



SunSmart

Ideas for social scripts

What is a social script?

Information from:

<https://www.amaze.org.au/training/social-scripts> and
<https://starautismsupport.com/simple-social-scripts-work/>

A social script is a document that uses storytelling techniques to explain new experiences and environments to autistic people through simple language and images.

Social scripts teach social skills, behavioural skills, and problem-solving in a story format that is individualized to the person.

They usually include very specific and illustrated information about what an autistic person can expect in different situations or experiences and what they can do if they feel overwhelmed.

Tips for writing social scripts

(From [STAR Autism Support](#).)

Social scripts are best when they are consistent and **SIMPLE**.

1. Select

Select a behaviour you want to encourage or teach. For sun protection, it is a routine you want children to become familiar and comfortable with.

2. Identify

Identify what you want to encourage children to do e.g. be relaxed in using different sun protection measures (hat wearing, sunscreen use, playing in shade).

3. Make

Make a script that is simple and clearly demonstrates the behaviour.

4. Perspective

Create the script from the child's point of view. Use lots of visuals. If appropriate, use images of the child in the specific setting doing the preferred behaviour.

5. Look

When the child feels calm and comfortable, look at the script together and read through it so they will be ready when the challenging behaviour needs to be implemented e.g. when sunscreen needs to be applied, when a hat needs to be worn. Look for the right opportunity to implement the social script.

6. Evaluate

Review the script to make sure it is helpful to the child. Do any adjustments need to be made? Is it working effectively?

A script should be simple and short so just a few sentences and supporting images.

Consider other resources and strategies to also support the script such as:

- A laminated image showing the parts of the body that need to have sunscreen applied i.e. cheeks, nose, chin, neck, back of hands, lower arms and lower legs
- Multiple scripts – each outlining a different sun protection measure
- A longer script could be used to introduce and reinforce the sun protection behaviours. Consider a flipbook or digital slideshow.
- Have a copy available for home use to help reinforce the behaviours at home
- Consider the peak UV times and when these messages need to be reinforced e.g. In Victoria, from mid-August to the end of April.
- Children could help choose their own sun hat to wear; a favourite colour/motif/design, in a fabric they like the feel of
- Consider various sunscreen types – milks, creams, gels and packaging – pump-packs, roll-on, tubes.

Suggested sun protection statements

These statements help describe the sun protection routine. Some may be relevant to the child's particular needs and helpful to include in your script.

It's important to support these sentences with photos.

Ideally the script should be simple and short so you wouldn't include all of these statements. Please just choose a few that best help in your situation.

Outdoor play

When I am outside I like to <consider outdoor spaces/areas the child likes to play in, consider activities the child likes to engage in>

It's important to stay safe when I am outside.

Too much sun can hurt my skin.

Hats

I can help protect my skin when I wear a hat.

My hat is <colour/pattern/ description of hat>

My hat has my name on it.

My hat is <location of hat>.

Before I go outside, I get my hat from <location> and put it on my head.

My hat feels

 <consider feel of fabric and feel of hat on the head – it may be soft, stiff, floppy, heavy, light, hot, dark>

My hat helps protect my head and eyes.

My hat comes with me wherever I go.

I see all the other children wearing hats too.

I see <Carer/educator's name> wears a hat too.



Clothing

I can help protect my skin when I wear long sleeves.

I can help protect my skin when I wear long trousers or skirts/dresses.

(Please note: try to encourage clothing that covers as much skin as possible so sunscreen application is minimal – if more skin is covered with clothes, less skin is exposed and less sunscreen needs to be applied.)

Shade

Playing in the shade helps protect my skin.

I like to play under/near/by... <choose preferred shaded play space to describe>.

I can see shadows/ patterns/shapes ...

I can see light through the...

The shade looks ...<dark, patterned etc>

The shade feels.... <cooler/cold/warm etc>

I hear.... when I am in the shade.

Sunscreen

I can help protect my skin when I put on sunscreen.

<Carer/educator's name> helps me put on the sunscreen.

The sunscreen is near/on/at...<location>

The sunscreen comes in a bottle/pump pack/tube...

The sunscreen container is <descriptor of sunscreen – colour of pack, size, shape...>

<Carer/educator's name> helps me turn the pump/ unscrew the cap/ flip the top....

When we do this the lid/ bottle makes a

 sound.

When we pump the nozzle / squeeze the tube... sunscreen comes out.

The sunscreen is <white, soft, cold, squishy....>

The sunscreen feels....

The sunscreen smells....

I help <educator> put a dot of sunscreen on my cheeks /nose / chin / neck / and rub it in.

I help <educator> put dots of sunscreen on the parts of my arms and hands / parts of my legs I can see and rub it in.

When the sunscreen is on my skin it feels....

I know the sunscreen helps protect my skin.

All the children put on sunscreen.

<Carer/educator's name> puts on sunscreen too.

Now I am ready to go outside and play.