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Social Communication Intervention Script for story book, *Knuffle Bunny Free*

***Knuffle Bunny Free* by Mo Willems, 2010, Harper Collins Children's Books, New York.**

Sharing a Story to Facilitate Social and Emotional Learning

Many children with disabilities such as developmental language disorders, language-learning disorders, social communication disorders, or autism spectrum disorders have difficulty with aspects of social and emotional learning. These children often need explicit, repeated instruction designed to facilitate emotion understanding, conversational ability, and language comprehension and production skill. The following informal script is designed to help interventionists (caregivers and professionals) focus on and emphasize important concepts.

The following storybook has been selected because it has a well-defined story structure, clear language, rich emotion content, and engaging illustrations. A script is provided to guide interventionists as they share this book. Initially, concepts are listed that this book is particularly well suited to teach. These include social and emotional knowledge, interactional skills, vocabulary, and language structure.

Following the list of concepts, a series of prompts is provided for each story page. These prompts include questions, comments, and brief activities (e.g., making a facial expression in a mirror) designed to teach specific concepts. The interventionist may read the story text for each page and then present any of the prompts they feel would be most appropriate. The script is designed to be flexible and adjusted to each child's needs.

At the conclusion of the story script, a series of questions is provided to probe how well children understand and identify emotions that story characters experience. If desired, these questions can be used to evaluate how well children grasp the emotion content of the story.

Following story sharing, the interventionist may guide children to enact the story using simple props. This activity facilitates story comprehension by assisting children to understand the internal states and motivations of characters. Older children may prefer a readers' theater format or choose to provide additional text or dialog to the storybook by using attachable note paper.

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Concepts to stress

- 1. Emotions:** happy, bored, sad, scared, shocked, worried, brave, annoyed, relieved, disgusted, surprised, proud
- 2. Anticipating the emotions that a situation may elicit**
- 3. The importance of reading facial expressions of emotion**
- 4. Understanding mixed emotions—e.g., happy that she is having fun, sad that the bunny is gone**
- 5. Anticipating/understanding how another person feels**
- 6. Prosocial behavior: Understanding how others feel (empathy.) Family members try to make other family members happy**
- 7. Prosocial behavior: sharing, putting someone else's needs before one's own.**
- 8. Structural: complete simple sentence forms, complex sentences with causal connections (but, if, so, because)**

Intro: Cover and Title Page—Look, this is another book about the little girl named Trixie and her Knuffle Bunny. Trixie really loves her Knuffle Bunny, doesn't she? In this book, Trixie and her family go on a long trip. They are going to visit Trixie's grandma and grandpa. Wait till you see what happened on the trip! Let's think about how Trixie and her family feel in this story.

Look at these pictures. (Show pictures of real faces showing happy, sad, scared, bored, surprised/shocked, worried, brave, annoyed, relieved, disgusted, proud, as available.) Trixie and her family are going to have some of these feelings in the story. Let's see what happens.

Page 1 (Title Page)

Look at these pictures. Here is Trixie's family again.

Page 2-3

Read: "One day, not so long ago..."

Trixie and her family are going on a long trip, aren't they?

How long do you think it will take to get there? (Discuss.)

Define Oma and Opa. (Grandma and grandpa.)

How do you think Trixie feels about this trip? (Trixie is happy and excited because she is going to see her grandparents.)

Page 4-5

Read: "So that meant..."

Wow! Look at all the things that Trixie and her parents have to do before they get on the plane.

How does Trixie feel? (Point to each picture. Note: Trixie is excited and happy about the trip, a little worried in the airport, worried when her bunny goes through the X-ray machine, bored waiting, and happy when she finally gets on the plane. Have child make a face like Trixie's in each picture. Use mirror.)

(Show a few emotion pictures—ask which of the people in the pictures looks like Trixie in one or two of the book pictures. Contrast the facial expressions.)

Page 6-7

Read: "On the plane..."

Look at all the things that Trixie did on the plane.

Have you ever been on a plane? What did you do? (Describe your experience and how you felt.)

Trixie is happy because they are finally in Holland.

Page 8-9

Read: "Oma and Opa's house..."

Look at Trixie's face here (p. 8). How does she feel? (Happy/excited.)

How do her grandparents feel? (They are happy and excited because Trixie has come to visit.)

How does Trixie feel (p.8)? (She is happy to see her grandparents.)

Uh oh, how does Trixie feel here (p. 9, final picture)? (Worried, afraid.)

Why do you think Trixie feels that way?

What does Trixie realize? (Ask about what could make Trixie feel this scared/worried when she is happy to see her grandparents.)

(Show a few emotion pictures—ask which of the people in the pictures looks like Trixie on p. 8 and then in the last picture on p. 9 [happy vs. worried or afraid]-- Contrast the facial expressions.)

Page 10-11

Point to each picture.

Read: “Trixie didn’t tell...”

Trixie did not tell her daddy about the bunny. How did Daddy know? (Talk about the fact that he could tell that Trixie was upset by looking at her face. Have the child make a face that shows he/she is upset—use the mirror.)

How does Trixie’s daddy feel? (He is so sad and worried because Trixie does not have her Knuffle Bunny.)

Where is the bunny? (She probably left it on the plane.)

Look at Trixie’s face. How does she feel? (Talk about the fact that she probably feels sad, scared, and worried all at the same time.)

Why does Trixie feel that way? (Trixie feels sad/scared/worried because her Knuffle Bunny is lost.)

Page 12-13

Read: “Trixie’s daddy called...”

(Discuss each picture.)

What does Trixie’s daddy do to solve the problem?

Does it work? (No.)

Why not? (The plane has already left for China so they cannot go get her bunny.)

Look at Trixie's face (p. 13). How does Trixie feel? (Talk about the fact that she feels at least two things at once—sad, scared.)

Can you make a face like Trixie's? (Use mirror.)

What do you think will happen?

Page 14-15

Read: "Trixie's mommy hugged her..."

Look at Trixie's face here (p. 14). How does she feel? (Sad/worried/scared.)

(Show a few emotion pictures.) Which of these people feels like Trixie?

Why does Trixie's mommy ask her to be brave? What does she mean? (Talk about not being too sad or fussing a lot. If the child has already read a *Llama Llama* book, ask the child what Little Llama would do if he left his Fuzzy on a plane—he would probably tantrum.)

Everyone in Trixie's family tries to make her feel better. What do they do? (Discuss each picture.)

What do you think Trixie's mommy and daddy and grandma and grandpa would REALLY like to do? (Get her bunny back.)

Can they do that? (They cannot get her bunny back because it is on a plane flying to China.)

Discuss each strategy. (Mommy—be brave. Daddy—I have gone through this. Oma and Opa—you are big and you can handle this.)

Why does Trixie's family try to help her feel better? (They love her and they want her to feel happy. When we love people, we want them to feel happy.)

Does it work (p. 15)? (Yes, she is feeling a little better.)

What would you say to Trixie?

Page 16-17

Read: "Even if she wished..."

(Point to each picture, note emotions.)

Look at all the fun places that Trixie went. Does she look like she's having fun? (No.)

Why? (Trixie is thinking about her bunny. Trixie feels so sad that her bunny is gone. She looks scared too—scared and sad that her bunny is gone.)

Why is she scared and sad? (Sad to be without her bunny, scared that she will never see her bunny again.)

Trixie is trying to enjoy herself. She is trying to be brave.

Look at Mommy's, Daddy's, Oma's, and Opa's faces (p. 17, last picture. Point to each one). How do they feel? (They are worried about Trixie because she is so sad.)

What would you say to Trixie?

Page 18-19

Read: "and while the whole week..."

Look, Trixie and her parents are doing lots of fun things (p. 18.).

But how does Trixie feel? (Look at each picture.)

Talk about the fact that Trixie likes the activities, but whenever she thinks about her bunny, she feels sad.

Look at Oma and Opa. What do you think they are doing?

What do you think will happen?

Page 20-21

Read: "That night..."

(Look at each picture.)

Oh wow! What happened?

Oma and Opa bought Trixie a new bunny.

(Point to last picture.) How does Trixie feel? (Sad.)

Why do you think Trixie still feels that way? (She is sad because this is not her bunny. She is sad because she misses her bunny.)

How do Opa and Oma feel(last picture)? (They feel sad/worried and disappointed that Trixie did not like the bunny/feel better.)

If you were there, what would you say to Trixie?

What would you say to Opa and Oma?

Let's see what happens...

Page 22-23-24 (open flap)

Read: "Trixie was sure..."

Look. Trixie is asleep. Trixie is having a dream.

What did Trixie dream?

Look at each picture and describe how the kids feel about the bunny.

Trixie dreamed that Knuffle Bunny was making kids happy all over the world.

How do you think this will make Trixie feel?

What do you think will happen?

Page 25

Read: "The next morning..."

How does Trixie feel now? (She is happy.)

Why does Trixie feel better? (Trixie is thinking about Knuffle Bunny's making other kids happy.)

Trixie is happy because her bunny is helping other kids.

Have you ever felt happy because you helped someone feel better? (Give an example or two.)

Page 26-27

Read: "Trixie had a big breakfast..."

Now how does Trixie feel?

Point to each picture and talk about what Trixie is doing and how she feels.

(Talk about the fact that Trixie thinks the coffee is disgusting. Have the child make a disgusted face. Use mirror.)

Trixie thinks the coffee is disgusting but the ice cream is good.

(Show some emotion pictures.) Which of these people feels disgusted? Happy?

Do you think that Trixie is thinking about her Knuffle Bunny?

Page 28-29

Read: Before she knew it..."

How does Trixie feel about her Oma?

How does Trixie feel about her Opa? (She loves them.)

How does Trixie feel on the train and the plane (p. 28)? (Trixie looks sad or worried.)

Why does she feel that way? (Maybe Trixie feels a little sad because she is leaving her Oma and Opa.)

Hey, look at this baby (last picture). How does the baby feel? (Mad/sad.)

What do you think the baby will do on the plane?

What will happen if that baby cries on the plane? (Talk about what it is like when a baby fusses and cries on a plane.)

Page 30

Read: "Waaaaa..."

What is happening here? That baby is crying really loud!

How does Daddy feel? (Daddy looks annoyed because the baby is making so much noise.)

How does Trixie feel here? (Maybe she feels annoyed too.)

Look at this guy (sitting by the baby). How does he feel? (Really annoyed that the baby is crying so loud.)

How does the baby's mother feel? (She is worried that the baby will cry all the way home.)

How long are they going to be on that plane? (A long time—all day.)

How long do you think the baby will cry? (Maybe the whole trip—give an example of a time you were on a flight and a baby cried the whole time.)

What do you think will happen?

Page 31

Read: "But can you believe it?..."

Wow! What happened?

What do you see there? (The bunny.)

Page 32-33

Read: "Knuffle Bunny!!!"

How does Trixie feel (p. 31)? (She is very surprised to see her bunny! It is a good surprise!")

(Show some emotion pictures.) Which of these people feels like Trixie does?

How do Trixie's mommy and daddy feel? (They are so surprised and so happy that Trixie has her bunny back.)

Are you surprised that the bunny was still there? (Talk about the fact that it was unlikely.)

Trixie is sooooo happy because she found her bunny!

But look at the baby behind Trixie. How does he feel? (He is still mad and sad.)

Page 34-35

Read: "Happy enough to make a decision..."

Wow! What did Trixie do?

(Point to each picture and discuss how each person feels. Talk about why Trixie's mommy and daddy are so surprised. Try to get the child to say, "The baby's mommy/ Trixie's mommy/daddy/the baby is surprised that Trixie will give her bunny to the baby.")

Why did Trixie give her bunny to the baby? (She gave her bunny to the baby to make the baby happy.)

Are you surprised that Trixie gave her bunny away? (Talk about the fact that you are surprised. Have the child make a surprised face.)

Do you think it was easy for Trixie to give her bunny away?

(Discuss the fact that Trixie has done something hard to make someone else happy.)

Page 36-37

Read: "Really..."

Wow! Trixie was kind and brave, wasn't she?

How does the baby feel? (The baby feels happy and excited to have the bunny.)

(Discuss why each person feels the way they do—the mother was very thankful that her baby is not crying anymore. The passengers are very relieved [define] because the baby is not crying anymore.)

Do you think that Trixie was brave? Tell me about that.

Page 38-39

Read: "And that is how..."

How does Trixie feel (p. 38, first picture)? (Happy that the baby is happy)

Then what happened? (Trixie got a letter and a picture from the baby's family.)

How do you think Trixie feels?

Do you think that Trixie ever missed her Knuffle Bunny? (Discuss the fact that Trixie may have been sad if she missed her bunny, but she felt happy when she thought about the baby.)

(Consider ending at p. 39 for a young child—Move on to p. 40-43 if you think the child will understand that Trixie's daddy is thinking about the future when Trixie will grow up and hopefully have a baby of her own.)

Page 40-41

Read: "A note to Trixie..."

Look, this is a note from Trixie's daddy.

(Look at each picture) What does Daddy hope will happen for Trixie? (Daddy wants Trixie to grow up and be happy.)

Page 42-43

Read: "...From an old pen pal..."

Look, here is Trixie all grown up. She has a baby of her own.

What does the baby have? (a Knuffle Bunny). Who do you think sent the bunny to Trixie's baby.

How does the baby feel? (The baby is so happy because she has a Knuffle Bunny.)

Summary:

(Use cloze procedures so child can help summarize.)

Trixie still loved her Knuffle Bunny. Trixie and her mommy and daddy went to visit Oma and Opa (grandparents) in Holland. It was a very long plane trip. Trixie left her Knuffle Bunny on the plane. Trixie was so sad, upset, and worried when she realized her bunny was gone. She was sad when she thought about her bunny, even though she did fun things. Oma and Opa bought Trixie a new bunny, but Trixie was still sad. That night, Trixie had a dream. She dreamed that her bunny was all over the world making kids

happy. Trixie was happy when she thought about that. Trixie had lots of fun with her grandparents. When it was time to go home, Trixie and her parents got on the plane. Trixie was so surprised and excited to find her Knuffle Bunny on the plane. But there was a baby on the plane who was very sad and mad. He was crying very loud! Trixie gave her bunny to the baby. Trixie was very kind and brave. Trixie did a hard thing to make the baby happy.

Follow-up probes

Probe 1, p. 6 (first picture), Look at Trixie. How does she feel?

Why does she feel_____?

Ask both questions first, but if the emotion response is wrong, say:

OR, she might feel happy. Trixie is happy because she is going on a trip.

Probe 2, p. 9 (last picture-bottom), Look at Trixie. How does she feel?

Why does she feel_____?

Ask both questions first, but if the emotion response is wrong, say:

OR, she might feel scared or worried. Trixie is scared because she remembered her bunny.

Probe 3, p. 12 (second picture), Look at Trixie. How does she feel?

Why does she feel_____?

Ask both questions first, but if the emotion response is wrong, say:

OR, she might feel sad. Trixie is sad because her bunny is gone.

Probe # 4, p. 19 (first picture), Look at Trixie. How does she feel?

Why does she feel_____?

Ask both questions first, but if the emotion response is wrong, say:

OR, she might feel sad. Trixie is sad because she misses her bunny.

Probe #5, p. 27 (first picture), Look at Trixie. How does she feel?

Why does she feel_____?

Ask both questions first, but if the emotion response is wrong, say:

OR, she might feel disgusted. Trixie is sad, disgusted because the coffee is yucky.

Probe #6 p. 31 (first picture), Look at Trixie. How does she feel?

Why does she feel_____

Ask both questions first, but if the emotion response is wrong, say:

OR, she might feel surprised. Trixie is surprised because she sees her bunny.

Dialog/enactment activity:

Help the child enact the story using simple props. Or, guide the child in a modified “readers’ theater” where the child voices one or more characters. Adjust as needed for the individual child.

Example of “reader’s theater”: Trixie went on a long trip to see Oma and Opa, didn’t she? Trixie took Knuffle Bunny with her. But Trixie accidentally left Knuffle Bunny on the airplane. Trixie was so sad and upset! Trixie’s family did lots of things to help Trixie feel better. In the end, Trixie did a very brave thing. Let’s look at the book again and you tell me what Trixie was thinking and feeling. Tell me what Trixie’s family was thinking too.”

On as many pages as possible, have the child say or dictate dialog or thoughts for the characters. Emphasize what the characters are feeling and why. In some instances, you might use a thought bubble or a dialog bubble attached to the page with a sticky note.