

*SECRET*  
**agent**  
*SOCIETY* **SOLVING the MYSTERY**  
**of SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS®**



**Guide for Professionals**

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# CONTENTS

<b>SECRET AGENT SOCIETY (SAS)</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>SAS Small Group Program</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>SAS Small Group Program Structure</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>THE EVIDENCE</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>SAS Provider Benefits</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>SAS FACILITATOR TRAINING COURSE</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Eligibility</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Training Structure and Content</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>ACCREDITATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>SAS SMALL GROUP PROGRAM RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Facilitator Resources</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Family Resources</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Optional Resources</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>PROGRAM PREPARATION AND SUPPORT</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Clinical Support</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW TO APPLY FOR TRAINING</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Open Enrolment</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Agency Training</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>THE SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING INSTITUTE</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>APPENDIX A. SAS SMALL GROUP PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>APPENDIX B. SAS GROUP DELIVERY</b> .....	<b>23</b>

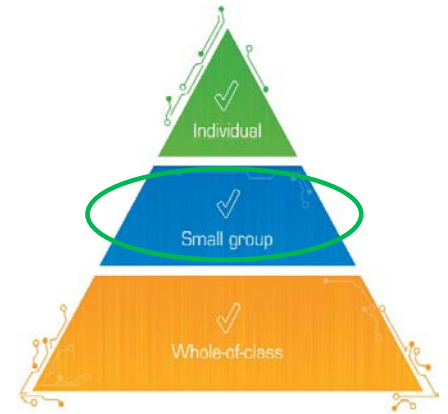
# SECRET AGENT SOCIETY (SAS)

Secret Agent Society (SAS) is a breakthrough approach for empowering children’s wellbeing, specifically social and emotional skills, and building inclusive cultures. The evidence-based framework is available for services to use at three different levels:

**SAS Stand Alone Resources** - Purchase a selection of SAS resources at any time to assist your current social skills groups, teaching or counselling, with no professional training required.

**SAS Small Group Program** - Complete the SAS Facilitator Training Course described below to offer this specialised and award-winning program for empowering children aged 8 to 12 who have identified social and emotional challenges.

**SAS Whole-Of-Class** - For building resilience for all students aged 8 to 12 within school. Select between informal use of the SAS Stand Alone resources as whole class activities or confidently lead innovative practice with our ready-to-use set of classroom resources for teaching to the Australian Curriculum (General Capabilities and mapped to the HPE subject area for years 4 and 5). Combined with the SAS Small Group Program for children with identified social and emotional challenges, SAS Whole-of-Class provides an ideal inclusive education model.



## SAS Small Group Program

Secret Agent Society (SAS) Small Group program consists of small group child sessions, parent and teacher information sessions and resources, real-life practice missions and a system to monitor and reward skill development at home and at school. Initially created by Clinical Psychologist, Dr Renae Beaumont through the University of Queensland, SAS is an evidence-based framework combining theories of cognitive function and behaviour change. For over 10 years, thousands of SAS Cadets have graduated as SAS Junior Detectives! In 2014, SAS was awarded the Autism Spectrum Australia National Recognition Award for advancement to acknowledge the significant, positive impact the program has on children’s and families’ lives.



The evidence-based curriculum captivates children with its espionage-themed games and activities including multi-level gamified learning through the SAS Digital Headquarters (SAS Digital HQ), Helpful Thought Missile Action Game, Challenger Board Game and Secret Message Transmission Device Walkie-Talkie Game.

Professionals learn to deliver SAS Small Group program aligned with evidence-base and clinical best practice in a 14 hour SAS Facilitator Training Course

SAS Small Group teaches children how to:

- Recognise emotions in themselves and others.
- Express their feelings in appropriate ways.
- Cope with feelings of anger and anxiety.
- Communicate and play with others.
- Cope with mistakes, transitions and challenges.
- Build and maintain friendships.
- Solve social problems.
- Prevent and manage bullying and teasing.
- Acknowledge their personal strengths.



The program was originally developed for children aged 8 to 12 years with Autism; however current research and clinical/educational use support its effectiveness with children who have other social and emotional challenges, including ADHD, Anxiety Disorders, and other mental health diagnoses or social difficulties without formal diagnosis.

SAS Small Group is a multi-component program that up-skills and empowers not only children with social and emotional challenges, but also the parents and teachers who support them. The program includes:

- **Child Group Meetings:** delivered as 11-22 sessions of either 45 or 90 minutes, 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 updated on the skills and content children are learning through SAS and how they can support the application of skills in the classroom and playground. This occurs through a combination of providing a series of SAS Teacher Tip Sheets, teacher consultation, school visits, and an optional school staff presentation.
- **Missions and Mission Journal:** Between each child group meeting, children participate in weekly tasks, including playing educational activities within the SAS Digital HQ, skills practice activities in day-to-day life and completion of a reflection journal.
- **Skill Tracker System:** A short-term daily motivation tool is used to encourage children to practice specific skills at home and school, aligned with progression through each module of the program.
- **Assessment Measures:** A combination of questionnaire booklets, an observational assessment tool, computer game performance and skill tracker cards, provide valuable information to guide areas of focus for each individual child as well as providing easy and comprehensive outcome reporting.
- **SAS Digital Headquarters:** An online platform accompanies the process to provide key digital components of the SAS Small Group Program; four levels of gamified learning, a Mission Journal for self-reflection on real life practice tasks, a multi-user Skill Tracker system, an E-Telligence Pack and other tools. [Watch the game trailer online!](#)

# SAS Small Group Program Structure

The Small Group program is ideally co-facilitated by two trained SAS Facilitators with a group of four to six children (minimum of three children). If this is not possible, a single SAS Facilitator may deliver the program to three to four children. SAS facilitators typically include allied health, education and disability professionals.

	CHILD	PARENT	SCHOOL/TEACHER
Assessment 1	Intake & Program set up		
		Parent Information Session (2 Hours)	2 hour School Information Session (optional)
	90mins	45mins	45mins 30mins 2hours
	1	1a 1b	1 1a 1b - - 1 1a 1b
	2	2a 2b	2 2a 2b - - 2 2a 2b
	3	3a 3b	3 3a 3b 2 3 3a 3b
	4	4a 4b	4 4a 4b - - 4 4a 4b
	5	5a 5b	5 5a 5b - - 5 5a 5b
	6	6a 6b	6 6a 6b 3 6 6a 6b
	7	7a 7b	7 7a 7b - - 7 7a 7b
	8	8a 8b	8 8a 8b - - 8 8a 8b
Assessment 2	9	9a 9b	9 9a 9b 4 9 9a 9b
		Follow-up	
Assessment 3	Follow-up Child 1	F-up 1a F-up 1b	Follow-up Parent 1 F-up 1a F-up 1b 10 10a 10b
		Follow-up	
Assessment 4	Follow-up Child 2	F-up 2a F-up 2b	Follow-up Parent 2 F-up 2a F-up 2b 11 11a 11b

# THE EVIDENCE

*Multiple University and community trials have shown SAS to be effective in improving children's emotional regulation and social skills when delivered in clinic, school and home contexts.*

## Autism Spectrum

Results from the initial clinic-based randomised controlled trial of the SAS Small Group program (formerly called the Junior Detective Training Program) showed 76 per cent of children aged 8 to 12 years with Asperger's Syndrome who had clinically significant delays in social functioning improved to showing social skills within the range of typically developing children<sup>3</sup>. Improvements in social skills and emotional regulation occurred across home and school and were maintained 5-months after the program ended. This Australian study currently holds the most clinically significant change published in the world for a social skills program for children with High-Functioning ASD.

An independent evaluation of the SAS Small Group program conducted in Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT) Satellite Classes across five NSW school districts showed that SAS led to improvements in the emotional regulation and social skills of students with ASD, with treatment gains maintained one year after the program ended<sup>4</sup>. Results showed that supplementing the school curriculum with SAS led to significantly greater gains in students' social-emotional functioning than the standard curriculum alone, with SAS shown to be equally effective irrespective of students' socio-economic status, verbal comprehension level, gender, or age (between 8 and 14 years). This three-year evaluation involved collaboration between ASPECT and academics from the University of Sydney, University of Queensland, Monash University, Griffith University, Westmead Children's Hospital and King's College (London).

Multiple sites across the world have conducted community implementation projects to demonstrate the benefits of using the SAS Small Group program in local hospital and school services. These include the National Educational Psychology Service in Ireland, Geneva Centre for Autism in Canada, the Children's Hospital Los Angeles and Buffalo School Districts in USA.

A Queensland-based trial of SAS was conducted in mainstream schools comparing the effectiveness of a variant of the SAS Small Group program to the SAS Computer Game Pack. Results showed that both interventions led to improvements in the emotional regulation and social skills of students with ASD, although the small group intervention led to greater treatment gains<sup>5</sup>. The small group program participants also displayed reductions in child anxiety, improvements in student behaviour and enhanced parent and teacher self-efficacy.

Parent-directed variants of SAS have been evaluated through the University of Queensland. Parents were supported by a trained SAS Facilitator via phone/web link, to deliver either a variant of the SAS Small Group Program or the SAS Computer Game Pack with results showing improvements in the emotion regulation and social skills of children with ASD<sup>7</sup>. The group program additionally improved children's behaviour and parents' self-efficacy. Results from a randomised controlled trial of this model are currently in preparation for publication.

## Other Social-Emotional Challenges

A pilot evaluation conducted at the University of Queensland has demonstrated the effectiveness of the SAS Small Group program for children who have social-emotional challenges, but who do not have an ASD<sup>2</sup>. This trial included students with learning difficulties, ADHD, anxiety disorders and those who had not been formally diagnosed with a psychological disorder. SAS was as effective for these children as for those with an ASD (as demonstrated in previous trials), with significant improvements in children's emotional-regulation skills, anxiety levels and social functioning shown.

Multiple applied research evaluations are currently underway or nearing completion within child mental health and developmental disability services across the globe. These studies include locations such as Dublin in Ireland, Melbourne in Australia and a multi-site randomised controlled trial through Weill Cornell Medicine and New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York USA.

## Individual Delivery

Preliminary evaluations and RCTs of individual delivery variants of the SAS Small Group program in Australia<sup>8</sup> and Canada<sup>9,10</sup> have also shown positive findings for improving the emotion regulation and/or social skills of children with ASDs.

<sup>1</sup> Beaumont, R., Hinton, S., and Sofronoff. (2018). *The Secret Agent Society: Upskilling Teachers in the Delivery of a Game-Based Social Skills Youth Program*. In D. Mentor (Ed.), *Computer Mediated Learning for Workforce Development* (pp 22-40). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. ISBN: 9781522541110

<sup>2</sup> Beaumont, R., Pearson, R., and Sofronoff, K. (2019) *A Novel Intervention for Child Peer Relationship Difficulties: The Secret Agent Society*, *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(11), 3075-3090. DOI: 10.1007/s10826-019-01485-7

<sup>3</sup> Beaumont, R., & Sofronoff, K. (2008). *A multi-component social skills intervention for children with Asperger syndrome: The junior detective training program*. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(7), 743-753.

<sup>4</sup> Einfeld, S., Beaumont, R., Sofronoff, K., Gray, K., Roberts, J., Taffe ... Howlin, P. (2017). *School-based social skills training for young people with autism spectrum disorders*. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, DOI: 10.3109/13668250.2017.1326587

<sup>5</sup> Beaumont, R., Rotolone, C., & Sofronoff, K. (2015). *The Secret Agent Society social skills program for children with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders: A comparison of two school variants*. *Psychology in the Schools*, 52(4), 390-402. DOI: 10.1002/pits.21831

<sup>6</sup> Sauv , S., O'Haire, C., Hall, H., Lane, C and Hudson, B (2018) *Adapting a Social Skills Intervention for Children with Autism within an Urban Specialty Community Clinic*, *Evidence-Based Practice in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. DOI: 10.1080/23794925.2018.1483214

<sup>7</sup> Sofronoff, K., Silva, J., & Beaumont, R. (2015). *The Secret Agent Society social-emotional skills program for children with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder: A parent-directed trial*. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 1-16. DOI: 10.1177/1088357615583467

<sup>8</sup> Tan, Y.L., Mazzucchelli, T.G. , & Beaumont, R. (2015). *An evaluation of individually delivered Secret Agent Society social skills program for children with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders: A pilot study*. *Behaviour Change*, 32(3), 159-174. doi 10.1017/bec.2015.7

<sup>9</sup> Thomson, K., Burnham Riosa, P., & Weiss, J. (2015). *Brief report of preliminary outcomes of an emotion regulation intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 45(1), 3487-3495.

<sup>10</sup> Weiss, J., Thomson, K., Burnham Riosa, P., Albaum, C., Chan, V., Maughan, A., Tablon, P., and Black, K (2018) *A randomized waitlist-controlled trial of cognitive behavior therapy to improve emotion regulation in children with autism*, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. DOI:10.1111/jcpp.12915



# ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING

To decide whether SAS is appropriate for your organisation, decision makers and prospective SAS Small Group program facilitators are encouraged to collaboratively complete the SAS Training Application Pack (for our scheduled open events) or Program Readiness Questionnaire (for agency hosted events) prior to training (see page 17 for further details). Please contact us to discuss any questions you may have about how SAS can be optimally delivered at your service.

Organisations are encouraged to contact relevant local and national funding bodies to determine their own and their clients' eligibility for subsidisation of program delivery time and resources.

## SAS Provider Benefits

Improving the resilience and social competence of children with social-emotional learning challenges establishes a strong foundation for their personal wellbeing and academic success. Become a trained SAS Provider and start offering a reputable evidence-based Small Group program that kids love!

- Having trusted trained professionals delivering SAS in an effective way is in increasing demand.
- A range of schools and clinical services use SAS to transform their social and emotional skills training.
- Funding bodies are following the ever growing evidence base of SAS.
- The evidence-base, session planning and engaging materials are all provided – saving professionals valuable session-preparation time, optimising children's skill generalisation to home and school and reducing child, parent and teacher resistance.
- SAS is based on a multiple theoretical frameworks and draws on child development research.
- Assessment measures with demonstrated reliability and validity are included in the intervention package to evaluate children's social-emotional skill profile and to track their progress through the Small Group program.
- The active involvement of children, parents and school staff as integral parts of the intervention framework ensures consistency and reinforcement of concepts across home and school environments, and helps to build the confidence and competence of all members of children's support teams.
- The SAS Facilitator Training Course provides 14 hours of professional development, claimable as formal professional development hours with many professions such as Allied Health professionals - including acknowledgment of covering the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and contributing 14 hours under NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) towards maintaining Proficient Teacher Accreditation in NSW.

# SAS FACILITATOR TRAINING COURSE

The 14 hour SAS Facilitator Training Course provides professionals with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively deliver the SAS Small Group program. To be an approved SAS Provider of the SAS Small Group program in the community, professionals must complete the SAS Facilitator Training Course.

During the training, professionals gain the knowledge and skills to:

- Assess the social functioning of children with social and emotional challenges,
- Deliver a comprehensive social skills program to children with social and emotional challenges and their parents,
- Promote the generalisation and maintenance of children's emotional regulation and friendship skills at home and at school,
- Manage common process issues that arise when facilitating group programs for children with social and emotional challenges and their parents,
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a social skills program for children with social and emotional challenges, and
- Identify indicators that a child and/or family require additional support.

Follow-up support is provided by the SST to help SAS Facilitators tailor the program to meet individual client or service model needs.

## Eligibility

Eligibility requirements ensure that professionals benefit from the SAS Facilitator Training Course and have the capacity to successfully deliver the SAS Small Group program.

To apply for training, professionals need:

- A minimum of a higher level education qualification in a helping or teaching profession (including, but not limited to, psychology, social work, psychiatry, counselling, occupational therapy, speech pathology, education), and
- A minimum of six months professional experience working with children with Autism and/or other social and emotional challenges.

## Training Structure and Content

Training is offered both face-to-face and online and involves a mix of didactic and multimedia presentations, small and large group discussions, exercises involving program resources and opportunities for participants to practise delivering program content. Face-to-face training size is limited to 20 participants to facilitate interactive activities and to allow for the provision of individualised feedback. Professionals are required to attend at least 75% of the training course to fulfil training requirements.

# ACCREDITATION

## Benefits

Accreditation is available to those wishing to gain a higher level of qualification in SAS Small Group Program delivery. It ensures that facilitators are skilled in delivering the program in a quality-assured, effective manner and are capable of obtaining results similar to those achieved in published research. Accreditation is optional.

Accredited SAS Facilitators will be:

- Recognised as having demonstrated best practice in the delivery of the Secret Agent Society Program.
- Acknowledged as an Accredited SAS Facilitator on the Social Skills Training Institute website for referral purposes (if desired).
- Able to promote themselves as accredited providers of the program.
- Eligible to apply for inclusion on the Australian Psychological Society Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) Identified Practitioners List (if desired/applicable).
- Eligible for an invitation to become SAS Regional Advisors with the Social Skills Training Institute. This role involves offering consultative support (face-to-face or telephone) to trained SAS Facilitators in their region.

## Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for accreditation, Facilitators must:

- Submit copies of all completed session checklists (de-identified) for the last SAS group program that they delivered.
- Submit copies of all parent satisfaction questionnaires (de-identified) from the last program delivered. Parent satisfaction ratings must average at least 3.5 out of 5, with no ratings falling below 3 out of 5.

## Become Accredited

To become accredited, SAS Facilitators must:

- Meet eligibility requirements.
- Submit a DVD/audiotape of themselves demonstrating two core competencies for program delivery. These core competencies are:
  - Teaching a new social skill during a child group session, and
  - Managing a process issue during a parent or child group session.
- Submit a self-evaluative checklist for each competency.
- Submit the Accreditation Application Form.
- Pay the Accreditation Fee.

# SAS SMALL GROUP PROGRAM RESOURCES

## Facilitator Resources

As part of their training plan, each participant in the SAS Facilitator Training Course receives each of the following Facilitator Resources.

### SAS Digital Facilitator Manual and SAS Facilitator Portal

- A 378 page digital SAS Facilitator Manual containing program instructions together with access to the online SAS Facilitator Portal to download digital program resources and other program and facilitator support materials.

### SAS Digital Facilitator Family Kit

- 1 x Cadet Handbook (full-colour)
- 1 x Parent Workbook (full-colour)
- 11 x Skill Tracker Cards
- 1 x Gadget Pack (refer to Family Kit components on page 15 for Gadget Pack components )

### SAS Digital HQ Product Key

- A 12 month licence to access the SAS Digital HQ containing multi-level gamified learning. Renewal options are available after 12 months.

To deliver the Secret Agent Society Small Group program in a quality-assured manner, organisations will require one **SAS Session Resources Kit** per service delivery site (approximately one kit per four facilitators).



### Session Resources Kit

- 1 x SAS Poster Set (6)
  - The set contains 6 A1 full colour posters
- 1 x SAS Challenger Board Game
  - 1 x Game Board, 12 x Character Figurines, 6 x Figurine Stands, 1 x Ball, 1 x Timer, 12 x Balloons, 2 x Dice, 4 x Corner Code Posters, 1 x Board Game Instruction Booklet
  - 1 x Set of Challenger Board Game Cards (12 x SAS Challenger cards, 6 x Meeting New People cards, 6 x Talking to Others cards, 6 x Playing with Others cards, 6 x Bullying and Teasing cards, 6 x Mistakes and Blunders cards, 6 x Change and Uncertainty cards)
- 1 x Helpful Thought Missile Game
  - 12 x Foam Helpful Thought Missiles, 1 x Helpful Thought Missile Launcher, 1 x Enemy Thoughts Backboard, 2 x Removable Hooks
- 6 x SAS Walkie Talkies

- 1 x SAS Mirror (in protective case)
- 11 x Detection of the Expression Game Cards
- 20 x Secret Message Transmission Device Game Cards
- 9 x Bully Guard Body Armour Cards
- 7 x D.E.C.O.D.E.R Game Cards
- 90 x Reward Tokens (in token bag)
- 1 x Permanent Marker
- 1 x SAS Session Resources Kit duffle bag

Due to quality assurance requirements, services are not able to access the Digital Facilitator Manual or purchase the Session Resources Kit without attending training.

## Family Resources

Each child and family who participates in the SAS Small Group program will require a Secret Agent Society Family Kit. The Family Kit contains all of the take-home and in-session resources and visual supports that families need to benefit from the intervention. Each Family Kit includes access for one child to enter the online SAS Digital HQ for 12 months. Without these resources, the effectiveness of the program is likely to be significantly compromised and improvements are less likely to be maintained.



For many organisations, the most cost-effective option is to purchase Family Kits for their upcoming groups upfront at a bulk discounted rate. Organisations may consider covering the cost of the Family Kits through fund raising, local grant initiatives and donations. Family Kits can be purchased with bulk discounts or individually by organisations or families via the Social Skills Training Institute website ([www.sst-institute.net](http://www.sst-institute.net)).

### Family Kit: 1 per child/family

- 1 x SAS Digital Headquarters Product Key
  - One child's game entry to Digital HQ for 12 months (renewal options available after this time)
  - Multi-level gamified learning, Mission Journals, Skill Tracker system, E-Telligence Pack, and more
- 1 x Cadet Handbook (full-colour)
- 1 x Parent Workbook (full-colour)
- 11 x Skill Tracker Cards
- 1 x Gadget Pack (in ziplock bag)
  - 1 x SAS ID Tag

- 1 x SAS Stressball
- 26 x Relaxation Gadget Code Cards
- 2 x Emotionometers (anger and anxiety emotion thermometers)
- 8 x Sheets of Stickers (featuring angry and anxious body clues, common situations where these emotions are felt, relaxation 'gadgets', Friendship Formula key, and SAS Bionic Powers)
- 11 x Skill Code Cards (Bionic Powers, D.E.C.O.D.E.R Problem-Solving Formula, Conversation Code, Play Code, Damage Control Code, Difference between Accidents, Jokes & Nasty Deeds, Confusion Code, Bully Guard Body Armour + blank cards)
- 1 x SAS Pocket-sized Code Card Holder
- 2 x Fact File Cards
- 1 x SAS Invisible Ink Pen
- 1 x SAS Friendship Formula tube and confetti
- 1 x SAS Graduation Medal
- 1 x Friendometer
- 1 x Satchel Bag

## Optional Resources

### SAS Challenger Board Game

The SAS Challenger Board Game helps children practically apply the social-emotional skills introduced in SAS through role plays and fun physical challenges. The Board Game requires 3-6 child players and is facilitated by a professional over several sittings/sessions. An instruction booklet gives tips on how to help children get the most out of Board Game play.



### SAS Poster Set

An optional extra for clinics, schools and home. Use the SAS Poster Set to help you teach or remember the SAS Skills. This set contains 6 posters: Emotionometers and body clues, Relaxation Gadgets, D.E.C.O.D.E.R Problem Solving Formula, Conversation Code, Play Code, and the Bully-Guard Body Armour



Please note: Copyright restrictions prohibit the photocopying of published SAS resources unless otherwise stated.

# PROGRAM PREPARATION AND SUPPORT

In preparing to deliver the SAS Small Group program, SAS Facilitators and organisations need to cater for the increased time that will initially be required for program planning, administration and session preparation. As SAS Facilitators gain experience, preparation time will reduce considerably. The first time a newly trained facilitator delivers SAS they are likely to need 2 hours per 90 minute session to prepare and debrief with their co-facilitator. This time requirement will decrease significantly with experience. **Refer to Appendix B for an example of service delivery for a group of six children.**

To deliver the SAS Small Group program, a room with minimum 3.5m x 5.5m dimensions is recommended for child sessions and a separate area with access to a computer, data projector (or equivalent) and seating for parents.

## Clinical Support

Research shows that post-training support within an organisation is critical for effective and sustainable program delivery.

### Built-in Support

#### Peer Support

- It is recommended that SAS Facilitators review program content with their co-facilitator and/or a peer support group to problem-solve obstacles to effective program delivery on an ongoing basis. Recommendation on how to do this effectively will be provided in training.

#### Half-hour Individual Consultation

Each training place includes a half-hour consultation with an accredited Secret Agent Society Consultant.

- Consultations are scheduled by individual SAS Facilitators, usually within the first month of program delivery. The agenda for the phone call or web link is determined by the SAS Facilitator, and typically focuses on successes and barriers to program implementation.
- Co-facilitators may elect to share their follow-up consultations with others.

#### Social Skills Training Institute Website

The SST Website will assist SAS Facilitators in promoting their service to the community through:

- Providing a “Find a SAS Provider” feature.
- Sharing our latest news articles through local networks.
- Directing families to information on what to expect in the SAS Small Group program and how it will benefit their family.

## SAS Facilitator Portal

Once professionals complete the SAS Facilitator Training Course, they are provided access to a new SAS Facilitator community portal to:

- Find and access SAS Digital Program Materials and Facilitator support items.
- Stay up-to-date with the latest research, promotional materials, and funding information.
- Manage their account and “Find a SAS Provider” details.
- Order their SAS resources.

## Promotional support materials

Trained SAS Providers are offered a range of tools and materials to help promote their SAS service.

### Additional Clinical Support Available

A number of additional clinical support options can be purchased as needed. These may include:

- **Telephone/Skype consultations**

Telephone/Skype consultations can be scheduled at convenient intervals (e.g. one per month for the first three months), or on an as-need basis.

- **DVD/audio footage review**

Feedback suggests that supervision sessions are often most valuable if SST staff have the opportunity to review footage of facilitators delivering the SAS program prior to scheduled support consultations.

- **Site visits**

When possible, site visits can be booked by organisations for a number of purposes, including briefing managers and/or other staff on the program, observing and providing feedback on program delivery and/or discussing implementation successes and barriers.





# HOW TO APPLY FOR TRAINING

## Open Enrolment

After reading this SAS Guide For Professionals, organisational leaders (e.g. team leader, manager, director, school principal) are encouraged to collaboratively complete the SAS Training Application Pack with the staff they intend to have trained in SAS and return it to the Program Coordinator at the Social Skills Training Institute via post (PO Box 6068 St Lucia Qld 4067 Australia), email ([training@sst-institute.net](mailto:training@sst-institute.net)), or fax (+61 7 3870 0798).

A team member will contact you closer to your scheduled course date to confirm your attendance and receipt of payment, and to discuss any questions or concerns that may arise from your paperwork.

If you are unable to attend any of the scheduled training courses, please email [training@sst-institute.net](mailto:training@sst-institute.net) to register your interest in a future course.

## Agency Training

1. Read the SAS Guide for Professionals.
2. Meet with organisational leaders to brief them on hosting an SAS training course and to discuss any questions or concerns they may have about the program. Encourage them to contact [training@sst-institute.net](mailto:training@sst-institute.net) or +61 7 3720 8740 for further information if needed.
3. Forward a copy of this SAS Guide for Professionals together with the SAS Program Readiness Questionnaire to organisational leader(s) who expressed interest in the program. Ask them to complete the Program Readiness Questionnaire with the staff whom they intend to deliver SAS and return it to you. Only one Program Readiness Questionnaire is required per service site/organisation.

The Program Readiness Questionnaire helps to assess whether an organisation or service delivery site (e.g. clinic or school) has sufficient resources and capacity to successfully deliver SAS, and assists in identifying where additional support may be needed. If a member of your network decide not to proceed with SAS after completing the questionnaire, their training places can be offered to another service delivery site or partner organisation that may be better equipped for program delivery. This ensures optimal return on an organisation's investment in facilitator training and resources.

4. Complete the Agency Training Application Form.
5. Return the Agency Training Application Form, together with the SAS Program Readiness Questionnaire(s) (one per organisation or service) to the SST Program Coordinator via post (PO Box 6068 St Lucia Qld 4067 Australia), email ([training@sst-institute.net](mailto:training@sst-institute.net)) or fax (+61 7 3870 0798). Once this paperwork has been received, you will be contacted to schedule the training and to discuss any questions that may arise.

## Letter of Agreement

Once details of the training and implementation model have been finalised, your organisation will be asked to sign a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with SST regarding the provision of SAS Facilitator Training and Resources. The LoA clarifies details regarding the training and the responsibilities of both parties. The LoA must be signed before dates of training can be confirmed.

## Training Venue and Other Requirements

Your organisation is responsible for securing an appropriate training venue and for confirming professional suitability, availability and attendance. As a brief overview, you will be required to organise:

- A training venue that can accommodate all participants, with tables and chairs configured in a U-shape.
- Catering (morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea are recommended if face-to-face event).
- Equipment (data projector and screen/white wall, whiteboard/flipchart and markers).
- Storage and distribution of training materials to participants.

## THE SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Social Skills Training Institute (SST) is the organisation that publishes the Secret Agent Society, making it available worldwide to children, parents and professionals. Social Skills Training Pty Ltd (trading as SST) is a subsidiary of the not-for-profit Autism CRC Ltd (Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism; Autism CRC) which is a world-first research collaboration. 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.



# APPENDIX A. SAS SMALL GROUP PROGRAM

## Program Structure

SAS is a multi-component Small Group program that up-skills and empowers not only children with social and emotional challenges, but also the parents and teachers who support them. The program components include:

### Child Group Meetings

- Child group meetings are delivered as 11-22 sessions of 45-90 minutes each, which includes 2-4 booster sessions. The first 9-18 sessions are typically delivered weekly with the following 2-4 boosters sessions spread over a six month period.
- The program is ideally co-facilitated by two SAS Facilitators with a group of four to six children (minimum of three children).
- If this is not possible, a single SAS Facilitator may deliver the program with three to four children.

### Parent Information Sessions and Support

- It is optimal if parents have the opportunity for facilitated discussion on the successes and challenges they've faced in supporting their children to use their newly learnt social skills.
- Parent group meetings are held throughout the program to advise and support parents on the content of child group meetings and how to help their children apply their SAS skills in real life. These parent meetings are typically held weekly after each Child Group Meeting, as 30-45 minute group session or alternatively as four 2-hour parent sessions across the SAS Small Group program.
- If the program is being co-facilitated, one SAS Facilitator typically delivers the Parent Meetings while the other helps children to use their social-emotional skills during informal play activities.
- If a service has multiple SAS Facilitators they have the options of holding the parent meetings concurrent to the child group meetings.
- If the program is being delivered by a sole facilitator, children may be supervised in the waiting room by an appropriate adult during the parent sessions. Alternatively, the parent meeting content can be delivered at a different time/day (without children present).

- Teacher Resources and School Support
- Parents or SAS Facilitators give teachers weekly Teacher Tip Sheets summarising program content and providing tips on how to help children apply their social-emotional skills in the classroom and playground.
- Follow-up phone calls or meetings between SAS Facilitators and teachers also help to support children's skill usage at school.
- An optional school staff information session can be delivered to inform school staff how they can optimally support children in applying their social-emotional skills in the classroom and playground, and create a caring, compassionate learning environment for all students.
- SAS is often written into children's individual learning plans to assist teachers to meet the social-emotional goals of their students.
- The SAS Small Group Program is mapped to the Australian National Curriculum.

## Missions & Mission Journal

- Between each child group meeting, children participate in weekly tasks, including playing educational activities within the SAS Digital HQ, skills practice activities in day-to-day life.
- At the completion of each Mission, children complete a self-reflection in their Mission Journal.
- The Mission Journal can be completed in their Cadet Handbooks or through the Digital HQ depending on their preference.

## Skill Tracker System

- A short-term daily motivation tool is used by parents and teachers to encourage children to practice specific skills at home and school each week.
- The target skills practiced every day for one week aligned with content progression of each module of the program.

## Assessment Measures

- SAS Facilitators use a combination of questionnaire booklets (parent, teacher and child), an observational assessment tool, computer game performance reporting and skill tracker points to assess each child's progress to the program.
- The assessment measures provide valuable information to guide areas of focus for each individual child as well as providing easy and comprehensive outcome reporting.

## SAS Digital Headquarters

- Children log into an online platform outside of group meetings to access key digital components of the SAS Small Group Program designed to motivate active knowledge and skills acquisition. [Watch the game trailer online!](#)
- The Digital HQ for the SAS Small Group Program contains access to four levels of educational games, a Mission Journal for self-reflection on real life practice tasks, a multi-user digital Skill Tracker system, an E-Telligence Pack and other tools.
- Children who record their Mission progress through the Digital HQ, can type their answers, use the 'Scene Generator' to make pictures with speech and thought bubbles, or other gamified activities.
- Parents or school staff help children play the Computer Game with the aid of an instruction manual and tips from their SAS Facilitator.



## Group Session Content

Over the course of the SAS Small Group program children and parents learn a range of skills through various secret agent activities. A brief summary of the content of the SAS Small Group program is shown below.

Meetings	Content
<b>Club Meeting 1a+b</b>	Bionic Powers; detecting emotions in others from face, body and voice clues.
<b>Club Meeting 2a+b</b>	Detecting emotions in yourself from body clues; the 'Emotionometer' (emotion thermometer); Relaxation 'gadgets': Slow breathing (the O2 Regulator).
<b>Club Meeting 3a+b:</b>	Relaxation 'gadgets': Doing a physical activity (the Fire Engine), thinking in helpful ways (the Helpful Thought Missile), noticing and letting thoughts go (Thought Tracker.)
<b>Club Meeting 4a+b:</b>	Relaxation 'gadgets': focusing your senses (the Enviro-Body Scan); 'Friendship Formula' of good friends; understanding different social groups; 'Friendometer' measuring friendship.
<b>Club Meeting 5a+b</b>	D.E.C.O.D.E.R problem-solving formula; conversation skills.
<b>Club Meeting 6a+b:</b>	Conversation skills; playing with others.
<b>Club Meeting 7a+b:</b>	Coping with mistakes and losing; Play SAS Challenger Board Game to practice skills; detecting the difference between accidents, jokes and nasty deeds.
<b>Club Meeting 8a+b:</b>	Understanding and managing bullying (Bully-Guard Body Armor); continue playing SAS Board Game.
<b>Club Meeting 9a+b:</b>	Coping with confusion; aim to finish SAS Board Game, review game; solving future social problems.
<b>Follow-up Meeting 1a+b:</b>	Progress update review activities; self-esteem activity; solving future social problems.
<b>Follow-up Meeting 2a+b:</b>	Progress update; SAS Stars activity; solving future social problems; graduation ceremony.
<p>Parents, teachers and children complete follow-up assessment measures and children are awarded graduation certificates and medals to celebrate their achievements.</p>	

# APPENDIX B. SAS GROUP DELIVERY

The below example outlines the Small Group program flow, and staff time allocation when running a group with 6 children. Please note that the assessment and teacher check-in time is proportional to the number of children per group. It is recommended that SAS Facilitators allocate 45 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes per child for assessment activities over the course of the program. For teacher check-ins, it is recommended that SAS Facilitators allocate 20 minutes per child (2 x 10 minute check-ins per child).

## 1. Intake & Pre-Assessment

For a group of 6 children, it is recommended that SAS Facilitators allocate 4 ½ to 8 hours for the Intake & Pre-Assessment, commonly consisting of the following:

- Registration forms / Expressions of interest from parents
- Intake interviews with parents and children
- School observation and teacher intake interview
- Scoring and interpretation of pre-program assessments

## 2. Order SAS Family Kits

Go [www.sst-institute.net](http://www.sst-institute.net) and order your SAS Family Kits. Please allow 2 to 3 weeks for SAS Family Kit delivery.

When setting up the financial modelling for your SAS service, consider:

- The bulk discount pricing for forward planning your SAS Family Kit needs
- Dividing the total SAS Family Kit order amount by the number of sessions and children associated with your group to get a 'per child per session' cost allocation
- The division of materials and professional time resources across children, parents and school staff
- Reduction of stationary budget & preparation time allocation

## 3. Preparation & Debrief

SAS Facilitators are recommended to allocate approximately 15 hours for session preparation and debriefing/supervision with their co-facilitator and/or peers.

#### 4. Delivery

The following provides a guide to the professional staffing requirements of the SAS Small Group Program.

#### Assessment: Intake process and outcome evaluation

SAS Program Activity	No of Sessions	Estimated Hours
<u>Pre Program Intake &amp; Assessment</u> Intake interview + Q're administration, scoring and interpretation - Parent, Teacher, Child, school observation	1	<b>1-5.5</b>
<u>Post Program Assessment</u> Q're administration and Scoring /observational assessment / scoring and interpretation/ feedback and consultation to parents & teachers	3	<b>1-3</b>

#### Child Group Meetings (2 x delivery format options)

SAS Program Activity	No of Sessions	Minimum Contact Hours
SAS Child Group Meetings	11-22	<b>16</b>

#### Parent Group Meetings (3 x delivery format options)

SAS Program Activity	No of Sessions	Minimum Contact Hours
SAS Parent Group Meetings	6-23	<b>8-12</b>

#### School - School and/or Teacher Contact (Varies across SAS Providers)

SAS Program Activity	Minimum Contact Hours
SAS School Information Session & Teacher Check-Ins	<b>2-9</b>