Social stories can be used with adults and children; they are a tool to help provide directions and examples of appropriate ways to respond to social situations. The goal of a social story is to illustrate and clarify expectations while building skills such as coping and emotional regulation. Social stories provide framework and should serve as a clear example of expected behaviors.

The Single Caregiver Social Story Series by YAI is focused on helping caregivers to prepare their child to call 911 if they are no longer able to care for them.

Introducing the Story:

- If person can read independently: adult reads it to the reader once, the reader reads it to the adult once, moving forward the person reads it once a day
- If cannot read: record audio of the adult reading story with bell to indicate time to turn the page, after teaching reader to access the recording, have them read it no more than once a day independently*
- Can or Cannot read: create a digital presentation of the audio recording of the adult reading the story accompanied by the image of the page being read, after teaching reader to access presentation have them read it no more than once per day*

*If you do not have access to this kind of technology, simply read the story to your child once per day.

Assessing for Comprehension:

You can assess comprehension via role play.

- Role play a 911 call with you as the operator and the child playing themselves.
  - Show them where the “If I call 911” sheet is located.
  - Make sure they know where the phone is and how to dial it.
  - Use the line from the story, “911, what is your emergency?”. Have them read from their sheet all their information.
  - Congratulate them on doing a good job.
  - Eventually, you want them to be able to show you where the “If I call 911” sheet is and where the phone is without your assistance.
- Role play answering the door for helpers with you as the helper and your child playing themselves.
  - Make sure your child knows where the front door is.
  - Make sure you child knows how people access your apartment. Is it a doorbell? Would they need to buzz someone in? Help them to understand what they need to do to give paramedics access to your apartment.
  - Make sure they know how to open the apartment door unless your child wanders. If so, it may not be safe to teach them how to open the door.
If you are able, practice you being on the other side of the door and either ringing the doorbell or knocking. Prompt your child to ask who it is. You should answer in a variety of ways, so your child is able to identify helping personnel regardless of how they introduce themselves.

- Police.
- Paramedics.
- You had an emergency?
- You called 911.
- We are here to help.

Your child should then open the door and show them where you are.

Review with them ways to stay calm. Practice breathing and counting.

Congratulate them on doing a good job.

- Role play giving their “My Emergency Information” to a helper.
  - Show them where their “My Emergency Information” is located.
  - Ask them if they have anyone to stay with in a variety of ways, so your child is able to identify that they need to get their “My Emergency Information” and give it to a helper.
    - Is there someone you can stay with?
    - Do you have any family?
    - Is there someone who can stay with you?
    - Did mom/dad/caregiver give you any people to call?

Your child should then give go get their “My Emergency Information” and give it to you.

Congratulate them on doing a good job.

- Role play having to go to the hospital with you, where you are the helper and they are themselves.
  - Show them where their Emergency Bag is located.
  - Tell them that they will have to go to the hospital. Have them then practice going to get their emergency bag.
  - Review with them that they need to listen to directions from the helpers.
  - Review with them ways to stay calm. Practice breathing and counting.
  - Congratulate them on doing a good job.

- Role play having to go to someone else’s house with you, where you are the helper and they are themselves.
  - Show them where their Emergency Bag is located.
  - Tell them that they will have to go to someone else’s house. Have them then practice going to get their emergency bag.
  - Review with them that they need to listen to directions from the helpers.
  - Review with them ways to stay calm. Practice breathing and counting.
  - Congratulate them on doing a good job.

Filling out My Emergency Information

While the Single Caregiver Social Story is focused on the current COVID-19 pandemic, the information included here is useful for any emergency.

My Emergency Information:
This sheet gives your child information on who a helper is.

List any non-relative and non-emergency staff helpers so that your child is able to identify them easily. If you have photos of these people, it is good to include these.

Write your/your child’s phone number and address at the bottom of this page.

All About Me Sheet:

This sheet tells helpers and others about your child’s communication style, preferences and needs. You can use any format for this (there are many online) but they should give a good snapshot of your child for people who do not know them.

- If able, engage your child while filling this out. You can do a mini interview where you ask them the questions, and even do one where they ask you the questions back. They can decorate their sheet. Letting them have input into this gives them a sense of ownership of the information and makes a stronger connection to the information, increasing the likelihood that they will recall where it is if an emergency arises.

Emergency Contact List:

This should list out the top 4 people that emergency services should contact if you are incapacitated. Be sure that they know you have listed them on these forms. You may want to share your child’s All About Me Sheet with them in advance so they are prepared if they need to assist your child.

Medical Sheet:

Both you and your child should have a Medical Sheet so emergency services are able to care for both of you to the best of their ability.

If I Call 911 Sheet

This sheet should be placed near the phone or somewhere easily accessible by your child.

It should be filled out from the perspective of your child.

- If able, engage your child while filling this out. You can do a mini interview where you ask them the questions, and even do one where they ask you the questions back. They can decorate their sheet. Letting them have input into this gives them a sense of ownership of the information and makes a stronger connection to the information, increasing the likelihood that they will recall where it is if an emergency arises.

Emergency Bag

You will want to have an emergency bag for your child prepared. You can use the NYC Emergency management guide to help you identify what should be in this bag. Make sure to include things like prescription medications, chargers for any devices your child uses, at least 2 days-worth of clothes, and any items that help keep them calm (i.e. toys, foods). You should also include copies of the My Emergency Information and the Single Caregiver Social Story.