



## **I Can Handle Scared Book**

**Help children handle big emotions with this class-made book!**

With the recent weather related events such as hurricanes, tornados and fires, children may be scared and don't know how to handle their fear. They may experience physical changes such as loss of appetite, trouble sleeping or headaches.

If this describes a child you care for, this printable book will assist in helping your child find alternative ways to calm and feel safe. This type of book is called a social story and is designed to help children learn how to seek help and get their needs met. You may choose to print this book as is or use it as a prototype to develop your own. It is best to make your own book using photos of the child needing new skills.

Read the book daily with your child. Practice the breathing techniques everyday with your child when he or she is calm. When the child is unable to breathe for themselves, an adult must breathe for the child.

Print the book on 8.5" x 11" paper, landscape layout and staple at the left margin. You may wish to laminate the pages and hole-punch at the top before placing in a 3-ring binder for long-term use.

**[ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://ConsciousDiscipline.com)**

# The Power of Social Stories

“Your child will get a referral and as a consequence can be suspended if he keeps on hitting his classmates. Please talk to him so that he stops the hitting.” As I am reading this note a parent recently shared with me, a part of me feels complete frustration but another part is full of compassion for this teacher. As teachers we all want our students to flourish, to show certain “appropriate behavior,” to show the best of themselves, but do we all know how to do this? Sadly it is hard, and when faced with certain behaviors teachers can get paralyzed and not know how to effectively best help the child.

Before I started practicing Conscious Discipline I could have been that teacher who relies on fear in the desire that the child will change his behavior. However Conscious Discipline has taught me that it is about three things: Helping the child feel safe, connecting with the child and teaching the child the missing skills.

Warning the child that next time he will get a referral, that his parents will have to come to school, that he will be sent to the principal’s office, the he will miss recess time certainly doesn’t teach the child a skill, nor help the child feel safe or connected.

A very efficient tool we use in Conscious Discipline to help children learn a skill is Social Stories. They are simple stories that help remind students about appropriate social behavior. The process in creating a social story is easy, you just think about the desire behavior, write short sentences that state that behavior and then add pictures. For example if the story is about helping a child who has anxiety separating from a parent in the mornings the sentences could look like this:

*Everyday my mom takes me to school. We walk together into the building.*

*She kisses me good-bye and I hug her tightly.*

*I then greet my teacher and if I feel sad I breathe deeply with her or I go to the*

*Safe Place to regain my composure.*

*I then go to my table and start working. I enjoy my day at school.*

*We have story time*

*Then mom is back to pick me up.*

*I did it! I enjoyed my day at school! I can do this!*

These are some steps that can help you create your own social stories and in turn help your children practice and learn healthy and appropriate social behaviors.

### **1. When is a social story helpful?**

Make a social story when you wish to teach a skill to a child or a group of children. Sometimes it has to do with teaching or practicing school procedures such as how to walk safely in the hallways, arrival or dismissal procedures, how to keep it safe in the school bus etc. Other times it might have more to do with social behavior such as how to help a child who expresses frustration by hitting, how to help a child who finds it difficult to separate from parents when coming to school, or how to help children struggling to relate to friends or dealing with fear over a natural disaster. It is really about seeing beyond the child's behavior and understanding what it is they might not be communicating appropriately and in consequence teaching them that missing skill through the social story.

### **2. How do you put it together?**

Each page in the book has a sentence reinforcing the desired behavior, add a visual of what that behavior looks like. Including real pictures of the child or group of children in action results in a more impacting result. Each page then shows the child what to do in different situations. The last page of the book can be designed for the adult reading it so that any adult knows exactly the purpose of it, how to further reinforce the skill, and when and how to read it.

### **3. Who will read this book?**

The book can be read by any educator in the school, but it is also important to make a copy of the book for the parents when it is something that can be reinforced at home. When there is a behavior that we are concerned about we usually ask parents for help. However parents don't really know how to help their child except for asking them to stop the unwanted behavior. The social story is a great tool for a parent to help the child with the particular situation and it also gives parents skills, such as specific language as to how to effectively help their child.

### **4. How to make it even more powerful**

As you read the story pause after every page and make sure the child has understood the message. Ask him questions, ask him to repeat a sentence that he could use in context or even role-play.

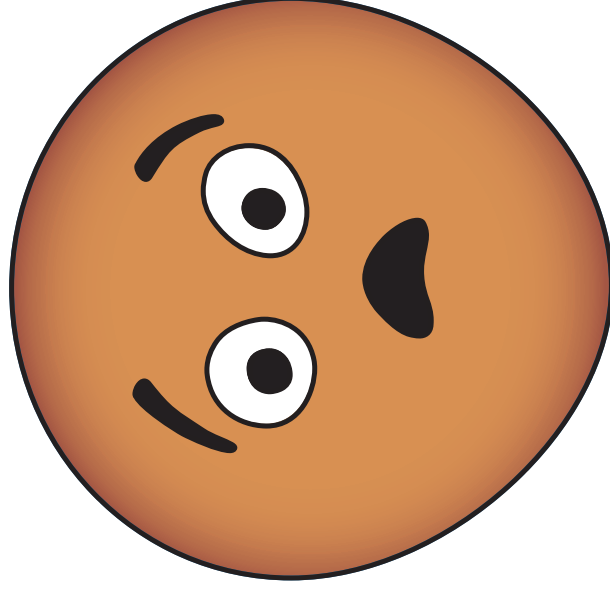
### **5. A tool for connection**

Reading a story can always turn into a precious moment of connection. Dedicate a special time to read this book to the child. Have him sit close to you, look at the child in the eye as you finish every sentence, be present in the moment as you are reading; it is your time with the child. And finally, enjoy it! If you enjoy this time with the child, he will enjoy it too and this moment of perfect connection will then translate – throughout your day- into cooperation, willingness, impulse control. So there, how you read it can be a great investment as well!

Some of the recent social stories I have put together are:

- *"I know what to do!"* Helping a child who hits at school.
- *"Oh I Felt Scared"* Helping children express and handle their emotions after a natural disaster. Specifically for Hurricanes and earthquakes
- *"When I feel mad"* Helping a child manage his anger.
- *"Our day at school"* Designed to help children follow their everyday procedures in a safe manner.

# I Can Handle Scared



**I'm safe. Keep breathing. I can handle this.**

**Sometimes I feel scared.  
I might feel scared when I am alone  
at night in my bed.**





**I might feel scared after I watch  
something on TV that I am not sure whether  
it will happen to me or not.**

**And lately, I might feel scared  
when it rains because it reminds me  
of when it rained so hard.**



It rained so hard that we couldn't go outside because it wasn't safe. This heavy rain and wind was caused by a hurricane. During the hurricane some of these things happened:

- Homes got flooded
- Windows broke
- Trees fell
- There was no electricity

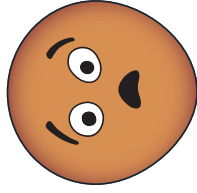
What happened in your home?  
If you are willing, share with your friends.

**Some things I might experience now are:**

- Headache
- Upset tummy
- Not feeling hungry
- Trouble sleeping
- Afraid of the dark
- Nightmares
- Being cranky
- Wetting my bed
- Crying easily

**Raise your hand if you have felt any of these.  
Who would like to share?**

**When I feel scared my eyebrows and eyelids go up, and the sides of my mouth pull down.**



**Scared says,  
"Seek safety and  
comfort from  
those you love."**

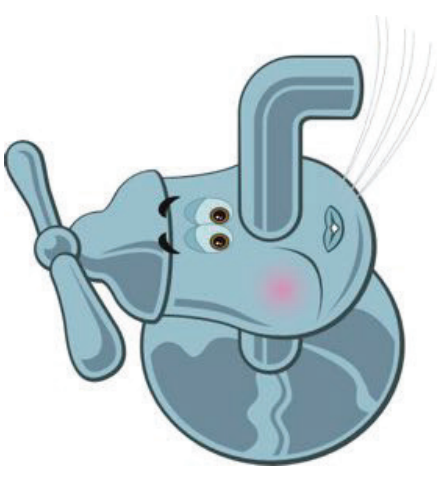
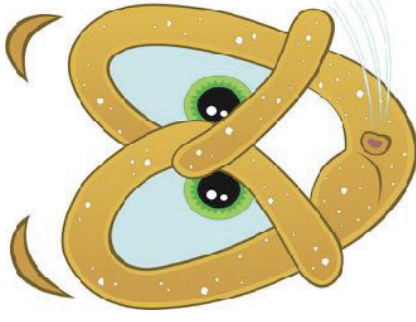
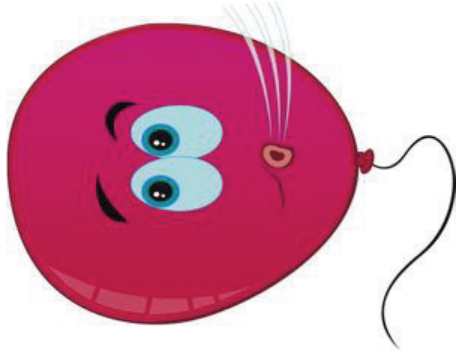
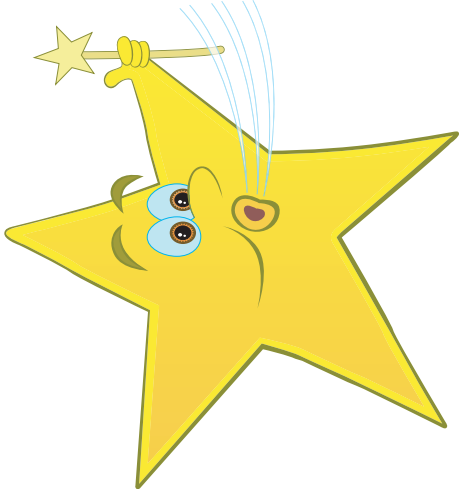


**Scared is a sign for me to look for help.  
I ask my mom, my dad, or my teachers to  
help me when I feel scared. They will remind  
me that I am safe.**



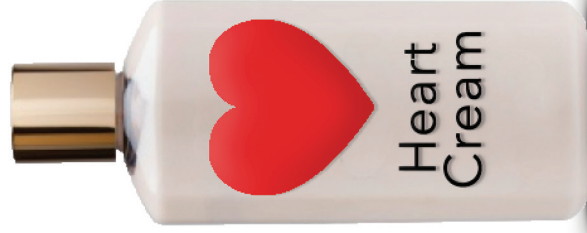
**You're safe.  
Keep breathing.  
I will keep you safe.**

Feeling scared signals for me to breathe  
deeply 3 times. I can choose to breathe like  
a S.T.A.R., Balloon, Pretzel or Drain.



**Breathe with me.**

**My teacher, my mom, my dad or a friend,  
can also put lotion on my hand. Then, I can rub  
it on each finger starting with my pinky,  
naming the people that can help me feel safe.**



My teacher, parents or friends can also do a story hand with me when I feel scared. Then I can do it with my friends when they feel scared too.

**Thumb: Describe the problem area or concern.**

But the thumb said, "What about me? Sometimes I feel scared the storm will come again." The thumb was worried. Fold child's thumb in and wrap fingers around it and say, "No matter what happens, I am here to keep you safe. You may always come to me, you're safe, breathe with me."

"This little finger likes to draw."

"This little finger likes to play."

"This little finger likes to learn."

Hold child firmly by the wrist. On each finger, tell a story about the child's life. "This little finger likes to come to school."

## Story Hand

**To help a child manage stress.**

Start at the pinky finger. As you massage each finger tell the story of the child's life. The thumb discloses the stressor and at the same time reassures the child that s/he is safe and capable.



If I am at school, I can get my Feeling Buddy Scared, and say, **"Hello Scared, breathe with me Scared, you are safe."**



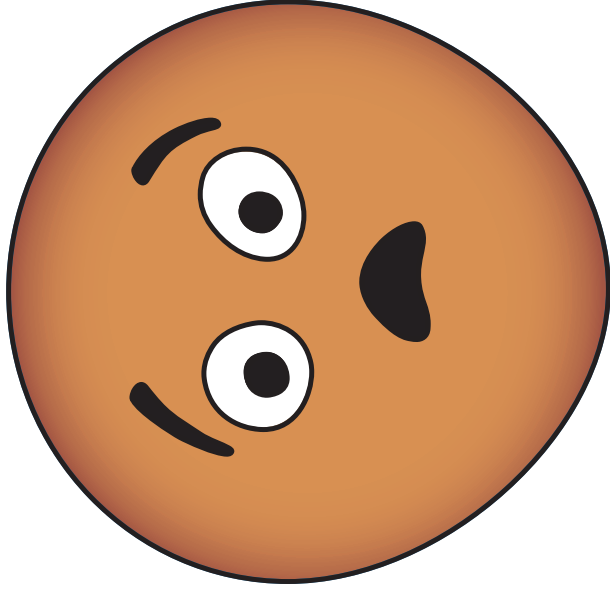
Then I breathe deeply with Scared 3 times and say:  
**"You look so scared, you can handle this."**  
And I keep on breathing with my feeling buddy.

**I can also help myself feel calm by:**

- **Make a drawing of what I find scary**
- **I can choose to do a story hand with someone**
- **I can choose to talk with someone**
- **I can choose to continue breathing deeply**



**When someone feels scared in my  
School Family, they might look like this:**



**I can be helpful by:**

**Wishing well**



**Helping in the  
Safe Place**



**Sharing a Feeling Buddy**



**"I did it! I was helpful!"**

**Breathing for another child**



**Feeling scared can be hard, it might  
happen throughout my day. But I can  
handle it!!! YES I CAN!!**

