What is a Social Story™?

Many people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other related disorders benefit from having a written guide for situations that may be new, scary, or confusing. A Social Story™ is a helpful way to provide this guide for visiting the Nashville Opera.

The goal of a Social Story™ is to help your child understand the situation and to help decrease anxiety that comes from entering an unknown situation. Social Stories™ can be used to describe other unfamiliar social situations or environments such as a birthday party, school field trip, having a substitute, etc. Social Stories™ give individuals social information through pictures and text instead of spoken word, which can be difficult for individuals with ASD.

Social Stories™ are part of a category of interventions known as story-based interventions or social narratives. They have had significant research showing the effectiveness of their use to be considered an established treatment for children with ASD. For more information about evidence-based treatments, go to The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders at http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/. Social Stories™ were created by Carol Gray; for more information visit, www.thegraycenter.org.

How Can I Use It to Help Prepare my Child for the Performance?

If knowing the details about coming to the opera performance ahead of time will relieve anxiety, have your child read the story a few days prior to the visit. By reviewing the story, it will help create predictability about a new or unknown social situation and environment. While reviewing the story with your child, you can answer other questions your child may have.

If reading the story ahead of time will make your child more anxious, wait until just before (for example, the morning of or in the car on the way) to give them the story. Have your child read the parts of the story that explains what is happening at each particular step during the visit.

We have developed 3 versions of a Social Story™ about coming to the Nashville Opera's Performance of *Billy Goat’s Gruff* at the Noah Liff Opera Center in an effort to meet the varying language abilities your child may have. The versions include a more detailed story, a brief social story, and a story with mostly pictures. Knowing your child’s language abilities will help you select the correct version to read with your child.