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Social Communication Intervention Script for story book, *What Will Fat Cat Sit On?*

***What Will Fat Cat Sit On?* by Jan Thomas, 2007, New York: Harcourt Inc.**

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, scared/frightened/afraid, nervous/anxious, surprised, relieved, angry/mad
2. **Anticipating how others will feel in certain situations**
3. **Emotions experienced because of relationships**
4. **Anticipating intents of others**
5. **What does it mean to be “relieved?”**
6. **Pro-social behavior: friends look out for each other**
7. **Structural: complete simple sentence forms, complex sentences with causal connections (but, if, so, because)**

Intro: Cover, Opening Pages, and Title Page— We are going to read a story about a fat cat. Fat Cat is huge. He is looking for a place to sit. Let’s see how the animals feel in this story.

Look at these pictures. (Display pictures of actual faces showing happy, sad, scared, surprised/shocked, worried, and mad, as available.) The animals are going to have some of these feelings in the story. Let’s see what happens.

Pages i-iv

(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 cover.)

Now let’s look at it together.

Page 1 (Title Page)

Read the title

I wonder what this is about.

Look at the mouse, how does he feel? (scared/frightened/afraid.)

Why do you think he feels scared?

Hmmm, let's see.

Page 2-3

What can you guess about this picture?

What does Fat Cat want to do?

How does the mouse feel? (Scared.)

Why is the mouse scared? (He is scared because Fat Cat might hurt/sit on/eat him.)

If the mouse thinks Fat Cat might hurt him, then he would feel scared.

Page 4-5

Read: "Will Fat Cat sit on..."

How does Fat Cat feel?

Look at this cow. How does the cow feel? (He feels surprised and probably scared. It is not a good surprise.)

Which of these people feels like the cow feels? (Show pictures.)

Can you make a scared/surprised/shocked face like the cow? (Use mirror.)

What do you think that Fat Cat is planning to do?

If the cow thinks Fat Cat might sit on him, then he would feel scared.

Why would the cow be scared? (He would be scared because Fat Cat is so big that he might smash him!)

Page 6-7

Read: "NO!..."

How does the cow feel?

He feels happy because Fat Cat will not sit on him.

The cow feels happy and relieved.

Do you know what relieved means? (Relieved is a kind of happy feeling.)

When you think something bad will happen and then it doesn't, you feel relieved.

The cow feels happy and relieved because Fat Cat will not sit on him.

Page 8-9

Read: "Will Fat Cat sit on..."

How does Fat Cat feel?

How does the chicken feel?

What do you think that Fat Cat is planning to do?

If the chicken thinks Fat Cat might sit on him, then he would feel scared.

The chicken looks worried too. He looks worried and scared.

Which of these people feels like the chicken? (Show pictures.)

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

Why would the chicken be so worried? He would be scared because Fat Cat is so big that he might smash him!

Page 10-11

Read: "Sit on the pig..."

What does the chicken want Fat Cat to do?

Why does the chicken want Fat Cat to sit on the pig? (The chicken thinks that if Fat Cat sits on the pig, then he will not sit on the chicken.)

How does the pig feel about that? (The pig looks scared.)

If the pig thinks Fat Cat might sit on him, then he would feel scared.

Why would the pig be scared? (He would be scared because Fat Cat is so big that he might smash him!)

Wait, how do you think that the pig would feel about the chicken? (Explain that the pig might be mad at the chicken because the chicken told Fat Cat to sit on him.)

Is the chicken being friendly to the pig?

How would you feel if you were the pig?

If you were there, what would you say to the chicken?

Page 12-13

Read: "NO! Fat Cat will not..."

How does the chicken feel?

How does the pig feel?

The chicken and pig feel happy and relieved.

Remember, relieved is a kind of happy feeling.

The chicken and the pig thought something bad would happen. They thought that if Fat Cat sat on them, then they would be smashed.

Because Fat Cat will not sit on them, then they feel happy and relieved.

Page 14-15

Read: "Will Fat Cat sit on..."

How does Fat Cat feel? What do you think he is planning to do?

How does the dog feel?

Does the dog look scared?

No, the dog looks mad. The dog is not scared of Fat Cat. But the dog looks mad at Fat Cat.

Which of these people feels like the dog? (Show pictures of faces. Help the child contrast mad and scared faces--have the child make the faces in the mirror.)

The dog is mad because he thinks that Fat Cat might sit on him.

Page 16-17

Read: "NO! Fat Cat will not..."

Hah! How does Fat Cat feel now?

Now Fat Cat is the one who is scared?

What is Fat Cat afraid of? Why? (Dogs chase cats—dogs might eat cats.)

Fat Cat is scared/afraid because he thinks that the dog might hurt him.

Fat Cat will not sit on the dog because Fat Cat is afraid of him.

Page 18-19

Read: "Okay, so Fat Cat will not..."

Look at each face?

How does the pig feel? (Happy and relieved.)

How does the cow feel? (Happy and relieved.)

How does the chicken feel? (Happy and relieved.)

They feel happy because Fat Cat will not sit on them and smash them.

How does the dog feel? (Mad.)

Dog is mad because he thought Fat Cat might sit on him. But maybe he is also a little happy that Fat Cat is scared of him.

Page 20-21

Read: "Then what will..."

How does the mouse feel? (afraid/scared, worried.)

Why do you think he feels afraid/scared/worried?

If Fat Cat will not sit on the cow, or the chicken, or the pig, then what will he sit on?

The mouse is worried/scared that Fat Cat might sit on him.

What does the mouse think might happen if Fat Cat sits on him?

He is the smallest one. If Fat Cat sits on the mouse, Fat Cat might really smash him.

Page 22-23

Read: "Perhaps he could sit on..."

The mouse makes a suggestion.

How does the mouse feel? (really scared/afraid.)

Which of these people feels like the mouse? (Show pictures.)

Can you make a scared face like the mouse's? (Use mirror.)

Why does the mouse suggest that Fat Cat sit on the chair?

If Fat Cat sits on the chair, then he will not sit on the mouse.

If Fat Cat sits on the chair, then the mouse will be safe.

Page 24-25

Read: "The chair of course!"

Look at each face. How do they all feel?

How does the pig feel? (happy and relieved.)

How does the cow feel? (happy and relieved.)

How does the mouse feel? (happy and relieved.)

How does the chicken feel? (happy and relieved.)

They feel happy because Fat Cat will not sit on them and smash them.

How does the dog feel? (mad/ but maybe a little happy.)

Dog is a little mad because he thought that Fat Cat might want to sit on him. But he is also a little happy because he knows Fat Cat is scared of him. Fat Cat is scared of the dog, so Fat Cat will stay away from the dog.

Page 26-27

Read: "Now, what will Fat Cat..."

Look at the mouse. How does the mouse feel?

Look at Fat Cat. What do you think he is planning?

Do you think he is planning anything? Maybe...

Page 28-29

Read: "have for lunch?"

Oh my, Fat Cat looks hungry!

What does Fat Cat want to do?

How does the mouse feel? (Scared.)

Why is the mouse scared? (He is scared because Fat Cat might eat him.)

If the mouse thinks Fat Cat might eat him, then he would feel scared.

What would you say to Fat Cat?

What would you say to the mouse?

Page 30-31

Read: "Lunch?"

How do they all feel?

What are they doing?

They are all running away because they think that Fat Cat might eat them for lunch.

How do they feel? (Scared/afraid.)

Who looks the most scared/afraid? (the mouse.)

Why is the mouse so scared?

He is the smallest one so he would be the easiest to eat.

Do cats eat mice?

The mouse is afraid of Fat Cat because the mouse knows that cats eat mice.

Page 32-33

Look at these pages.

What do you think might happen?

How does the mouse feel about that?

Page 34-35

What do you think Fat Cat is planning? (To eat the mouse.)

But we thought he was planning to sit on the mouse before, and he was not planning that. That surprised us. I thought Fat Cat would sit on the animals, but he didn't. That surprised me. It was a good surprise because I did not want Fat Cat to smash the animals.

I wonder what he is planning now?

What do you think?

Summary:

(Use cloze procedures so child can help summarize.)

Fat Cat was huge. The animals thought he might sit on them. They were scared because they thought that Fat Cat would smash them. But Fat Cat did not sit on any of the animals. He sat on a chair. The animals were very

relieved. Then Fat Cat was looking for lunch. I wonder what Fat Cat will eat for lunch.

Follow-up probes

Probe #1, p. 3, Look at Mouse. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel scared. The mouse is scared because Fat Cat is coming.

Probe #2, p. 7, Look at the cow. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel happy/relieved. The cow is happy/relieved because Fat Cat did not sit on him.

Probe #3, p. 11, Look at the pig. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel scared/afraid. The pig is scared because he thinks Fat Cat might sit on him.

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

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel mad. He might be mad at Fat Cat.

Probe #5, p. 16, Look at Fat Cat. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might scared/afraid. Fat Cat might be afraid of the dog.

Probe #6 p. 21, Look at the mouse. How does he feel?

Why does he feel_____?

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

OR, he might feel scared. The mouse is scared that Fat Cat might sit on him.

Possible enactment:

Look, I have a fat cat here. I also have a mouse, a chicken, a cow, a pig and a big dog. Let's look at the book again. Which animals would you like to be? Tell me what you are thinking on every page, okay? I will be some of the other animals. (Repeat and have the child take the roles of other characters). Try to get the child to understand how the animals feel. Contrast fear and relief.

If preferred, guide the child in a modified "readers' theater" where the child voices one or more characters. As an alternative activity, 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. Create a thought bubble or a dialog bubble attached to the page with a sticky note. When finished, read the story again including the dialog bubbles. Adjust as needed for the individual child.