

Making Friendships Work



KS1-3

Pembrokeshire Inclusion Service

C Bullock ASC Advisory Teacher



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Introduction

Many pupils with Autism and communication difficulties, struggle with relationship development. Making and keeping friendships requires those involved to be able to:

- Communicate effectively
- Understand the rules of conversation: Listening, avoiding monologue.
- Understand the meaning of non- verbal language (body language, eye contact and gesture).
- Be aware of the other person's needs
- Recognise emotions in others and respond appropriately
- Avoid saying or doing things that upset the other person
- Share interests

Children with autism often struggle with all of the above. This means that making and sustaining friendships can be difficult and anxiety provoking for them, particularly if they are aware they are making mistakes socially.

To enable pupils with autism to have a better chance at making friends it is important to support their understanding of emotions (what they are, how to recognise them in themselves and others and how to manage these emotions). It is also important to teach conversation and listening skills. Professionals also need to bear in mind that some pupils may appear to have grasped a skill or cope in certain situations or settings but struggle or appear to have forgotten everything in another place or scenario. Transferring skills can be difficult for them and so the skills mentioned above, need to be reinforced and consolidated through teaching or practising in different settings.

This pack focuses on friendship skills and helping pupils to understand what is involved in the making and maintaining of friendships. Some of the lessons/activities will relate to emotions and conversation, however, additional work may be required on this prior to using this pack. You can choose to deliver the sessions in any order, to suit individuals' needs. Some may benefit from starting by being taught about what friendship is, whilst others would cope better if they first had a grounding in recognising and understanding emotions- you can always return and repeat at a later stage, these skills will need consolidation. Pick and choose which activities to try- you know the children best. Similarly, choose the best means of delivery. At times I will give alternatives, however, you may need to tweak delivery or differentiate to ensure pupil understanding. The material can be amended to suit most pupils in the KS1-3 range.

The self-evaluation and teacher's evaluation sheets should be completed at the beginning of the sessions and at the end to track progress and highlight any areas requiring additional work. The pupils' evaluations are not essential but can prove interesting as, at times, their perceptions can differ markedly from those of the teachers!

I have written the pack with 1:1 teaching or group work in mind. Often some intensive 1:1 work is needed, or schools cannot release groups of pupils and so 1:1 work is the only option. A few of the activities such as the role- play a small group or partners would be preferable. I will use the term 'children' within the pack, but the activities can generally be done 1:1 or with an adult as partner as required.



Making Friendships Work Pupil Evaluation

Name: _____		Date _____		
	 YES	 NOT SURE	 NO	
I know what a good friend does				
I know what a friend should not do				
I know different ways of starting a conversation				
I know different ways of ending a conversation				
I know what a good conversation is like				
I know what a bad conversation is like				
I know when I am happy				
I know when others are happy by what they say				
I know when others are happy by what they do				
I know when I am sad				
I know when others are sad by what they say				
I know when others are sad by what they do				
I know when I am angry				
I know when others are angry by what they say				
I know when others are angry by what they do				
I know what to do if someone is sad or angry				

*Add your own evaluation criteria if needed, in the blank spaces on the table



Making Friendships Work Staff Evaluation

Teacher/LSA Name: _____ Date _____

Pupil Name: _____

	Yes	Limited	No	Comment
Knows what a good friend does				
Knows what a friend should not do				
Knows different ways of starting a conversation appropriately				
Knows different ways of ending a conversation appropriately				
Knows what a good conversation is like				
Knows what a bad conversation is like				
Knows when they are happy				
Knows when others are happy by what they say				
Knows when others are happy by what they do				
Knows when they are sad				
Knows when others are sad by what they say				
Knows when others are sad by what they do				
Knows when they are angry				
Knows when others are angry by what they say				
Knows when others are angry by what they do				
Knows what to do if someone is sad or angry				

*Add your own evaluation criteria if needed, in the blank spaces on the table

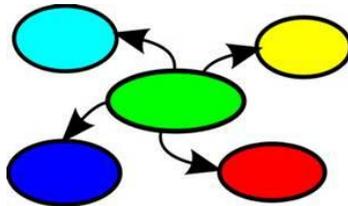


What are friends and why do people want them?

- *Aim: To help pupils understand what friendship is and what it involves.*
- *Aim: To help pupils understand the importance of friendship and why people like to have friends.*

Whilst many pupils with autism want friendships, some prefer their own company and do not want or cannot cope with friendship and all it involves. It is important to reassure them that it is OK and their choice.

- Explain to the children that you are going to find out a bit more about friendships. Ask them what 'friendship' means to them. Create a mind map using their words, by discussing ideas about what is a friend? A friend:
 - Has similar interests/hobbies
 - Listens to what you say
 - Enjoys spending time with you and you with them
 - May help you, have fun with you, play games with you
 - May do activities with you/invite you to their house to play
 - May make you laugh or smile



- Ask the pupils if they have a friend, to tell them who and one item from the list or mind map that means they are friends. Some pupils may struggle to think of somebody. If so, you could ask what do they think is the best point on the list / web or ask them to describe mum, dad, sibling, pet. Using your knowledge of the child, support them and guide them to answer. The important thing is to get them thinking about what makes a good friend and what is involved.
- Show YouTube clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZHmsVRshwU> There are a series of 'notebook babies' autistic kids TV clips which deliver simple, messages about friendship and social skills.
- An additional or alternative activity. Encourage pupils to write or complete a cloze procedure activity: I am friends with We are friends because I am a good friend because..... He/She is a good friend because.....



Good and Not So Good Friend Behaviour

- *Aim: To help pupils recognise the behavior of a good friend*
- *Aim: To help pupils recognise unfriendly behavior*

Some children with autism may struggle to understand how their actions can impact on others. If a pupil is struggling to understand why certain behaviours can cause others distress, then some work on emotions and feelings may be needed.

-A warm up game showing cards or magazine clips of facial expressions could be a useful way of teaching a bit about emotions/feelings. Show the cards and get the pupils to copy the faces and discuss what the feeling may be.

- Talk with the pupils about the importance of friendship and see if they can remember some of the things friends do together and why it is good to have friends.
- Give each pupil a copy of the Good Friend/ Not how friends behave sheet and a set of the pictures. These could be cut out with or without the words depending on ability. Similarly, you may choose to use just some of those provided or all of them. More can be found at : <http://www.sclera.be/en/picto/> for specific behaviours.

(You could laminate a few of these and Velcro or blu tack them on for multiple uses and to save time/resources)

- Choose an example of good and not so good behavior and decide with the children's input, where to place the cards/ stick the symbols. Then depending on ability: allow them to work through independently and discuss afterwards or work through the cards one at a time with the group, discussing where they should go and why.
- If a pupil chooses to place a symbol in the wrong place, ask them to explain why. If they cannot understand why saying 'go away', for example, is wrong, then this may need some discussion. Role play could help, model correct behavior, suggest alternatives. How could we do it better?

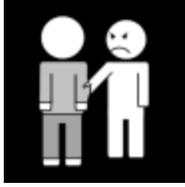
*Photographs instead of symbols may be more suited to older children. There are various websites providing these or school could make their own If pupils can act them out safely!

This Is GOOD friend behavior



This is NOT how friends behave





Pinching



taking care of others



saying 'go away'



help someone



Sharing



scratching



talking



help with work



Hitting



forgiving



say hello and goodbye



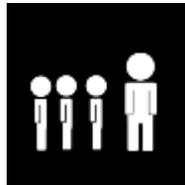
Shouting



Kicking



Laughing



always have to be first



call people names



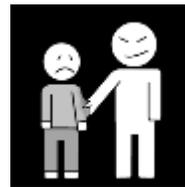
good listening



don't let others play



throw things



grabbing



How to Make Friends- Greetings and Introductions

- *Aim: To help pupils develop peer entry skills*
- *Aim: To explore different ways of greeting friends*
- *Aim: To help pupils understand how they can make new friends*

Consolidation is key with this skill. Some pupils may need scripts or reminders to begin with. They will need to 'try out' their greetings and introductions to different people , at different times and places to ensure transferring of the skill. They will also need to be prepared for what to do if things don't go to plan. See later session.

- Talk to the pupils about greetings. Explain that they are important because that is how we let other people know that we are talking to them. . They are also important because it is a good way to start a conversation and conversation is how we talk with friends and share interests etc.
- Complete a mindmap of different greetings on the board , ask the children to contribute: Hi, Hey, Hiya, Hello, Hello (name)...
- Explain that, by using these greetings, the other person will know we want to talk with them. Having a conversation and talking with someone , means talking and listening to the other person. Think of some other conversation starters. After you have said the greeting , what else might you want to talk about? You may need to give them a starter idea:

-Ask them a question: how are you? What did you make in Art? What did you do on the weekend? What are you doing after school?

-Talk about a shared interest: who is your favourite character? Which game do you prefer?

-Give a compliment: I like your bag, shoes, hair, lunch box...

- Pupils can write some ideas about topics/conversation starters on the following sheet.

If appropriate, they could role play this with one another or with an adult leading and modelling.





Making New Friends- Keeping the conversation going

Aim: Help pupils to understand the two way nature of conversation

Aim: Help pupils understand how to keep a conversation going

Aim: Help pupils end a conversation appropriately

Pupils may need help in maintaining a conversation. They have learned how to start a conversation, but we can not take it for granted that they will be able to successfully continue a two-way conversation. They will need to learn to ask questions, but not too many, to listen and respond appropriately.

- Ask the children to greet one another , each using a different greeting until they cannot think of any more. Then see if they can repeat, following on with an appropriate question or conversation starter.
- Model the start of a conversation with another adult.
 - Hello Mrs X
 - Hi Mr S
 - I like your shoes, are they new?’
 - ‘Yes’

Ask the children what should/could happen next? We need to keep the conversation going, that means we have to talk a bit about ourselves but not TOO much, ask and answer questions. Most importantly we need to listen carefully so that we can make relevant comments, not talk over the other person and answer correctly if asked a question. If the children can come up with ‘what next’ ideas, then continue the role play including their ideas. Did they work? If not why not? What could make it a better conversation?

Ask the children to watch closely and model a short conversation showing poor conversation skills: looking away / yawning indicating not listening, talking over the other person, dominating the conversation with monologue and/or ignoring a question. Ask the children to point out what was wrong. You could go through this again, asking them to stop you as you do something wrong and to tell you or show you how to do it. More high affect language and body language may be useful for less able/younger pupils.

- Run through the conversation again- modelling a good version! At the end say goodbye and wave. Ask the pupils if they noticed how the conversation ended. Repeat if needed.
- Ask the pupils to suggest as many alternative ways of saying goodbye as they can
- See script/story on the following page. This could be used with some children to support their social interaction. It can be altered to suit individual need. The language may need tweaking and pictures or symbols could be added.

Practice entry skills, greetings and farewells as opportunities arise.

1. Greeting

When I see my friends at school I can say hi and I can wave.

I can say hi and then the person's name.

Sometimes it is hard to say hello but I will try to look at my friend's face and wave or say hi.

Most of the time my friends will say hi or wave to me when they see me.

I can try to say hi and wave back when this happens.

Everyone says hi to friends when they see them

2. When attempts at interaction fail

When I see my friends I can talk to them.

I can say how are you or ask if I can play with them.

I can then listen to their answer.

Sometimes my friends will talk more and want to play.

I can enjoy talking and playing.

Sometimes friends might not talk to me or may say 'go away'

I can say ok and walk away

Sometimes my friends may not want to talk or play. This is ok.

I can tell my teacher or LSA and they can help me understand.



Making new friends-When things don't go to plan

Aim: To consolidate the understanding about appropriate and inappropriate behavior in friendship

Aim: To help pupils cope when their attempts at friendship are not reciprocated

Situations where pupils miss social cues or 'get it wrong' can cause their peers to rebuff their attempts at interaction and friendship. This can leave the pupil confused, embarrassed, upset and potentially isolated.

Warm Up:

Collect some pictures of good and not so good friend behavior/scenarios. They could be anonymised photographs of "live" scenarios or use free photos or clip art you can find on the web. Make sure the action in the picture is easy to interpret.

Some ideas for scenarios:

- A person receiving a gift
- A foot being stepped on
- A tower created from toy blocks being kicked over
- A person being snubbed or ignored by others

Encourage the pupils to identify what went wrong and see if they can name the emotion or describe using one or more words how the person in the picture may feel and how the person could cope with the situation. What could you do if it happened to you? What would we tell him to do if it happened again? How would we respond? Use it as a chance to get your group or individual thinking and talking

- Explain, that even when we do our good friend behavior, we may still make mistakes or someone may not want to talk to us or be our friend. That is ok.
- Ask the pupils what they could do if they try to start a conversation or a game and the other person ignores them or tells them to go away. Note ideas down. Tell them that sometimes it can help to tell an adult and they may be able to help work out what went wrong.
- Put several (depending on number of pupils) scenarios on pieces of paper, in a jar and encourage the pupils to take one at a time. The scenario could read. 'You try to talk to a pupil, but they walk away', 'you ask someone to join their game but they say 'g o away' ', You are having a conversation and the other person gets angry all of a sudden'. Encourage discussion, what could they do , how would they manage this.
 - Sometimes they could ask the other person why? /for an explanation, sometimes talk it through with an adult, sometimes say, 'ok and walk away',
 - You may need to point out what NOT to do ie. Follow the other person, continue asking etc. Explain that this could make the other person angrier. They may just be tire/need quiet time themselves.
- Scripts can be useful for some pupils , particularly those who keep getting social interaction wrong. The pupil who persists despite being rebuffed or who dominates games or conversations for example. See previous page for example. The script can be written out as a play to support t individual child's needs and rehearsed or role played much as a play would be.



Recognising Happiness and Sadness in Ourselves and Others

Aim: To recognize the emotions happy and sad in themselves and others through facial expression and body language

Aim: To understand what to do when they or others feel this way

This will take 2 sessions.

Warm Up- Take a selection of facial expressions from magazines or the web. Include some funny ones, exaggerated ones. Make into cards or show on whiteboard. Ask the children to select (or show on the screen) one at a time. Ask the children to make up fun ideas for the emotion: ie. A scowling face could be because he stepped in cow manure (where was he, why might he have been there? What might he do next?), the excited face could be because she won a prize (what prize? , What will she do with it?). Get the pupils talking and sharing. This is good for group working and building self esteem as they share jokes and work together developing the 'story' around the cards.

- Find a clip of a TV programme, cartoon or Youtube video which shows the characters happy and sad. Some of the cartoons demonstrate these emotions throughout! Older children may relate more to children's TV serials or programmes such as Tracey Beaker. Watch the clip through once and on the second showing, see if they can pick up on happy and sad characters. How do they know? Faces, words, body language.
- Give the pupils 2 pieces of paper and ask them to draw a picture of a happy face/person on one and a sad face/person on the other- colour them in- their choice of colours.. Ask the pupils to look at the happy face. Ask them when they are happy what do they feel? What words describe it? What does their face look like? What does their body do (skip, jump, tap, rock, knock things over) How does their body feel (light, fizzy,) Ask the pupils to write their and other's descriptions down. These can be weird and wonderful, as long as they are meaningful to the pupils. Repeat for the sad face.
- If there is time, the pupils could look through catalogues and magazines to find pictures of happy and sad faces. They could stick these on to their happy and sad sheets.
- Looking at the photos on the following page.. Ask the pupils to look at them (one at a time) . Is the person in the photo happy or sad? How can we tell?
- Talk about the ways in which we know if someone else is happy. Look at happy sheets from last session (above). How would others know that we were happy. If we and others are happy, everything is ok.
- How do we recognize if we are sad? Start by giving an example – 'When I am sad my forehead frowns like this or my mouth turns down like this (show them) . Ask them to tell you 2 or 3 ways how they know when they are sad. They may need prompts- how does your tummy feel, how does your face look. Use mirrors to pull happy and sad faces.
- Write down the 3 ways that they know they feel sad. These can be used as cards to show others/let them know

- We need to recognize when others are sad. We can learn to look for clues, like detectives. Looking at their body language (discuss, model and write down), their faces (look, model, write down), their words (what they say and how they say it (look model write down)
- Sheet follows which could be used for pupils to note down their clues for recognizing sadness in others
- What to do when people are sad. Talk about how we can be helpful friends and if we see someone and we think they might be sad talk about what we can do- make a mind map:

-Ask them are they ok?

-Tell a teacher or LSA if they say they are not ok.

-Tell a teacher or LSA if we think they are sad but they will not talk.

-Try to cheer them up

-Ask if they want to play etc.

- When we are sad , how do we know? Recap. Encourage pupils to think of three things they could do to cheer themselves up if they are sad in school and 3 things to cheer them if sad at home. These can be written down on cards, decorated / laminated and kept as a reminder. It may look like:

If I am sad in school I can talk to my teacher or ___(named other person).

I can help myself feel happy again by :

- Playing my favourite game
- Looking at my (special interest/hobby) book/cards/ pictures
- Ask my teacher if I can listen to my music





Detective Work: Recognising Sadness

When people are sad their faces can look (draw and label or write):

When people are sad, their body can look like (draw and label or write):

When people are sad, the way they speak may sound like:

Recognising Anger in Ourselves and Others



- Aim: To recognize when others are angry*
- Aim: To know what to do when others are angry*
- Aim: To recognize when they are angry*
- Aim: To know how to manage their anger*

Again, 2 or more sessions, depending on pupils.

Warm up: Simon Says- for facial expressions and body language. 'Simon says, show an angry face or show you are angry with your body' Explain and model to start.

Some pupils struggle to recognize when they are getting angry. They can be calm and then not recognize the signs in themselves that they are getting angry or notice triggers. We need to try to help them recognize these triggers and signs of anger as well as supporting them with finding ways to calm themselves.

Some pupils will not be able to recognize anger in others. They may need to be taught the signs to look for that suggest another person is angry and they may need help learning how to respond ...or not to!

- Ask the pupils to put on angry faces. Look in mirror. Copy one another . talkabout what angry looks like.
- Starting with a youtube clip or cartoon, orTV clip as with the previous session can be a good, visual way to start. Show a clip which shows a trigger and an angry outburst. Watch the clip and discuss: What made them angry? How do we know they were angry? What could they have done instead?
(The type of clip and questions asked will depend on age and ability)
- Ask the pupils to complete the scale on the following page or complete it with them. This may take some time and discussion and would be best done as an individual exercise rather than a group. I have filled these in, but delete and input information SPECIFIC TO THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD. It should, wherever possible, be their language, descriptions and input.
You can choose which type of form, depending on age/ability. More able pupils may be able to articulate how they feel at the three stages. Some may recognize more than three stages and you can add a line! You may need to guide or consult with parents re. calming strategies or the pupil may know themselves. The second, simpler form should also use the pupil's language to describe emotional states but this sheet can be used by the pupil to communicate with the teacher by pointing if they are unable to communicate owing to distress. Some pupils may require both. Amend to suit the individual need.
- See social story below. Some may benefit.
- Now pupils have an understanding of how it 'looks' when they and the group are angry and they know some strategies to help themselves, they need to learn how to recognize anger in others. Using the picture on the sheet further on, ask the pupils to note what makes the girl look angry? How can we tell? Facial expression,? What would her voice be like?
- Ask the pupils what angry body language would look like and discuss: hands on hips, turning away, clenched fists, red face/clenched jaw. Ask the pupils to try and draw one another in the box on the sheet (or teacher/TA can model!)
- If we think someone is angry what should we do? Make a list or mind map what the pupils say.
– Tell teacher, walk away, stop doing or saying what you are saying, listen if they are talking, offer help but leave if they say no, go away or similar. Role play is ideal here as the pupils get the practice of seeing an 'angry' person and responding. Try this a few times in the group.

How I feel	What I can do
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Say I need to go

 <p>Hot Angry Cross inside Shoulders high Teeth clenched</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If I can't use my words just go ○ Walk Away ○ Go to my quiet space ○ Use my time out card ○ Count my breaths
 <p>Getting hot Tingling chest Tight tummy Shorter breaths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask my teacher to go for a walk ○ Count my deep breaths ○ Tell my teacher if something is making me angry ○ Tell my teacher I need quiet time ○ Put on my headphones for 5 minutes ○ Use my toy to distract and calm me
 <p>Calm Happy Everything is ok</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enjoy feeling happy

How I feel



**Feeling very angry
I need help to calm down**



**Something is bothering me and I
am not feeling good**



**I am calm and happy.
Everything is ok**

Social Story Samples

These should be altered to suit the individual. Use pictures or symbols and simplify if that is needed to aid understanding and processing. Individualise the story with the pupils own choice of calming strategies, people to talk to etc.

Sometimes I feel angry.

It's okay to feel angry.

Everyone feels angry sometimes.

I can remember to not hurt others, not hurt myself, and not to break things.

Sometimes, my face gets red, my hands curl up, and I want to scream.

I need to think of safe ways to make my angry feelings go away

I can tell someone that I feel angry.

I can take some deep breaths.

I can squeeze something soft like a ball or pillow.

I can stamp my feet.

Sometimes I feel angry.

It's okay to feel angry.

Everyone feels angry sometimes.

I can tell that I am angry when _____

When I feel angry I can _____ (taken 4 deep breaths _____)

When I have _____ (taken the breaths) _____ I can go to talk to my teacher or my mum or dad and tell them I feel angry.

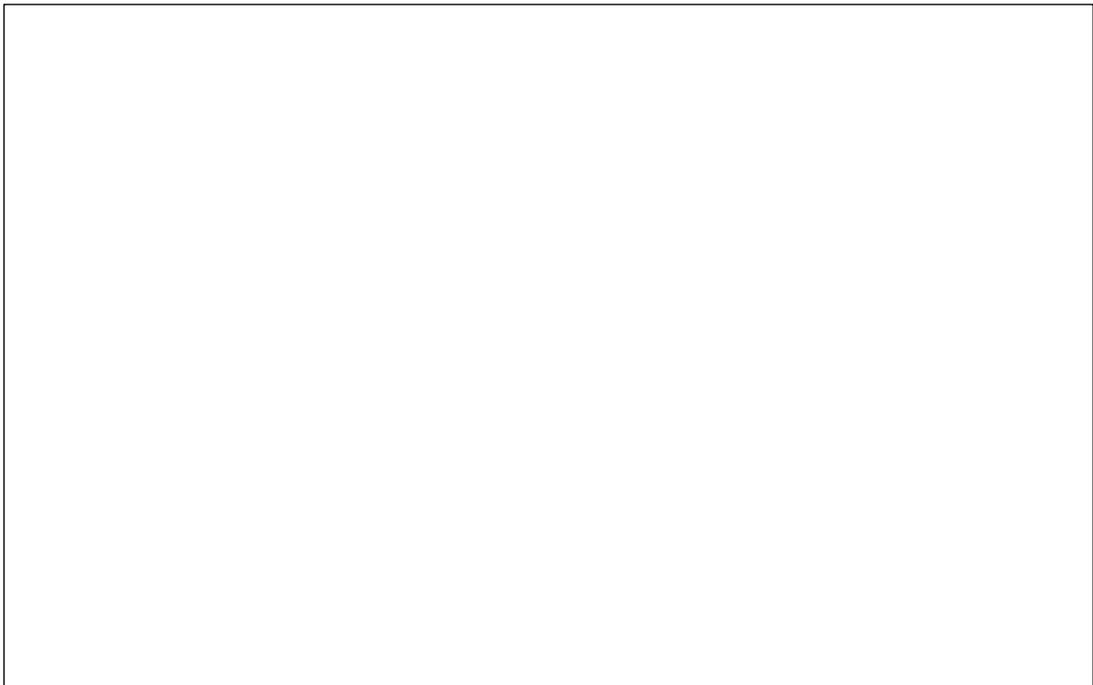
I can tell them 'I am angry'

I will try to use my quiet voice when I talk to my teacher or my mum or dad

I will try to tell them what made me angry.

My teacher, mum or dad will try to help me work out the problem that made me angry.

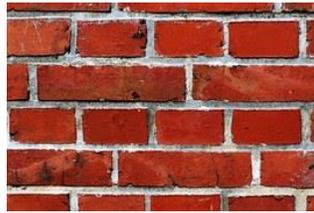
Then I will feel happy and calm



Classroom Display Idea



Make friendship trees or friendship walls. Pupils can write on leaves or bricks what makes a good friend. Younger pupils could stick hand prints and photos on the tree/wall too. Pictures, mind maps and social stories could also be displayed.



Another idea is to display 'The recipe for a good friendship' and this could show a large bowl and list of ingredients. Different packets and bottles could have the different 'ingredients' of a good friend written on them, and be displayed around the bowl.



Last Words....

Remember to complete the evaluations again to see areas that have improved, and how much .The evaluations may show progress in some areas but not others and this indicates that more work is needed in this area. The sessions can be revisited, altered and trialled in different settings to ensure consolidation of learning.



[Links For Schools](#)

http://www.tonyattwood.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:understanding-and-teaching-friendship-skills&Itemid=181

carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>

http://www.5pointscale.com/stuff_kari.htm

[Links for Parents](#)

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/social-skills/young-children.aspx>

<http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/good-practice/written%20for%20you/parents-and-cares/pc%20personal%20and%20social%20development.aspx>

<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/common-challenges/making-keeping-friends/at-a-glance-4-skills-for-making-friends>

<http://www.autism-help.org/communication-autism-making-friends.htm>

