



# SOCIAL SKILLS

**Everyday social interactions are complex and multi-layered.** Everyone makes some social mistakes but on the whole we are quick to recognise our errors and act to repair them. However, people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are seriously disadvantaged socially as they have great difficulty understanding non-verbal communication, such as facial expression, body language and/or tone of voice. Their literal interpretation of language means that they frequently misunderstand the actual words.

We know, almost instinctively so it seems, how to act in different situations even when the differences are quite subtle; e.g. where to stand in a lift when it is full or empty, where to stand when there are only two people in the lift such as yourself and a stranger or yourself and a friend. For people with ASD these differences are not obvious so they tend to apply the rule they learnt the first time they were in that particular setting whether it was appropriate or not. In addition they are unable to 'read' the other person's reactions and so make no attempt to repair the situation if this could be proven necessary.



Social skills are not easy to teach as they are complex and so much depends on 'reading' an individual, and adjusting to the individual situation as it evolves. We often do not realise exactly what is involved in a social skill but **we immediately recognise when it is absent**. When teaching social behaviours and skills to students with ASD many of us fall into the trap of assuming knowledge on the person with ASD's part, e.g. we fail to realise that the young child will not know that one greets friends in a different way to the school principal or even that the child will understand what the word 'greet' means. It is commonly known that children with ASD are socially naive and have the social awareness, without necessarily the quality, of a child two or three years younger than they are.



## 10 TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS

Excerpt from *Developing Social Skills* by Sue Larkey and Gay von Ess

- 1 Adapt activities to REAL people and places the child knows. Imagine you are talking to teacher, friend, name a specific student — include real names of people they know.
- 2 Remember that social expectations frequently become more complex as people get older — repetition and elaboration is essential.
- 3 Tell what to do, not what NOT to do. Instead of “NO JAMES” say “James wait, Sarah first.”
- 4 Catch students doing ‘the right thing!’ and reward.
- 5 Do not assume they will generalise, they need to practice in different environments.
- 6 Engage peers as they can be great role models and encourage students in a range of situations.
- 7 Be a role model. Being slightly over-dramatic will help the child identify points you are illustrating; e.g. body language, tone of voice, coping with mistakes.
- 8 Use visuals — a picture is worth a thousand words or more!
- 9 Make teaching quick and fun!
- 10 PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.

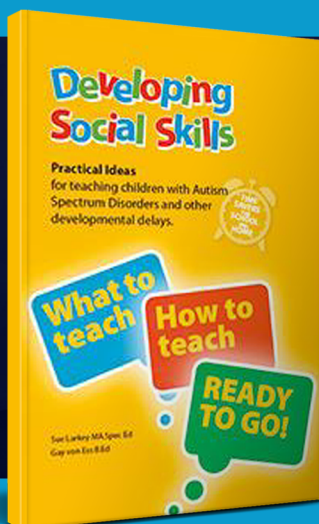


*More great ideas and timesavers*  
available in my book “*Developing Social Skills*”.

## DEVELOPING SOCIAL SKILLS

### PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN WITH ASD

by Sue Larkey and Gay von Ess

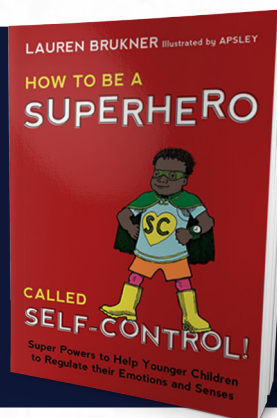


A starting point for teaching and encouraging social interactions and skills for children with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental delays. It is a useful concrete and visual resource which when coupled with videoing, role playing and modeling will help young primary school age children with an autism spectrum disorder to better understand the social world around them. This book includes 100s of ideas, social stories and worksheets. It is a great resource full of time savers for home and school.

- Code: B31
- \$45

**Book available here!**

Does your school use Restorative Justice? Do you know children who were not attending school full time? Many children in the spectrum have difficulty regulating emotions and don't know how to “fix” or “reflect on behavior” when they occur. Teaching Emotional Regulation is the key to success and participation.



## How to be a Superhero Called Self-Control

By Lauren Brukner

Narrated by a superhero called Self-Control, this illustrated book provides a variety of super power strategies to help children with emotional and sensory regulation difficulties, aged approximately 4 to 7 years to master self-control.

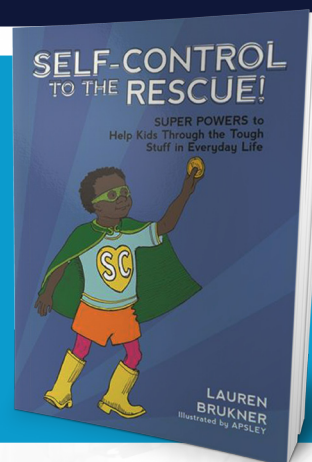
CODE B142 **\$35.95 (plus P & H)**

## Self-Control to the Rescue

By Lauren Brukner

Narrated by a superhero called Self-Control, this illustrated book provides a variety of super power strategies to help children with emotional and sensory regulation difficulties, aged approximately 4 to 7 years to master self-control.

CODE B163 **\$35.95 (plus P & H)**



## The Kids Guide to Staying Awesome and In Control

By Lauren Brukner

From breathing exercises, pressure holds and finger pulls, to fidgets, noise-reducing headphones and gum, this book is brimming with fun stuff to help kids feel cool, calm and collected. They will learn how to label difficult feelings, choose the perfect strategies and tools to tackle them, and use the se correctly whether at home or at school.

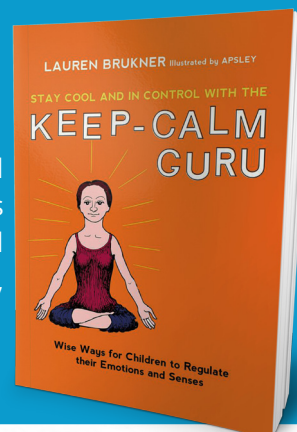
CODE B111 **\$35.95 (plus P & H)**

## Stay Cool and In Control with the Keep-Calm Guru

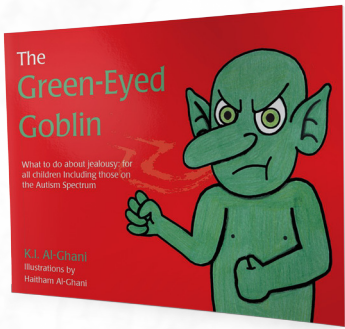
By Lauren Brukner

Meet the Keep-Calm Guru, our expert guide to the art of staying cool, calm, and in control in the face of overpowering feelings! This illustrated book introduces wise ways for children to recognise and cope with anxiety, anger, frustration, and other difficult emotions. Using everything from yoga poses and pressure holds, to deep breathing and relaxing colouring activities.

CODE B157 **\$35.95 (plus P & H)**







## The Green-Eyed Goblin. By K.I. Al-Ghani

### Green Eyed Goblin = JEALOUSY

This illustrated storybook explains jealousy through the story of Theo and his Green-Eyed Goblin. It will encourage children to talk about their feelings and learn how to subdue their own Green-Eyed Goblin for good. A section of tried and tested techniques for using with children, and a helpful introduction for parents and carers is included.

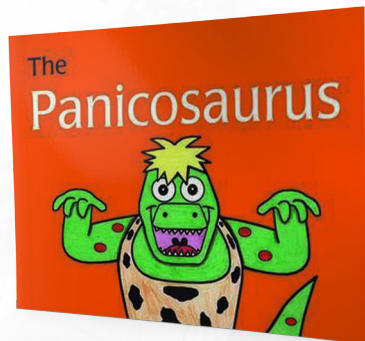
CODE B156 **\$33.95 (plus P & H)**

## The Red Beast: By K.I. Al-Ghani

### The Red Beast= ANGER

This vibrant, fully illustrated children's storybook is written for children aged 5+, and is an accessible, fun way to talk about anger, with useful tips about how to 'tame the red beast' and guidance for parents on how anger affects children with Asperger's Syndrome.

CODE B38 **\$33.95 (plus P & H)**



## The Panicosaurus: By K.I. Al-Ghani

### Panicosaurus = ANXIETY

This fun, easy-to-read and fully illustrated storybook will inspire children who experience anxiety, and encourage them to banish their own Panicosauruses with help from Mabel's strategies. Parents and carers will like the helpful introduction, explaining anxiety in children, and the list of techniques for lessening anxiety at the end of the book.

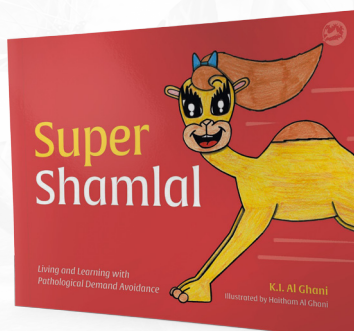
CODE B39 **\$33.95 (plus P & H)**

## The Disappointment Dragon: By K.I. Al-Ghani

### DISAPPOINTMENT

The Disappointment Dragon sometimes comes to see us all and, if we let him, he can make us feel sad or angry. The fun characters in this charming, fully illustrated storybook will help children to cope with, and discuss openly, their feelings of disappointment. There are many creative suggestions on how to banish the Disappointment Dragon and an introduction for adults explaining disappointment in children and how they can help.

CODE B41 **\$33.95 (plus P & H)**



## Super Shamlal: By K.I. Al-Ghani

Shamlal the Camel finds it almost impossible to do all the normal, everyday things that the other camels do. Her first word was 'NO!' and this is still the word she repeats the most through every day. Luckily, Shamlal's parents take her to a psychologist who explains that she has PDA, and gives her tips for how to live and learn with the syndrome.

**\$33.95 (plus P & H)**