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Social Communication Intervention Script for *The Easter Bunny's Assistant*

The Easter Bunny's Assistant by Jan Thomas, 2012, Harper, 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 experienced:** Happy, excited, sad, annoyed, disgusted, sorry/guilty, worried, embarrassed, frustrated
- 2. Anticipating how others will feel in certain situations**
- 3. "Controlling" oneself under conditions of high emotion**
- 4. Pro-social: Including others in play or work, friends try to find ways to work together**
- 5. Structural: complete simple sentence forms, complex sentences with causal connections (but, if, so, because)**

Intro: Cover and Title Page—We are going to read a book called *The Easter Bunny's Assistant*. What do you think the book might be about?

This book is about two friends, the Easter Bunny and Skunk. The Easter Bunny wants to make Easter eggs, and Skunk wants to help. But there is going to be a problem. I want you to think about what the Easter Bunny and Skunk are thinking in this story. Think about how they feel in this story.

Page 1 (Title Page)

(Look at picture on cover and picture right inside cover.)

I wonder what this book is about?

What do you think? (Let child look at picture.)

Now let's look at it together.

Page 2-3

Read: "Hello, I am the..."

Look at the Easter Bunny—he has an assistant.

Do you know what an assistant is? (helper)

How do they feel? Why do you think they feel happy? (Maybe they feel happy because they are planning to do something fun.)

Have you ever made Easter eggs? (Have child tell about it.)

Page 4-5

Read: “Step 1: Hard-boil...”

How does Skunk feel about that? (Skunk is so excited to boil the eggs.)

(Talk about “excited” very happy—the “jumpy happy” feeling.)

(Talk about the fact that we sometimes feel excited when we are planning to do something fun.)

Can you make an excited face? (Use mirror)

Page 6-7

Read: “Uh, Skunk....”

Oh, what has happened? (Help child infer that Skunk has sprayed. Talk about how skunks can spray a really, REALLY nasty spray. They usually spray when they are afraid, but this skunk sprays every time he is excited.)

Look at the Easter Bunny’s face? How does he feel? (He feels disgusted because it smells so bad.) Have you ever smelled something really disgusting? (Elaborate.)

Can you make a disgusted face like Easter Bunny’s? (Use mirror.)

How does Skunk feel? (He is sorry because he sprayed. Skunk is embarrassed because he sprayed [define embarrassed.]

Page 8-9

Read: “Please try to control....”

What does Easter Bunny mean when he says, "Please try to control yourself?" (The Easter Bunny wants Skunk to control his spraying.)

Why does Skunk spray? (Skunk sprays when he is excited.) Do you think that Skunk can control his spraying?

How does Easter Bunny feel about Skunk's spraying? (He is annoyed or a little mad.)

Skunk is Easter Bunny's assistant and they want to work together. Easter Bunny and Skunk want to work together, but Skunk makes a disgusting smell.

What do you think they will do? How will they work this out?

Page 10-11

Read: "Step 2: Make dye..."

What is step 2? (That means, what does Easter Bunny plan to do next?)

(Define "dye.")

Easter Bunny is making dye so he can color the eggs.

How does Easter Bunny feel about this? (He is happy because he wants to color the eggs.)

How does Skunk feel? Do you think he feels excited?

When Skunk feels excited, what happens?

What do you think will happen?

Page 12-13

Read: "Exciting!"

How does Skunk feel? (very excited)

How does Easter Bunny feel? (Worried, sad.)

Can you make a worried face like Easter Bunny's?" (Use mirror,)

Does Easter Bunny feel worried that Skunk will spray again?

If Skunk sprays, what will happen?

Page 14-15

Read: "Skunk!..."

Oh, look at Easter Bunny. What do you think happened?

How does Easter Bunny feel? (Easter Bunny feels disgusted because Skunk sprayed. Easter Bunny feels disgusted because it smells really, really bad.)

How does Skunk feel? (Skunk feels guilty/sorry/embarrassed because he sprayed. Define guilty.)

Page 16-17

Read: "Step 3: Decorate..."

Step 3: What do they need to do next?

Have you ever decorated eggs with crayons? Do you think it would be fun to decorate Easter eggs with crayons? (Yes, that would be fun.)

How does Easter Bunny feel? (Mad, worried.) Wait, decorating eggs with crayons is fun. Why does Easter Bunny feel mad/worried? (He feels worried because he thinks Skunk might spray again.)

Look at Skunk. How does he feel? How does he feel about decorating eggs?

If Skunk feels excited, what might happen?

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

Page 18-19

Read: "so..."

Look at Easter Bunny; look at Skunk.

What is Easter Bunny thinking? How does he feel? (He feels mad/worried because he thinks Skunk will spray.)

Can you make a worried face like Easter Bunny's? (Use mirror.)

How does Skunk feel? (Maybe a little worried?) Why is Skunk worried? (He is worried because he is afraid he will spray, and he knows that Easter Bunny will be disgusted.)

Page 20-21

Read: "pleasant..."

How does Easter Bunny feel? (worried, mad/annoyed.)

How does Skunk feel? (He also feels a little worried.)

Do you think that Skunk is trying NOT to feel excited? Why? (He is trying not to feel excited so he will not spray.)

What do you think is going to happen here?

Page 22-23

Read: "and exciting!"

How does Skunk feel? (Really, really excited.)

Can you make a really excited face like Skunk's? (Use mirror.)

What happens when Skunk feels excited?

Oh, oh, how is Easter Bunny going to feel?

Page 24-25

Whoa, look at this.

How does Easter Bunny feel? Why? (He feels disgusted because Skunk sprayed.)

How does Skunk feel? (He feels embarrassed/guilty because he sprayed. Define guilty again.)

Did Skunk want to spray? (No) Did he spray on purpose? (He sprayed because he got excited. Skunks spray when they are excited. Maybe he did not mean to spray, but he just sprayed because he was so excited.)

Page 26-27

Read: "Step 4: Remove Skunk..."

What is step 4?

Why did Easter Bunny say the next step is to push Skunk out of the room? (He wants Skunk to leave.)

How does Easter Bunny feel? (mad/angry)

How does Skunk feel? (Skunk feels surprised, but it is not a good surprise. Maybe he is sad too.)

Why did Easter Bunny push Skunk out? (Easter Bunny wants Skunk to leave so he will not have to smell the spray.)

Wait, Skunk is Easter Bunny's assistant. They are supposed to work together.

How could they work this out? If you were there, what would you say to Easter Bunny and Skunk?

Page 28-29

Read: "Step 5: Dye..."

What is step 5? (Define dye if necessary.)

How does Easter Bunny feel? (happy)

Where is Skunk? How does he feel? (Skunk is still a little excited about the eggs—he does not look mad.)

What does Skunk want to do? (He wants to come back in. He wants to help. He wants to work together.)

Page 30-31

Read: "Now you have..."

How does Easter Bunny feel? Why? (He is happy because he made beautiful Easter eggs.)

Where is Skunk? How does he feel? (Skunk looks happy. He is still a little excited about the eggs.)

What does Skunk want to do?

How do you think they could work this out?

Page 32-33

Read: "Should I let him..."

What is Easter Bunny thinking? (He is wondering if he should let Skunk hide the eggs.)

How does Easter Bunny feel? (worried/confused) Why does he feel that way?

How does Skunk feel? (He feels excited and happy because he might get to help.)

What do you think Easter Bunny should do?

(Stress that friends try to cooperate and work things out.)

Page 34-35

Read: "You sure?"

How does Easter Bunny feel? (Worried/confused) Why does he feel that way?

How does Skunk feel? (He is hoping that he might get to help.)

What do you think?

Page 36-37

What happened?

How does Easter Bunny feel? (happy but maybe still a little worried) Why does he feel that way? (He feels happy that they could dye the eggs together. He feels a little worried that Skunk will still spray.)

How does Skunk feel? (He feels happy because he gets to help hide the eggs.)

How did Easter Bunny and Skunk work their problem out?

How did they cooperate?

What do you think will happen? (Skunk will probably get excited and spray. Easter Bunny will not smell Skunk because he has a plug on his nose.)

Do you think that Easter Bunny and Skunk are still friends? (Yes, they worked out their problem.)

Summary:

(Use cloze procedures so child can help summarize. Example, "When Skunk felt excited, he _____.")

The Easter Bunny wanted to make Easter eggs, and Skunk was his assistant or helper. But there was a problem. Every time Easter Bunny planned to do something with the eggs, Skunk got excited. When Skunk felt excited, he sprayed. The spray smelled really, really bad. When Skunk sprayed, Easter Bunny felt disgusted! Easter Bunny also felt a little mad because Skunk kept spraying. Skunk felt guilty and sorry that he sprayed, but he could not help it. Easter Bunny and Skunk found a way to work together. Skunk helped to hide the eggs, and Easter Bunny plugged his nose. Easter Bunny plugged his nose so he could not smell Skunk.

Follow-up probes

Probe #1, p. 3, Look at Easter Bunny and Skunk. How do they feel?

Why do they feel _____?

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

OR, they might feel happy. They feel happy because they are going to dye eggs.

Probe #2, p. 6, Look at the Easter Bunny. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel disgusted. Easter Bunny is disgusted because he smells something bad.

Probe #3, p. 13, Look at Skunk. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel excited. Skunk is excited to dye eggs.

Probe # 4, p. 15, Look at Skunk. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel sorry (or guilty or embarrassed). He might feel sorry that he sprayed.

Probe #5, p. 18, Look at Easter Bunny. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel mad/annoyed. Easter Bunny is mad because he thinks Skunk might spray.

Probe #6 p. 25, Look at Skunk. How does he feel?

Why does he feel _____?

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

OR, he might feel sorry or embarrassed. Skunk is embarrassed because he sprayed.

Possible enactment:

Look, I have an Easter Bunny and a Skunk here. I also some Easter Eggs. Let's look at the book again and act out the story. Which animal would you like to be? Tell me what you are thinking on every page, okay? (Repeat and have the child take the role of each character). Try to get the child to understand how the animals feel. Stress excitement, disgust, embarrassment and guilt.