SOCIAL STORIES

Social Story: Unexpected Change

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A simple social story about plans changing, with space to add the person's preferred way of being told.

This is a simple social story you can adapt. Change names, details and wording so they are true for this person. Read it when things are reasonably calm, not only in a crisis. It is a support, not a script the person must perform, and it is not a licensed or official programme. Stop if it adds worry.

Who this is for

Anyone who finds unexpected change difficult, and the adults supporting them.

What is inside

- How to use the story
- Story pages
- A notes page

Please read this first

This is a free starting-point resource from My SEND Friend. It is general information, not legal, medical or benefits advice, and it is not an official or government form. It does not guarantee an assessment, plan, adjustment, payment or any other outcome. Check current official guidance (for example GOV.UK) and get individual advice from SENDIASS, IPSEA or a suitably qualified adviser when you need it.

How to use this story

This is a simple social story you can adapt. Change names, details and wording so they are true for this person. Read it when things are reasonably calm, not only in a crisis. It is a support, not a script the person must perform, and it is not a licensed or official programme. Stop if it adds worry.

Pair this story with a real way of showing a change — a now-and-next board, a “change of plan” card, or a short written note. Adults should only promise what they can do.

UNEXPECTED CHANGE

Sometimes plans change

Sometimes a plan changes. This can happen at home, at school, or when we are out. A change can feel sudden, even when other people think it is small.

It is okay to feel cross, worried, or sad when a plan changes. Those feelings make sense.

A change that is hard for me is

UNEXPECTED CHANGE

The new plan is still a plan

When a plan changes, there is usually a new plan: what we will do instead, who will be with me, and what will happen after.

An adult can tell me the new plan in a clear way. They can write it, show it on a now-and-next board, or say it in a few short sentences.

How I like to be told about a change

UNEXPECTED CHANGE

What I can do

I can ask “what is happening instead?” I can ask “when will it finish?” I can ask for a little time, or a comfort item, if I need it.

I do not have to pretend I am okay straight away. I can have my feeling and still be helped with the next step.

Words I can use, or a card I can show

UNEXPECTED CHANGE

Afterwards

When the new plan has happened, the day can continue. We can talk later about what helped, if I want to.

Plans will change again sometimes. I can practise this story when things are already reasonably calm, so it is ready if I need it.

What helps me after a change

Our change-of-plan routine

How we will show a change, and what support comes with it

Useful next steps and sources

Use what helped in this pack and leave the rest. You can come back to it when you need to. Live tools on mysendfriend.co.uk remain free, including Help Me Now, the SEND Letter Builder, the Reasonable Adjustments Builder, the DLA and PIP Claim Planners, and the free resources hub. Saving work to My SEND Plan is optional.

Where to check official or independent information

Guidance and benefit rules can change. Check the current official position, and get individual advice when you need it.

- mysendfriend.co.uk family and school resources
- Adapt every story so the facts are true for this person
- This is not a licensed Social Story™ product

> **A reminder about this free pack**
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