

SOCIAL THINKING GROUPS

Available at Princeton Speech-
Language & Learning Center

Navigating the social world

For most of us, interacting with other people comes naturally. However, students with conditions such as High Functioning Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and ADD often lack this innate ability to think through and succeed in everyday social situations. For them, social thinking must be learned and practiced.

PSLLC's cutting-edge Social Thinking* groups bring together students of similar ages and abilities for weekly therapy sessions. Students learn ways to more easily "fit in" and establish and maintain friendships.

Based on the work of world-renowned expert Michelle Garcia Winner, we teach skills ranging from perspective taking, which is understanding that others have "thoughts" separate from our own, to interpreting and responding to the nuances of verbal and non-verbal communication.

Who can benefit from participating in the groups?

Groups are geared for students with average to above average IQ who have social cognitive deficits as a result of High Functioning Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, ADD, NLD, PDD-NOS, or related diagnoses. We work with students starting in kindergarten and, as students progress in school, they gradually move on to more complex social thinking topics depending on their maturity and interest level.

How the groups work

New groups are formed at the beginning of the school year for the regular (September to June) session and in June for the 8-week summer session. Each group includes two to four students and meets for an hour, once a week, under the supervision of a nationally certified speech-language pathologist. Each treatment session includes:

- **Gathering** - Three to five minutes of open talk time.
- **Group Lesson** - Social cognitive strategies and social thinking lessons.
- **Practice/Unstructured Time** - This could include an "open topic" discussion among group members. During this time, the therapist provides feedback to reinforce the lesson.
- **Parent Wrap Up** - Parents gather while the therapist reviews the group's lesson. If parents are unable to attend, we arrange for them to receive feedback either via email, phone calls or face-to-face monthly conferences.



Promoting desirable behaviors

While the program explores a wide range of topics, some central lessons include:

Expected vs. Unexpected

Students are taught that verbal and nonverbal actions have consequences in terms of how other people think about us. "Expected" actions can generate good thoughts, and "unexpected" actions can generate weird thoughts.

What to Keep In and What to Let Out

Students are taught that certain types of knowledge/opinions should stay in one's head and certain types of knowledge/opinions can be shared with others.

We have found that these methods of teaching social thinking increase the occurrence of desirable social behaviors outside the therapy room. Over time, students learn how their social behaviors can influence others' thoughts and actions.

If you would like to learn more about how our Social Thinking Groups can help your child, please call us today 609-924-7080.



Listen. Learn. Speak. Interact.

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*The concept of Social Thinking Groups and the terms social thinking vocabulary, Superflex and Purposeful Play Groups are based on the works of nationally renowned experts Michelle Garcia Winner and Stephanie Madrigal. To learn more about their work, visit www.socialthinking.com