



Secret Agent Society Small Group Program NDIS Guide 2020-21

for

**Plan Managers, Planners, Support
Coordinators & SAS Providers**



**Social Skills
Training Institute**

SAS Small Group Program (SAS-SG) is published and distributed by Social Skills Training Pty Ltd (SST) which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Autism CRC Ltd. SST's mission is to develop and deliver evidence-based resources for professionals and families worldwide to assist young people to build personal and social responsibility to find their pathway.

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What is the purpose of the SAS Small Group Program?

The Secret Agent Society Small Group Program (SAS-SG) is an award winning evidence-based **social-emotional skill development program** designed to help children who struggle with social participation and emotion recognition and regulation.

SAS-SG empowers children to feel happier, calmer and braver while making and maintaining friendships, working in teams, and engaging in the community. Designed to captivate kids while they **learn social-emotional skills and emotion recognition in a fun way!**

The program is both evidence-based and founded on a number of different theoretical frameworks, cognitive function, and therapeutic approaches that are relevant to autism and other developmental and attentional disabilities, as well as child mental health:

- Theory of Mind
- Weak Central Coherence Theory
- Executive Functioning Deficits
- Applied Behaviour Analysis
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Typical Child Development

Who is SAS-SG best suited to?

The program is designed for children 8-12 years of age with a disability who have social and emotional needs and the evidence base is increasingly expanding towards 7-14 years of age.

SAS-SG was originally designed to use an espionage theme and computer game component to capture the interest of children on the **autism spectrum** or similar developmental disabilities and provide them, via service providers, a best-practice intervention to help reach their potential at home, school and in the community.

SAS-SG has since demonstrated significant benefits for children and families living with a range of disability and mental health challenges; such as ADHD, learning difficulties, anxiety disorders and children without formal diagnoses.

Does SAS-SG align with NDIS Support Categories?

SAS-SG supports participants with their social, emotional and behavioural NDIS participant goals. Additionally, the program can facilitate the participant's / families **capacity building** in the following areas:

- a. Social and Community Participation**
- b. Improved Relationships**
- c. Improved Daily Living Skills**

For some participants **core supports** may also be utilised to assist a child's participation in the program and the application of new skills in the community.

Children who face challenges with reading emotions in others, regulating emotions in themselves, working in groups, and making or keeping friendships can suffer significant detriments to their quality of life. The social-emotional challenges experienced by many children can impact on educational, career, relationship status, mental health, criminal justice contact and general wellbeing outcomes later in life.

SAS builds capacity in the following areas:

- Recognise emotions in themselves and others;
- Express their feelings in appropriate ways;
- Cope with feelings of anger and anxiety;
- Understand levels of friendship;
- Communicate and play with others;
- Cope with team work, games, and 'losing';
- Build and maintain friendships;
- Cope with mistakes, transitions, and other challenges;
- Solve social problems;
- Detect the difference between accidents, jokes and nasty deeds;
- Detect and understanding bullying;
- Prevent and manage bullying and teasing;
- Acknowledge personal strengths and goals;
- And more.

Research has shown there are substantial lifelong benefits to be gained from effective interventions for enhancing social-emotional skills in childhood, and this is precisely what SAS-SG provides for children.

How do I find SAS-SG Providers for my Clients?

Social Skills Training Institute's (SST)* website provides a free [Find an SAS Provider](#) search function. Families and NDIS team members can use this service to locate their nearest SAS-SG Provider.

Please contact a Provider directly to establish if they are NDIS Registered Providers.

Although SAS Provider accessibility is increasing across Australia, families may need to seek out and enrol in an SAS-SG Program outside of their usual service access. Alternatively, services and/or individual clinicians can be encouraged to complete the SAS Facilitator Training Course and become a new local SAS Provider of SAS-SG program.

If the family resides remotely, it is recommended that they contact distant SAS Providers to discuss remote delivery options.

Find an SAS Provider listings are wholly managed by the SAS Provider. SST holds no responsibility for the information contained in provider listings.

Go to <https://www.sst-institute.net/find-a-service-provider> and type in your **City/Town, State** to find providers*.

Disclaimer

**SST trains professionals in SAS-SG program delivery and provides clinical program delivery support. It is important to note that SST are not SAS-SG Providers and are not NDIS registered.*

Who is eligible to be an SAS-SG Provider?

SAS Providers typically include **allied health, education, and other disability professionals** typically working in community, hospital or educational settings.

To ensure program fidelity and best practice, professionals attend a **clinically lead, intensive facilitator training course** and are provided with a suite of in-depth, relevant and evidence based resources to maximise program delivery and client outcomes.

All SAS providers have a **certificate of completion** and prior to enrolling in the program parents or caregivers may request to see this SAS Provider certificate.

What does the SAS-SG program delivery model look like?

SAS-SG is a multi-component program that up-skills and empowers not only children with social and emotional challenges, but also the parents, carers and teachers who support them. SAS-SG typically spans across a 6-10 month period, depending on the delivery format.

The curriculum captivates children with its espionage-themed games and activities including a multi-level Computer Game, Helpful Thought Missile Action Game, Challenger Board Game and Secret Transmission Device Walkie-Talkie Game.

The program includes:

- **Child Group Meetings:** delivered as 11-22 sessions of 45-90 minutes each, which includes 2-4 booster sessions.
- **Parent Group Sessions:** commence with a 2 hour parent information session, followed by 11-22 group meetings of 30-45 minutes (or as 4 x 2 hour sessions) over the course of the program.
- **School Support:** Classroom teachers are educated and updated on the skills and content children are learning and how they can support the application of skills in the classroom and playground. This occurs through a varied combination of providing a series of SAS Teacher Tip Sheets, teacher consultation, school visits, and a school staff presentation.
- **Missions and Mission Journal:** Between child group meetings, children participate in weekly tasks, including playing educational activities within the SAS Computer Game, skills practice activities in day-to-day life and completion of a reflection journal.
- **Skill Tracker System:** A **short-term** daily motivation tool to encourage children to practice specific skills at home and school, aligned with progression through the program.
- **Assessment Measures:** Built-in Questionnaire booklets, observational assessment tool,

computer game reporting and skill tracker cards, provide valuable information to guide clinical practice for each individual child as well as providing easy and comprehensive outcome reporting.

How many hours should be allocated for the program?

As there are multiple components to the program which may vary slightly across providers and family's needs, the program can be delivered over 28 to 45 hours across multiple line items. Program pricing could range from \$2,000 to \$7,000 spanning an eight month period depending on the range of the participant's needs. We recommend that you contact a provider to confirm approximate costs.

How many children can be in one group?

SAS-SG is ideally co-facilitated by two trained facilitators to a group of **four to six children** (minimum of three children), If this is not possible, a sole facilitator may deliver the program with up to 3 children (maximum of **four children**).

Can SAS-SG be delivered to an individual child?

Yes, although research shows SAS-SG delivered in small groups leads to the greatest outcomes for children, however published research and clinical use, also support the alternate use of SAS-SG program in an individual format. As part of the in-take process the SAS Provider will make an informed assessment as to whether a child and family are best supported with a group or streamed to an alternative individual delivery model.

During training, SAS Facilitators are given instructions on how to deliver SAS-SG individually.

Can SAS-SG be delivered via telehealth?

Yes, SAS-SG can be delivered via a telehealth delivery method. Generally, SAS Providers offer a telehealth delivery when:

- families are unable to access face-to-face services due to their location;
- during periods of suspended face-to-face services due to social distancing requirements;
- where an online delivery is assessed as being in the best interests of the family by an allied health professional; or
- when families are required to protect their health and wellbeing.

Is there a consumable resource needed for SAS-SG?

Yes, each SAS Provider factors in an SAS Family Kit for each child/family. This may be included in their service model budgeting or treated as an additional support as part of accessing the program. The Family Kit contains all of the take-home and in-session resources and visual supports that participants and their support network (families and educators) need to benefit from the intervention. Each Family Kit includes the following resources:

- *1 x SAS Computer Game Access Code*

- *One child's game play for 12 months (renewal options available after this time)*
- *Access to online Instruction Manual*
- *1 x SAS Cadet Handbook (full-colour)*
- *1 x SAS Parent Workbook (full-colour)*
- *1 x digital SAS Teacher Tip Sheet Pack (full-colour)*
- *11 x Skill Tracker Cards*
- *1 x Gadget Pack (containing visual supports, individualised emotion and friendship scales, etc.)*
- *1 x Satchel Bag*

Without these resources, program fidelity will not be achieved or aligned with the evidence-base, the effectiveness of the program is likely to be significantly compromised, and improvements are less likely to be maintained.

Will the child require internet access?

Yes, ideally the child needs access to stable internet when playing the SAS Computer Game components between sessions. If the child doesn't have internet access through home or school the SAS Provider will discuss and recommend alternative options *i.e. such as utilising a room at the service location to complete the SAS Computer Game activities and missions or working at the local library or school library.*

Is the SAS Digital HQ component of SAS-SG compatible with iPads or other tablets?

Core learning activities within SAS Digital HQ component of SAS are designed to be for compatible tablets (e.g. iPads), laptops and desktops.

We recommend that all families review the [System Requirements](#) on the SST website.

Is there an eligibility intake process for families wanting to enrol in SAS-SG?

SST recommends that prior to program delivery, SAS providers conduct an intake assessment with each child/family to assist them in determining suitability for the program.

The SAS intake assessment typically includes interviews with the child's parents, a child's school teacher (or other staff member) and information from other medical/allied health professionals working with the child, in addition the completion of parent-and teacher-report questionnaires and child competency measures. Intake may also involve the optional SAS observational assessment at school.

Assessment results are integrated to create a profile of the child's social-emotional strengths to determine program suitability, individualise program content delivery and to determine group composition.

Can SAS-SG be delivered to younger or older children who fall outside of the evidence-base age range of 8-12years?

The program is designed for children 8-12 years of age who have social and emotional needs and the evidence base is increasingly expanding towards 7-14 years of age.

The applied use of SAS goes beyond the recommended age range quite frequently. For example, practitioners use the structured program or the stand-alone tools with older and younger children when considered to be clinically and practically appropriate.

Where do I find out more about the SAS evidence-base?

Multiple research evaluations support the effectiveness of SAS for improving the social and emotional skills of children around the world.

To find out more, visit the SST website which has a page dedicated to research <https://www.sst-institute.net/sas-evidence> or contact SST directly SAS@sst-institute.net or 07 3720 8740.

Can families access any other SAS options?

Yes, SAS Stand-Alone (SAS-SA) is for flexible teaching of specific skills where SAS-SG is not appropriate. These resources can be purchased at any time, they include:

- [**SAS Computer Game Pack**](#)
 - Includes access to the Computer Game for 1 player, digital instruction manual, E-Telligence Pack (a set of core visual supports) and a Guide for Parents & Professionals.
- [**SAS Challenger Board Game**](#)
 - The board game is best used as a supporting resource to the SAS Computer Game and should ideally be introduced after a child has completed level 2 of the Computer Game
- [**SAS E-Telligence Pack**](#)
 - A set of visual supports, including relaxation gadget code cards, stickers and much more.
- [**SAS Poster Set \(6 x A1 size\)**](#)
 - The poster set aligns with the visual supports included in the SAS Computer Game Pack

Some SAS-SG Providers also offer SAS-SA as a professionally led therapy solution to their Clients based on an assessment of the child and family needs. Families can utilise at home or with the support of their allied health or education professional in a therapy or school setting.

It is important to note that training is not required to utilise SAS-SA.

Need more information?

If you require any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact the SAS team directly.

Enquires email: SAS@sst-institute.net

Telephone: (07) 3720 8740

Website: www.sst-institute.net

[Watch Dr. Renae Beaumont SAS Program Developer speak at a recent TEDxUQ](#)

Any NDIS related content has been sourced from the following documents which are valid from 13 July 2020

NDIS Support Catalogue 2020-21

NDIS Price Guide 2020-21