dad still love me.



I will stay with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(custodial parent)



I will still see \_\_\_\_\_.  
(non-custodial parent) (visitation schedule\*)

\*Write in the visitation schedule (e.g., every other weekend, every Friday).

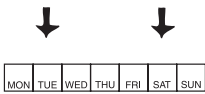
# Shared Custody



Mom and Dad don't live together anymore.



They still want to see me.



Sometimes I will live with Dad.



Sometimes I will live with Mom.



I can use a calendar.



I will know when I go to live with Mom or Dad.

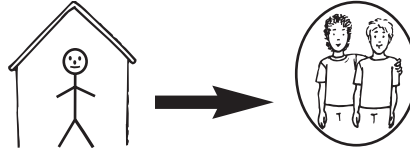
# Step Family



My \_\_\_\_\_ will marry \_\_\_\_\_.

(mom/dad)

(person)



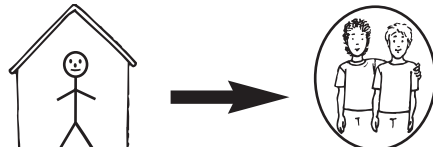
\_\_\_\_\_ will come and live with us.

(person)

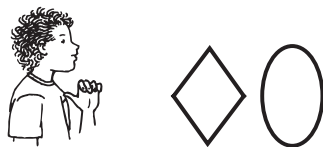


\_\_\_\_\_ has children.

(person)



They will come and live with us too.



\_\_\_\_\_ will be my \_\_\_\_\_.

(stepsibling(s) names)

(stepsister(s)/brother(s))



We will be a family together.

# Boyfriend Moves In



Mom has a special friend.



He is going to live with us.



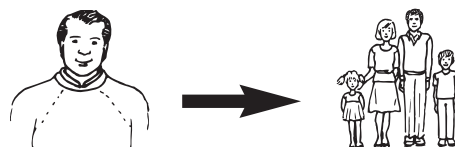
He will be here at night.



He will be here in the mornings.



I will get to know \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(boyfriend's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ will be part of our family.  
(boyfriend's name)

# Girlfriend Moves In



Dad has a special friend.



She is going to live with us.



She will be here at night.



She will be here in the mornings.



I will get to know \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(girlfriend's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ will be part of our family.  
(girlfriend's name)

# In-Home Trainer



\_\_\_\_\_ is my in-home trainer\*.  
(person)



He/she will teach me at home.



He/she will come at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(time\*\*)



I will listen to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(person)



I will try to do what \_\_\_\_\_ tells me.  
(person)



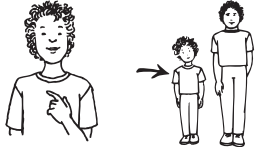
I will try to work at home with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(person)

\*Substitute a name the child is familiar with (e.g., teacher, therapist).

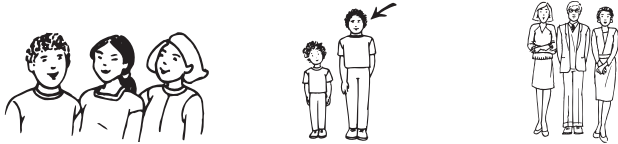
\*\*Draw in clock hands to show the appropriate time.

# Showing Respect to Adults

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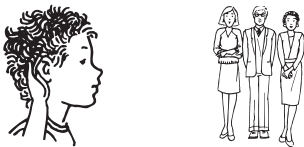
I am a child.



People who are grown up are adults.



I need to show respect to adults.



I can listen to adults.



I can answer their questions.



I can try to follow their directions.

# Waking Up at Night

---



Sometimes I wake up at night.



My family is sleeping.



I will try not to wake \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(person)



I can \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(appropriate behavior\*)



I can \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(appropriate behavior\*)



I will try to stay quiet and let \_\_\_\_\_ sleep.  
(person)



# Going to a Wedding

---



\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are getting married.  
(person) (person)



We are all happy.



They will have a wedding.



Many people will come to the wedding.



I will sit and listen during the wedding.



After the wedding, I will go to a party for them.

# Visiting a Nursing Home



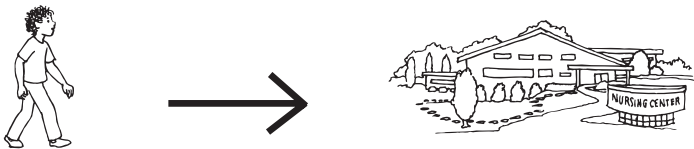
Some people are old and need help.



They may live in a nursing home.



\_\_\_\_\_ lives in a nursing home.  
(person)



We are going to visit \_\_\_\_\_.  
(person)

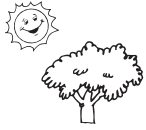


It might be loud. It might smell different.

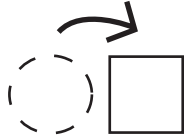


It is okay. \_\_\_\_\_ will be happy to see us.  
(person)

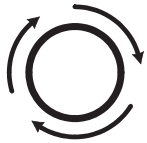
# Daylight Savings Time



Daylight Savings Time begins tonight.



Tonight we will change our clocks.

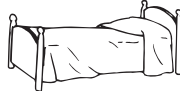


1

We will turn the clocks ahead one hour.



It might be light outside when it is time for bed.



It's okay. My bedtime is still \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(time\*)



1

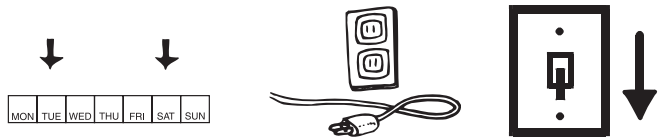
All people turn their clocks ahead one hour.

\*Draw in clock hands to show the child's bedtime.



# Electricity Goes Out

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Sometimes the electricity goes off.



The TV doesn't work.



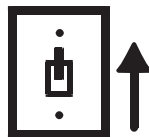
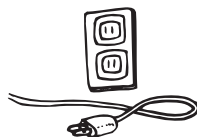
The lights don't work.



No electric appliances will work.



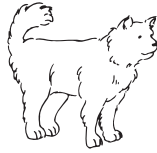
It might be dark. We can use a flashlight.



It is okay. The electricity will come on again.

# New Pet

---



I am going to get a new pet.

Pet's Name

We will call it \_\_\_\_\_.  
(pet's name)



I can help take care of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(pet's name)



I can give \_\_\_\_\_ fresh water every day.  
(pet's name)



I can help feed \_\_\_\_\_.  
(pet's name)



I will be gentle with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(pet's name)

# Pet to Vet



A vet is a doctor for animals.



\_\_\_\_\_ needs to go to the vet.  
(pet's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ will ride in the car with us.  
(pet's name)



\_\_\_\_\_ may be noisy in the car.  
(pet's name)



I can wear earplugs or cover my ears if it is too noisy.



When we are finished at the vet, \_\_\_\_\_ will ride home with us.\*  
(pet's name)

\*Optional sentence: When we are finished at the vet, (pet's name) will have to stay for (number) days. It is okay.

# Pet Dies

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died.

\_\_\_\_\_ (pet's name)



won't live with us anymore.

\_\_\_\_\_ (pet's name)



I will miss \_\_\_\_\_ (pet's name).



I feel sad inside.



Everyone feels sad when a pet dies.



It is okay. I will feel happy again.