


5-2015

# Designing Social Stories for the Brooklyn Children's Museum

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## Recommended Citation

Tuschen, B. (2015). Designing Social Stories for the Brooklyn Children's Museum. *New York : Bank Street College of Education*. Retrieved from <http://educate.bankstreet.edu/independent-studies/164>

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**Designing Social Stories for the Brooklyn Children's Museum**

**Spring 2015**

**By Brigid Tuschen**

**Mentor: Cathleen Wiggins**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Science in Education

Bank Street College of Education

2015

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## Designing Social Stories for the Brooklyn Children's Museum

Brigid Tuschen

### **Abstract**

In this Integrative Masters Project, I have researched and written two social stories for the Brooklyn Children's Museum. A social story is a story used to prepare someone for an event or activity. Social stories are often used in the classroom and are becoming a popular tool to use in Museums. I found that there was a significant amount of recent research done on how best to use social stories in the classroom and none in a museum setting. I have written these two social stories based off of two school programs offered at the Brooklyn Children's Museum – Sensory Sensation and Culture Kids: Brooklyn. I decided to focus on the School Programs experience because a visit to a Museum, whether it is a child's first or they have been there several times before, can be very exciting and overwhelming. There are many things to see and do in the museum, preparing a child with a wide range of abilities greatly improves their experience.

## **Rationale**

I have the unique opportunity as a graduate student in the Museum Education Program, to student teach in a classroom and complete an internship at a museum. Through this program, I have discovered that museums are creating incredible tours for visitors with a variety of abilities. For instance, we learned about programs and areas dedicated to children on the Autism Spectrum and participated in tours that are designed for people with low-vision. These opportunities allow for people of all abilities to have a fulfilling trip to a museum, to help them feel that they can also belong.

As I was growing up in Florida, these opportunities were not available for my family and it was one we would have benefited from. My sister has Downs Syndrome and school was challenging for her. It felt like there was never a teacher or place that was on her side, who wanted to see her learn or reach her full potential. It was not till her last year in high school that we found the right teacher and class for her. She was finally making noticeable progress in her life skills and education; she had finally begun to enjoy school when she had to leave it. Having the opportunity to go to a museum and partake in the programs that are becoming available in New York City might have benefited her greatly in her education and allowed her to find an avenue to the joy of learning much sooner.

As I was completing my student teaching, where I worked with students who are considered gifted and talented, I knew I wanted the chance to work with students of a wider range of abilities. Once I found the Brooklyn Children's Museum and their Accessibilities Program Internship, I knew this is the place I wanted to be. At this museum, I am a part of a group of educators that develop two programs each month for children on the Autism Spectrum. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is, as described by the Center for Disease Control (2015):

a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges...people with ASD may communicate, interact, behave, and learn in ways that are different from most other people. The learning, thinking, and problem-solving abilities of people with ASD can range from gifted to severely challenged. Some people with ASD need a lot of help in their daily lives; others need less (Facts about Autism, para. 1).

The programs range from exploring insects to dancing and crafting. Every day I am at the museum, I work in the Sensory Room. It is an area developed with children on the Spectrum in mind but children of all abilities are invited into the room. There are facilitated activities that allow children on the Spectrum to practice communicating socially and explore their different senses in a safe space. I also teach and observe school programs that are tailored for students with special abilities.

The professional material I decided to create for this museum is a set of social stories to help children with special needs prepare for their time at the Brooklyn Children's Museum. A social story is a story used to prepare someone for an event or activity. While this museum is truly a wonderful place for all children, it can be over-stimulating. If you come in the morning, several school groups are arriving at one time, it is loud, there are multicolored lights, and a large variety of materials and objects to interact with. In the afternoon, there are even more children and adults who visit, there are many public programs happening, and again the noise, lights, and materials all play a factor.

I choose social stories because it is a tool I had a basic understanding of and wanted to learn more about. I was not sure how it was created, was it tailored to an individual or was it mass produced? Did it simply explain situations or did it also explain how one should act in them? As I worked on these stories, I asked these and several other questions –

- Who else could be the audience besides children on the Autism Spectrum for social stories?
- What are the ‘effects’? What does one hope to achieve with a social story?
- How are children on the Autism Spectrum helped?
- What are the benefits of social stories? Is there support from the world of Academia?
- Is there a particular presentation that works best for social stories?
- How is language and pictures used in social stories?
- How are they used in the classroom?
- How have museums, particularly the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, used this tool in the past?

I began my research by looking at what a social story is. I was also interested in any research available on the effectiveness of the stories and if researchers had conclusive evidence that supported their use. I was surprised to find that this concept is still a relatively new one and because of that, research on this material is all relatively recent. As I read article after article, I began to understand how important social stories can be for a child with special needs. Fisher and Haufe (2009) wrote that (as cited by Social Skill Builder, 2008):

children with disabilities sometimes lack the ability to learn from their life experiences or pick up social skills and cues from peers, siblings and adults, and thus have more difficulty with social skills. In order for these children to learn the critical life skills essential to living with others, they have to be taught. (p. 13)

After I understood more about how and why social stories can be used, I turned my sights toward the one the Brooklyn Children’s Museum had created. The one social story the Museum has was created during one of the monthly access programs. It is very simple; each page has a picture that could be colored in and a word below it. The pictures were different things the children would see in the Museum or that represented a part of the Museum. There was a pizza for the pizza shop, a flower for the green house, a snake for the Sensory Room, and much more.

The children also glued a piece of material to the paper to remind them of that area – a piece of felt for the pizza and a small yellow tile for the Museum itself.

While doing research on what components lead to a successful social story, I found many papers and journal articles on the use of social stories in schools but nothing on the use of social stories in museums. There are a multitude of museums that make social stories available online to help families prepare for their self-guided visits but there appears to be an utter lack of social stories for teachers to use for their students with special needs. I decided it would be best that when writing the social stories for the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, I would base their design and language on research that had been done on social stories used in the classroom.

Depending on the needs of the child, there are a wide variety of social stories that can be used in the classroom. When doing a general search online for different stories, I found that some were simple in their design. Others were simple in their subject, like how to set the table. Others were fairly complex, like how to share. A topic that seems simple but when one considers the emotional, physical, and mental aspects of sharing, it is a tricky idea for any child to grasp.

In the material I created for the museum, I wanted to focus specifically on the school group experience. One of the first questions a Museum Educator will ask when a school group arrives is ‘Have you been to the Museum before?’ For many children, this is their first time visiting the museum and it is often very exciting. For those on the spectrum and with other special needs, a program can be overwhelming. I felt that by creating a material that could help these children prepare for the visit, it would make their time at the Museum much more enjoyable.



The new material is more story-like and captures the school program experience. While the old material has just a picture and a word or two, each page of the new material has one to five complete sentences. It is recommended that social stories follow a specific wording format and sentence structure.

...a Social Story must include several types of sentences: (a) descriptive—factual statements used to describe the situation and people involved in it; (b) perspective—descriptions of the reactions, feelings, and responses of others; (c) directive—statements that identify an appropriate response and guide child’s behavior; (d) cooperative—sentences to identify what others will do to assist; (e) affirmative—statements that enhance the meaning by expressing values or opinions common in a given culture; and (f) control—sentences written by the child to identify his/her personal strategies to recall and use information. (Kokina & Kern, 2010, p. 813)

There is also a recommended ratio of these sentences. For every sentence that is a directive or control sentence, there should also be two to five affirmative, descriptive, or perspective sentences (Tarnai, 2011, p. 64). The belief behind this is that directive and control sentences tell the child what to do, they are strategies to guide the child’s behavior. Perspective, affirmative and descriptive are meant to describe why these behaviors are needed, they explain the feelings behind another child’s reactions or a teacher’s instructions.

I was able to follow the ratio for one of my social stories, Sensory Sensation, very successfully and have provided a short example below of what the ratio breakdown can look like. The red is a descriptive sentence, the orange is a perspective sentence, and the yellow is a directive sentence.

I walk through the whole Museum to get to the room where we will have our program. I see so many fun things. My classmates are excited, so they are talking loudly as they

point out different parts of the Museum like the Rainbow Tunnel, The Greenhouse and The Beach. I make sure to stay with my group so I don't get lost.

I had a difficult time making the other social story I wrote, Culture Kids: Brooklyn, have a variety of sentence types. It has the same story-like quality of Sensory Sensation but it relies more heavily on descriptive and directive sentences. There is a large amount of information in this program and I wanted to find a way to communicate the same information in a clear and concise manner. I felt that using the other sentence types could be too much for this particular story.

The new material is also more specific than the social story created during the Accessibility Program. Several researchers noted the importance of clearly addressing one 'target behavior' at a time. For this reason Rowe (1999) specifically states that "a social story extends and applies schemata by making an implicit schema explicit and build directly on a pupil's existing stock of knowledge" p. 14. By making the social cues of one situation clear, most children in the research were able to then extend this new found thinking to other situations. This all being said, the stories I have written are still rather general in how a child could act during the program. There is no way to foresee the exact reactions of any child to the museum or the program. I have written the social stories in a way that clearly explains the program, so the student who uses this story will know what to expect, and how other students generally act during the program.

Another aspect of this new material is the imagery used. "As children with developmental delays can have attention difficulties or limited areas of interest, it is important to ensure pictures enhance the story instead of drawing attention away" (More, 2012, p. 170). The previous

material used pictures akin to a coloring book. To prevent miscommunication between the story and the student, photography of the museum and different aspects of the program, will be used and they will be black and white. This is another method to reduce distractions from the story for the student (Ozdemir, 2008, p. 1).

A significant finding in the research about social stories is that children at any age, with a variety of needs can use them. “ (As cited in thegraycenter.org, 2008) Although social stories were developed for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the approach has also been seen to be successful with children, adolescents, and adults with ASD and other social and communication delays and differences, as well as individuals developing normally” (Fisher and Hauger, 2009, p. 38). I was excited to find this information because it means that many more children can use these materials and have an even better experience at the museum.

Keeping this in mind, the material still has to be at an appropriate level that can be read, understood, and enjoyed, with or without help. The language used in the stories are based off of the language used in the lesson plan for each program. A program that is written for a pre-kindergarten to first grade class has a lesson with language appropriate for a pre-kindergarten to first grade class. A great benefit for writing social stories for the Brooklyn Children’s Museum is that the school programs are quite ‘standardized’. This standardization allows for a general social story to be made for each program. While the museum educator will present the program in their own unique way, the information remains the same.

Once I had completed the two social stories for the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, I decided to look again at the social stories that have been written by museums, specifically the Port Discovery Children’s Museum, Boston’s Children’s Museum, Chicago Children’s Museum,

and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These stories are made available to families and schools through their website. I wanted to compare the social stories I found to the research that has currently been completed about their use in classrooms. As I wrote the two social stories for the Museum I found that the information could be placed into three main categories: the sentence type, the specificity of the story, and the imagery used. These components came up time and again in what makes a social story successful for a student.

When I first read these stories, I focused on the sentence type that was used in each. I was looking for descriptive, perspective, directive, cooperative and affirmative sentences and for them to be used in the proper ratio of two to five affirmative, descriptive, or perspective sentences for every directive sentence. I found this happened about half the time but all four museums have relied heavily on descriptive and directive sentences. Common descriptive sentences talk about the staff that would be seen in the museum: ‘When we arrive at Port Discovery, a staff member will welcome our class to the Museum. Port Discovery staff wear purple shirts and work at the Museum (Ponzio & Ruhf, n.d. p. 4).’ Common directive sentences describe proper museum behavior: ‘I may need to take turns with other Museum visitors. This space can be exciting and loud, and I will try to stay calm (My Visit to Boston Children’s Museum, n.d. p. 12).’

When looking at the ‘specificity’ of each story, there were again two distinct groups. The Boston Children’s Museum and Chicago Children’s Museum dedicated a page to each area of the museum, describing the sights, sounds, even smells! The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Port Discovery Children’s Museum described only how to enter the museum, mentioning that there were many things to explore once you were inside. The Metropolitan added the ability to look for different quiet spaces by clicking on a link and a page dedicated to exiting the museum.

Lastly I focused on the images used in each museum. The Boston Children's Museum used only photographs of each space and was the only social story to include a map. The three other museums used a combination of cartoon like graphics and images of the space. The Chicago Children's Museum used cartoons and images of the guests, not really the space, on each page. The social story from this museum appears to be cluttered with too many images and not enough focus on what space the children and families will encounter.

Creating and analyzing these social stories has helped me to believe, even more whole heartedly than before, that every child has the ability to learn. As an educator, I believe each student can learn and reach their full potential. From the experiences I have had during my program, my student teaching and internship, this can happen through educators using a variety of tools in their classroom, especially one as simple and engaging as a social story. Each student in the classroom can benefit from differentiation through the use of a variety of materials and tools. Some will receive more differentiation and some will receive less, and it is all in an effort to make sure each child is engaged and learning with their peers.

When trying to put into words why this is so important to me, I think about my time as an undergraduate in college. There was a distinct difference between the classes for my Animal Science Major and Educational Studies Minor. The classes for my major were all held in large lecture halls where hundreds of students sat, furiously taking notes. The classes for my minor were much smaller, maybe twenty students in a room; we had discussions, completed projects, almost every learning style could be utilized and every student was engaged.

The class that caused me to want to pursue education as a career was Physics. The first day of class the head of the Physics department, our professor, came in and started talking about

the syllabus. As he was doing so he said, 'I still haven't decided how many of you I'm going to let pass.' I was gob smacked and by the time the class period had finished, I was fuming. This is not how I imagined education to be and from the classes I was taking for my minor, I knew there was a better way.

A student's education is only successful if they believe in it. They have to be engaged and learning with enthusiasm. This is the educator's main goal, to differentiate for each student, to inspire them to believe in their abilities to learn. And if a tool as simple as a social story is the key to helping any student enjoy their education in any space, then it is one I am thrilled and honored to make.

## Social Stories Sentence Structure

two to five descriptive, perspective, and affirmative sentences for every directive sentence.

(a) **descriptive**—factual statements used to describe the situation and people involved in it;

(b) **perspective**—descriptions of the reactions, feelings, and responses of others;

(c) **directive**—statements that identify an appropriate response and guide child’s behavior;

(d) **cooperative**—sentences to identify what others will do to assist;

### Sensory Sensations

I am going to the Brooklyn Children’s Museum with my class. Everyone is very excited!

When I get to the Museum, a Museum Educator will meet us at the front of the museum. A Museum Educator is a teacher that works in a museum. They know all sorts of cool things. All Museum Educator’s at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum wear blue aprons.

When I walk into the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, I put anything I don’t need into a bin with the rest of my class so I don’t have to carry it around during our visit.

My class and I meet the Museum Educator that will teach us an exciting program. A program at a museum is like a lesson I have in my classroom. Our program is in the Sensory Room and is about the five senses!

I walk through the whole Museum to get to the room where we will have our program. I see so many fun things. My classmates are excited, so they are talking loudly and point out different parts of the Museum like the Rainbow Tunnel, The Greenhouse and The Beach. I make sure to stay with my group so I don’t get lost

When I get to the Sensory Room, I get to take off my shoes. My teacher and the parents do too! It’s fun to feel with my toes instead of my fingers.

This is how the Sensory Room looks like when we walk in.

We are going to talk about our five senses here. When we are done talking about the senses we used when walking through the Museum, I get to sing a fun song with my class about the five senses.

It goes like this -

*With our eyes we - see, see!*

*With our ears we - hear, hear!*

*With our mouths we - taste, taste!*

*With our hands we - touch, touch!*

*With our nose we - smell, smell!*

Our Museum Educator shows us a rainstick. It makes a loud noise! If it bothers me, I let our Museum Educator know and they will give me headphones to wear.

It is loud because small rocks hit sticks that are inside the rain stick. The Museum Educator lets us take turns holding onto the stick. It really does sound like rain!

I then get to explore two mystery bags with my class. I sing two fun songs to remember to pass it to the person sitting next to me.

The first song goes like this -

*Feel..Listen..Pass it to a friend*

The second song goes like this -

*Feel..Smell..Pass it to a friend*

When everyone gets a chance to see the Mystery Bags, we get to open them and see what the noises and smells are.

Our Museum Educator tells us that we are going to meet an animal friend, a snake! Some of my classmates cheer and others shout and back away because they are scared.

Before meeting our animal friend, we get to see a snake skin. We touch the snake skin very carefully with two fingers. This is how we are going to touch our animal friend. If we use rough fingers, the snake skin can break!

Before the snake is taken out of the box, our Museum Educator says that if I don't want to touch the snake, all we have to tell them is "No, Thank you." or put our hands in our lap. If I want to touch the snake I use two fingers and only touch the snake's body. If I'm still scared, I can tell the Museum Educator and they will think of a way to help me feel better.

Even though we practiced how to meet an animal friend, some of my classmates might still yell in surprise. When I decide to touch the snake, it feels very smooth and soft! I feel very brave for meeting a snake friend.

Now I get to play in an obstacle course in the Sensory Room! I crawl on my belly over the blue wave and through the purple tunnel, walk across the red matt, jump on to the red bump and fall onto the big fluff chair. I can look at the Sensory Snake, explore more mystery bags, play the drum, or run the obstacle course again.

Our program is all done in the Sensory Room! I had so much fun exploring the room with my different senses!



# Sensory Sensations



at the  
Brooklyn Children's  
Museum



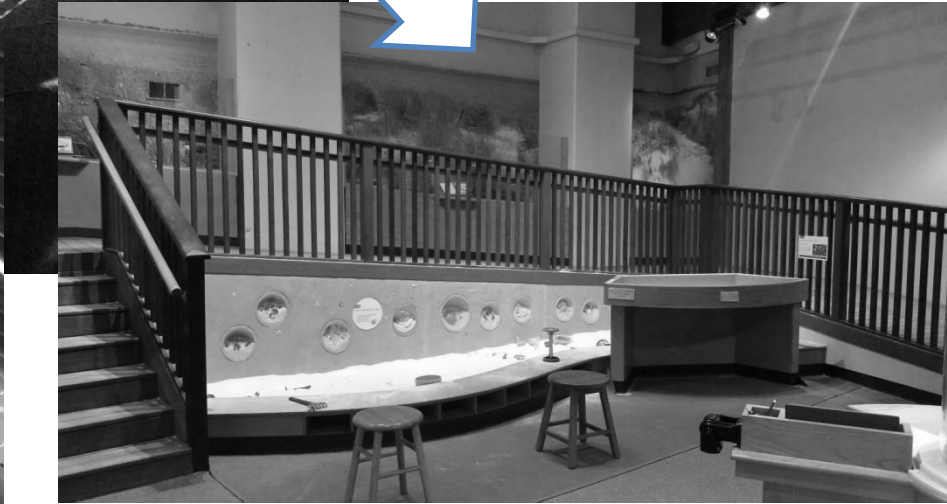
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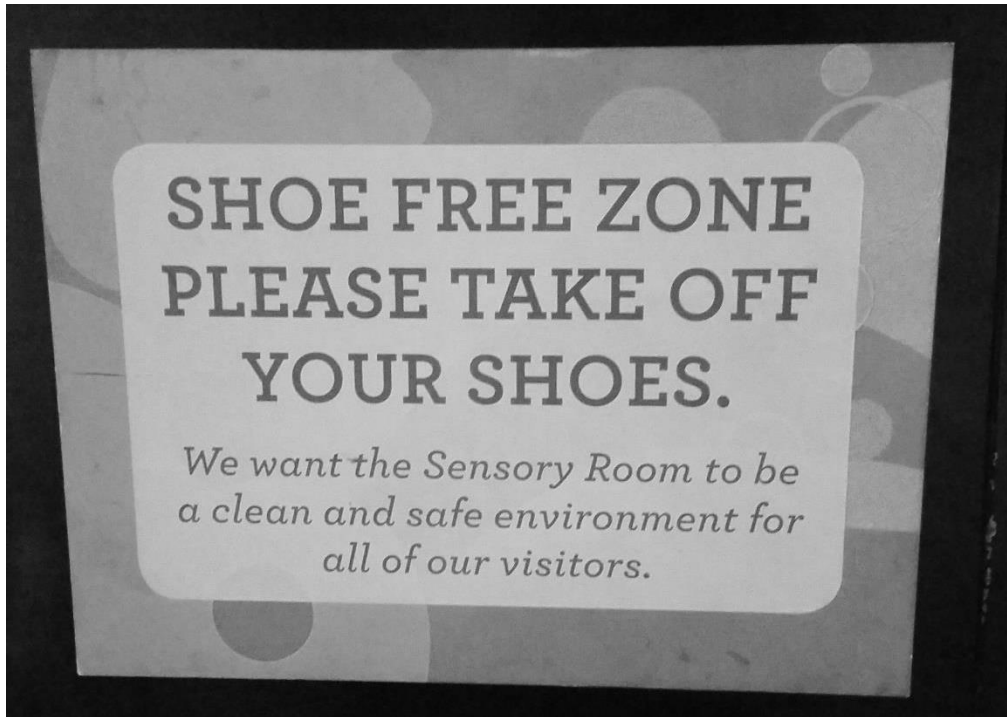


When I walk into the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, I put anything I don’t need into a bin with the rest of my class so I don’t have to carry it around during our visit.

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Our Museum Educator shows us a rain stick. It makes a loud noise! If it bothers me, I let our Museum Educator know and they will give me headphones to wear.

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I then get to explore two mystery bags with my class. I sing two fun songs to remember to pass it to the person sitting next to me.

The first song goes like this -

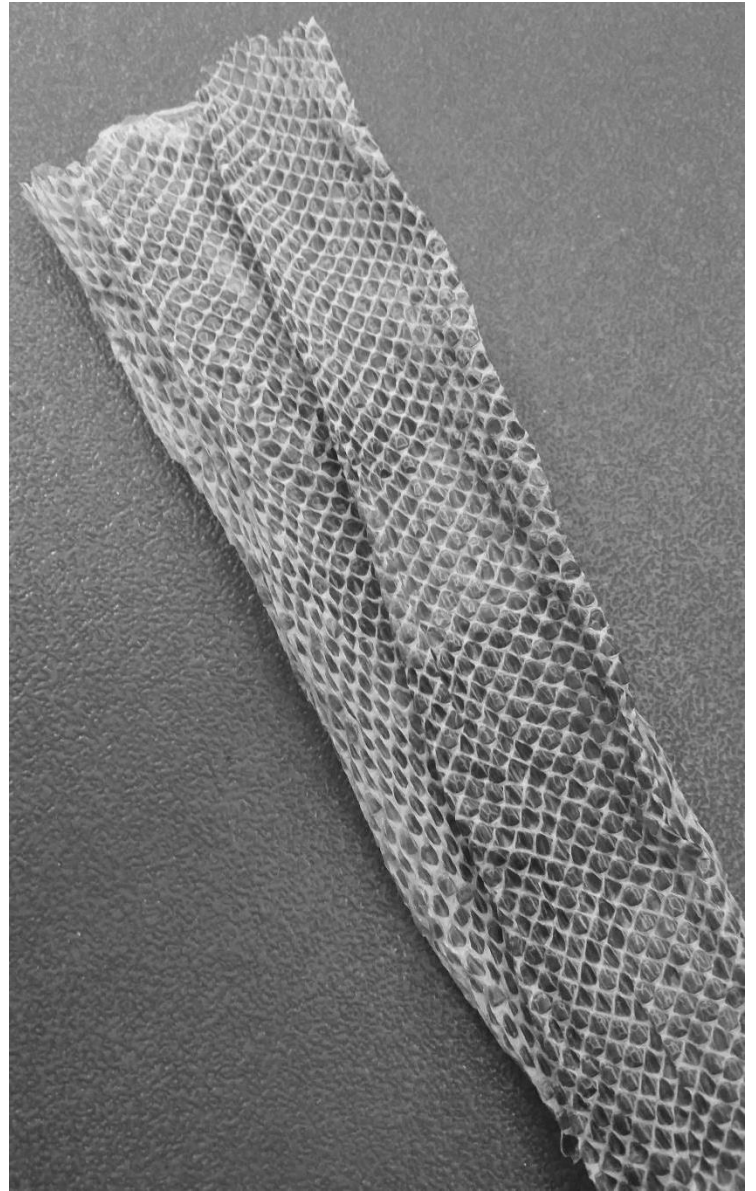
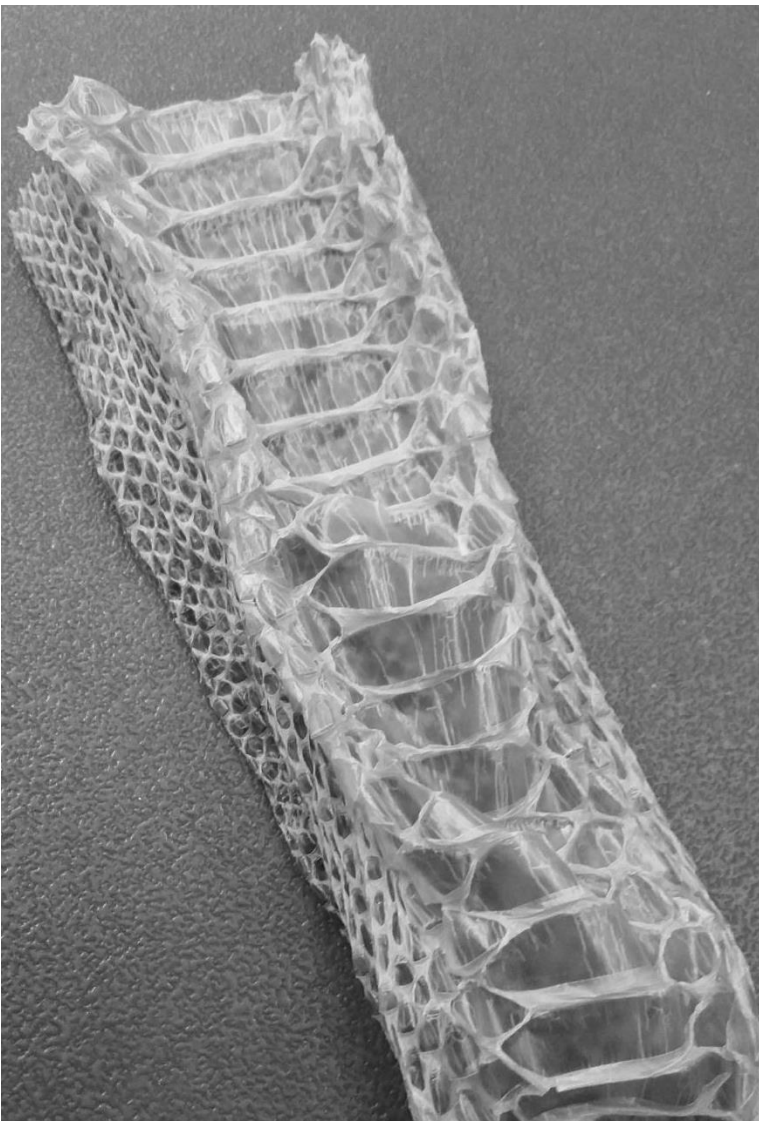
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Now I get to play in an obstacle course in the Sensory Room! I crawl on my belly over the blue wave and through the purple tunnel like a snake, walk across the red matt, jump on to the red bump and fall onto the big fluff chair. I can look at the Sensory Snake, explore more mystery bags, play the drum, or go through the obstacle course again.

Our program is all done!

I got to explore my senses in the  
Sensory Room!

# Culture Kids: Brooklyn



at the  
Brooklyn Children's  
Museum



I am going to the Brooklyn Children's Museum with my class. Everyone is very excited!

When I get to the Museum, a Museum Educator will meet us at the front of the museum. A Museum Educator is a teacher that works in a museum. They know all sorts of cool things. All Museum Educator's at the Brooklyn Children's Museum wear green lanyards and blue aprons.



When I walk into the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, I put anything I don’t need into a bin with the rest of my class so I don’t have to carry it around during our visit.

My class and I meet a Museum Educator that will teach us an exciting program. A program at a museum is like a lesson I have in my classroom. During our program, we get to explore the different shops in the Museum and learn more about Brooklyn!



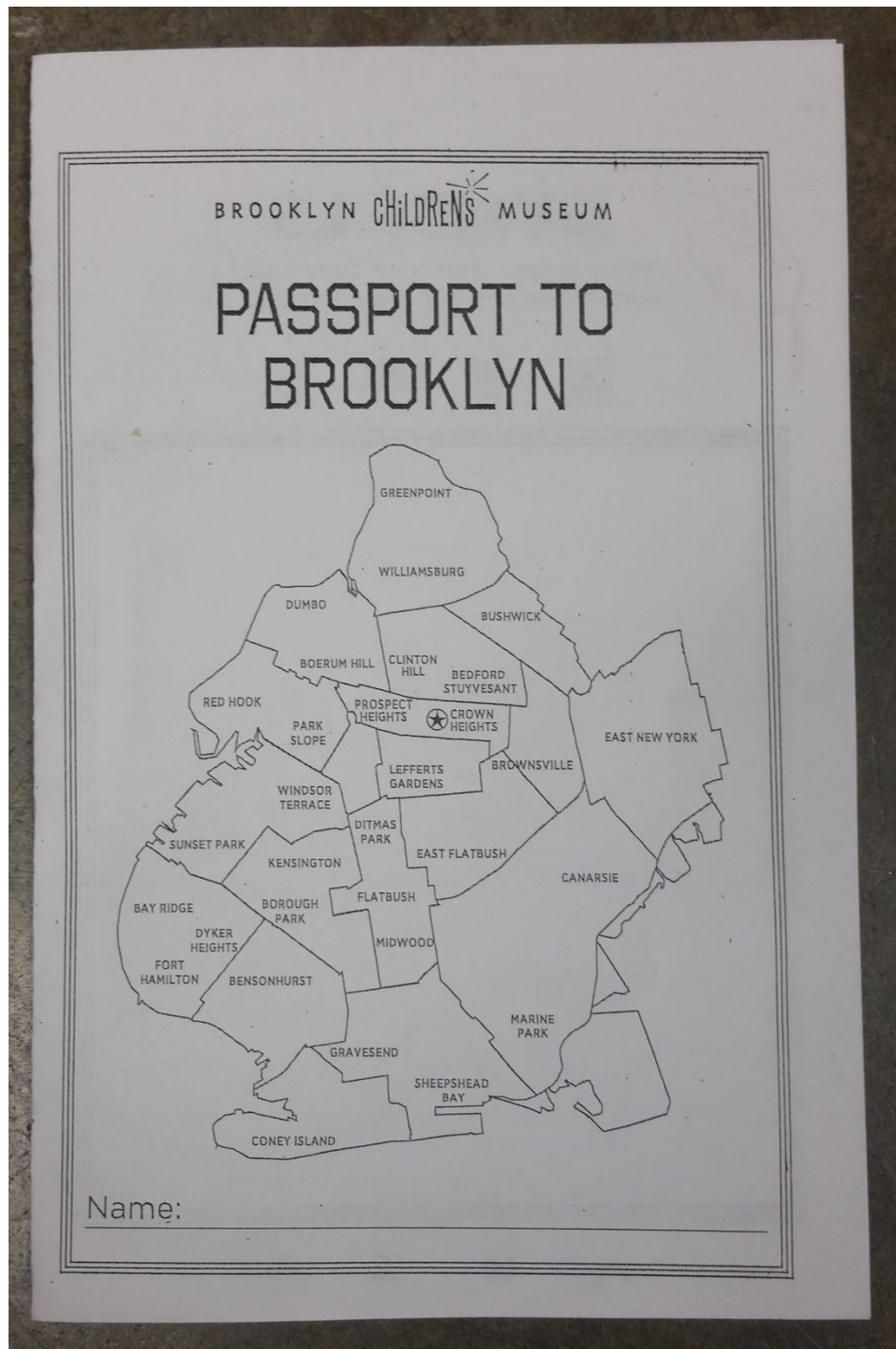


The first stop is World Journal Bookstore and we all sit in front of the store.

Our Museum Educator asks us what ‘immigration’ or ‘to immigrate’ means? If I raise my hand, our Museum Educator will call on me and I will get to share with my class. If my classmate raises their hand, I listen very carefully like they did for me.

Immigration is when a person or group of people move from one country to another. Many people from all over the world have immigrated to New York City.

Our Museum educator asks us why someone might want to change countries and what we would bring if we had to move. We are going to learn what each person who immigrates to another country can bring along with them.

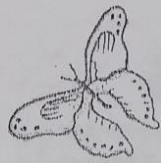


When the Museum Educator is done calling on some of my classmates, we get a passport. I am going to use this passport at the different stores and do an activity at each.



Once everyone has a passport, our Museum Educator asks us to look very closely at the signs in front of the Bookstore. The sign is written in English and Chinese.

When a person moves from one country to another, they don't just bring physical items, they also bring their language.



# CHINESE BINGO

coin 硬幣 Yingbi	fan 風扇 Fengshan	bridge 橋 Qiao	hello 你好 Ni hao
symbol 符號 Fuhao	community 社區 Shequ	chopsticks 筷子 Kuaizi	festival 節日 Jieri
tradition 傳統 Chuan-tong	thank you 謝謝 Xiexie	welcome 歡迎 Huanying	good-bye 再見 Zaijian
shoes 鞋 Xie	music 音樂 Yinyue	culture 文化 Wenhua	immigrant 移民 Yimin

We get to play Bingo to help us learn some Chinese! To play, our Museum Educator is going to show us an object and say what it is in Chinese. I try to pay close attention so that I can call out Bingo if I get 5 in a row!



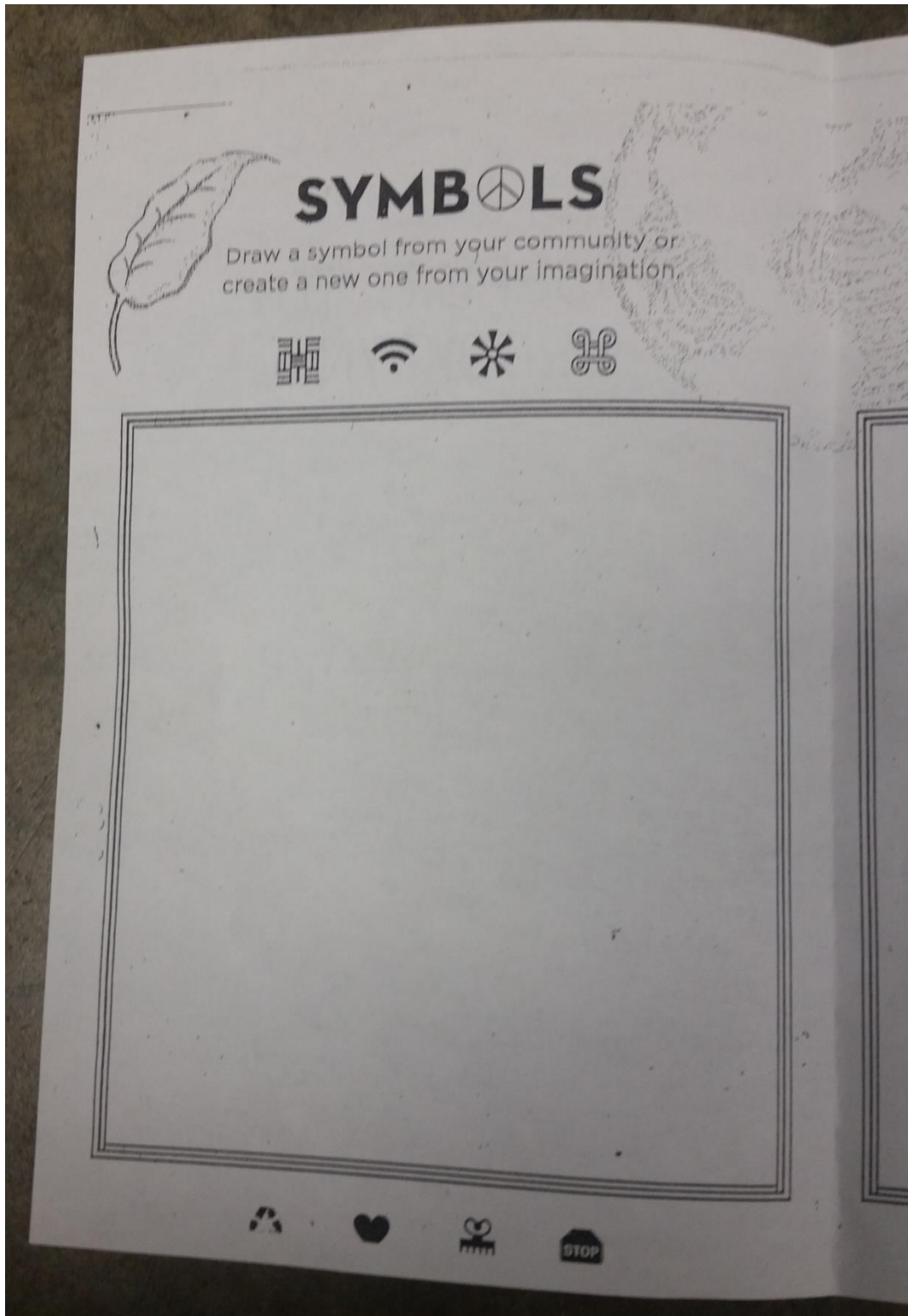
After playing Bingo, we get to explore the Bookstore. We can go inside the store, look at the Dragon's head outside the store, or watch the video about the Lion Dance and Chinese Fireworks.



Now we are going to walk to the OWA Afrikan Market where we will sit in front of the store and talk about Symbols. A symbol is a picture that represents something; it can be an object, place, person, or idea.



Our Museum Educator shows us different fabrics that can be found hanging up in the market. All of them have symbols from West Africa, what do these symbols look like? Our Museum educator asks for examples of a Symbol that we use or see at home or in our school.



We get a chance to walk around the store and look for Symbols. I can draw a symbol in our passport that I see in the store or I can design our own symbol.



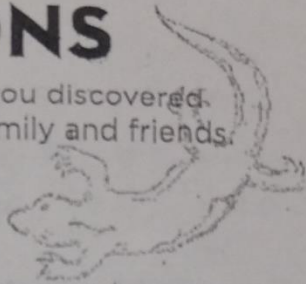


Our last stop is inside Caribbean Travels where we will talk about traditions.

A tradition is like a holiday, it is something that has been happening for many years around the same time of year.

# TRADITIONS

Draw or write about a tradition you discovered today or one you celebrate with family and friends.

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for a student to draw or write about a tradition.

If I raise my hand, I can share a tradition my family has or my favorite holiday. In the last page of our Passport, I can draw a picture of a tradition.



Now we can explore Caribbean Travels and learn about a tradition that is celebrated in the Caribbean Islands and even in New York City, Carnival!

Our program is all done!

I have learned about the  
languages, symbols, and  
traditions of some of the people  
that live in Brooklyn.

## **Applications**

Whenever a school group visits any museum, it is always highly recommended that they come prepared in some way. The Brooklyn Children's Museum has written two pre-lessons for each program that teachers can find on the Group Visits section of their website to use to introduce a topic or prepare their students for a trip. One way I see teachers using social stories is to preview a program with a student. The pre-lessons are not all written with students of varying abilities in mind. This is one way teachers can prepare their students with special needs for the museum trip.

One topic I was interested in researching was how social stories are used in the classroom. There were two common themes that came up again and again; the time spent reading the story and how often the story was read. Fisher and Haufe (2009) found through their research that it might have been more helpful reading and talking about their social story for ten minutes, twice a day, instead of spending only fifteen minutes on the social story at one point during the day. Kokina and Kern (2010), while doing a meta-analysis of research completed on social stories, found that the most successful 'interventions' occurred when the social stories were read immediately before the situation in the story occurred. I feel that something similar would have to happen for a social story about a field trip to also be successful. The story should be read frequently by the teacher or by the student, so the student knows what to expect far in advance of the trip and it should be read right before the student leaves for the trip.

While researching, I stumbled upon an interesting finding or I should say a set of findings. Much of the research I read up until that point had the teacher or researcher reading the story to the students or the teacher or researcher observing the students as they read the story. Kokina and Kern (2010) also found during their meta-analysis that "Studies that involved target

children as their own agents of intervention produced higher PND [Percentage of Non-overlapping Data] scores than those in which the Stories were read by teachers or parents” p.

820. Gray, the individual who created the concept of social stories was cited by Rowe (1999) as saying that “it is important for the child to be in ‘direct contact with the information in the story’ and that staff involvement should be minimized” p. 12.

One way this can occur is for the student to write control sentences for their social story, one of the recommended types of sentences that should be in the story. This sentence type serves as a personal reminder instead of one written by an adult of what the student thinks they should do in a difficult situation (Tarnai, 2011, p. 59). Another way for students to be the ‘agents of intervention’ is to actually read the social stories on their own. While I can not work with an individual student on their social story, I can simply encourage teachers to allow their students the space to read the story on their own. I believe that, since there seems to be no conclusive evidence one way or the other, teacher need to balance time spent reading the story to their student and for the student to be allowed to read the story on their own.

This balance can be achieved by following another suggestion from the meta-analysis on social stories. It has been shown that “studies that included assessment of comprehension yielded higher PND scores than those that did not” (Kokina and Kern, 2010, p. 821). This simply means that once the student has read the story, they should be assessed. The assessments do not need to be extremely sophisticated or formal, just simple questions to check in with the student. If the student appears to understand the story and the appropriate actions to take when they are feeling nervous or upset, then they can read the story on their own and continue to pick up even smaller nuances from the story.

Another way to achieve this balance is through the presentation of the social stories. These social stories can simply be printed into a booklet form thus they will also be available to download on to a computer, laptop, or tablet device and can be read that way. Research that looked at the effectiveness of social stories on such digital devices shows that “multimedia social story interventions were effective in increasing the duration of appropriate social engagement of all children participated in this study...all target children demonstrated longer time spent socially engaged with peers compared to baseline performance” (Ozdemir, 2008, p. 6). Another group also found that once the children were taught how to access and use the story, “computer-aided instruction can be implemented by students independently throughout the school day” (More, 2008, p. 171).

I see the Brooklyn Children’s Museum using the social stories in several different ways. I hope the Museum will not only work to always keep the Stories available online but make sure to also have a physical copy available at the front desk. This can be helpful for a student who has accidentally forgotten their story at home or at school, giving them the chance to read it immediately before the program. This can also be helpful for a student who has not read it before but is immediately feeling overwhelmed when entering the museum. This tool could possibly help both the teacher and the educator help the student feel more comfortable in this new environment right away.

Since the research on this type of tool is non-existent in the field of Museum Education, I hope the Brooklyn Children’s Museum continues to expand the writing of the social stories to all the programs that are currently available and gather data on their usefulness. There are so many aspects of the social story that the museum can gather data on. For instance the language that is used in the Culture Kids: Brooklyn Social Story can be compared to Sensory Sensation. Do

students need more of a descriptive story or a perspective story when visiting a museum? The research gathered could result in a new tool that can be easily created in all Museums, allowing for many more children to find a new place to belong.



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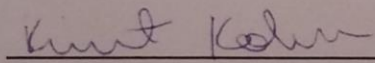


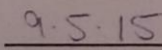
To Whom it may Concern;

Brigid Tuschen has permission from the Brooklyn Children's Museum to use photographs of the building, locations/exhibits in the museum, and animals/items used in the programs Sensory Sensations and CK: Brooklyn for her Integrative Masters Project.

You are welcome to be in contact with any further questions by emailing [KKohn@brooklynkids.org](mailto:KKohn@brooklynkids.org) or calling (718) 735-4400 extension 123.

Sincerely,  
Kinneret Kohn  
Manager of Education & Public Programs  
Brooklyn Children's Museum

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kinneret Kohn

  
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Date