

**PDIG Final Report**  
**Using Social Stories to Manage the Behaviour of students on the Autism Spectrum**

1. Project Description:

- a. The project was carried out as planned.
- b. The teachers did not use all of the substitution time as their meetings with the Concordia University intern and the Parkdale principal and the EMSB ICT educational consultant were very efficient, effective, engaging and succinct.
- c. Challenges:
  - i. The Parkdale School principal, Marylene Perron, was injured in the school in the early Fall, and went on sick leave for many months. In the late spring she was cleared for a partial return to work but not at Parkdale School. The replacement principal was very supportive of the project but he did not have the subject matter (autism) expertise of the principal who started the project.
  - ii. The EMSB ICT educational consultant – Maureen Baron – was on sick leave for the months of March and April – during the final production stage of the “social stories” project. While one of her colleagues stepped in to support the project, he did not have the same level of subject matter (autism) knowledge as Maureen Baron.
- d. Journal entries’ synthesis:
  - i. Meetings were held to confirm the contents of the “social stories”, the presentation formats, appropriate use of the stories and their presentation to parents.
  - ii. Meetings were held to debrief after pilot testing the “social stories” with the students so as to adjust them as needed.

2. Project Goals: All project goals were met.

3. Project Outcomes:

- a. Teachers gained a greater understanding of what a “social story” was, as well as when and how it could be used most effectively.
- b. Teachers focused on specific student behaviour triggers that benefited from the use of a “social story”. This knowledge was shared with other staff members.
- c. The “social stories” were available to all staff members either through the school website or as hard copies located in the special education closed classrooms.
- d. The “social stories” will be shared with the parents of Parkdale School on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Parents will receive training on how to access and use them.

4. Reinvestment:

- a. Benefits to the educational community at large:
  - i. Students on the Autism Spectrum are present in almost all public and private English schools in Quebec. For students on the Autism Spectrum and the staff and family members who interact with them:

1. The digitally available “social stories” are easily accessible resources to increase communication opportunities and mitigate inappropriate behaviours in the school, classroom, home and outside environment (e.g. on the school bus, on a field trip).
  2. The digitally available “social stories” are easily accessible resources for the students to use as self-regulation tools when feeling anxious, upset because of changes in their environment, schedule, or perception of what should be happening.
  3. The digitally available “social stories” reflect the students' reality - e.g. Canada, Quebec, diversity of representation.
- b. Replication of the project:
- i. Yes this project should be replicated so as to:
    1. increase the number of available “social stories”
    2. increase the range of content of the “social stories”
  - ii. Improvements:
    1. Create an online discussion group where teachers can propose and discuss potential topics for “social stories”.
    2. Create an online discussion group where parents can propose and discuss potential topics for “social stories”.
    3. Create a technological solution whereby the students, and or their teachers and or family members, can personalize each required “social story” to the user (e.g. include the name of the student)

#### 5. Posting for the LCEEQ website:

Most students on the autism spectrum have some level or type of communication challenge, more specifically, expressing themselves and or understanding what others are trying to communicate to them. Problems in this communication process often results in students exhibiting inappropriate behaviour(s) which makes their inclusion in school settings more challenging. A successful strategy to calm, prevent and or mitigate these inappropriate behaviours is the use of “social stories” as a communication tool. "Social stories are simple descriptions of an everyday social situation, written from a child’s perspective. Social stories can help a child prepare for upcoming changes in routine, de-mystify social interactions, and relate academic skills to real-life experiences. The idea is that, with the help of an adult, the child rehearses the story ahead of time. When the situation actually happens, the child can then use the story to help guide his or her behaviour.... Social stories were developed to help improve social interactions in children with autism by giving simple and clear descriptions of social cues and appropriate behaviours." <http://autismcanada.org/living-with-autism/treatments/non-medical/communication/social-stories/> .

The project developed, produced content for, and curates a database of “social stories” where Canadian and Quebec environments and diverse student populations are represented. This database entitled, *Animated social stories for use by teachers and parents of children on the autism spectrum*, is available to those who work with students on the Autism Spectrum (e.g.

teachers, parents and support personal), online through the English Montreal School Board's (EMSB), Parkdale School's website <http://www.emsb.qc.ca/parkdale/> . The social stories function on computers and mobile devices so that they are accessible to potential users where ever and whenever needed.

Documents included with this report:

1. EMSB Press Release announcing the launch of the project's finished "social stories"
2. Link to the article in the publication entitled Inspirations, regarding the project, see page 33. [http://www.inspirationsnews.com/pdf/Editions/Inspirations\\_2018\\_spring-summer-FINAL-lowres.pdf](http://www.inspirationsnews.com/pdf/Editions/Inspirations_2018_spring-summer-FINAL-lowres.pdf)