



Who Are the People in *Your* Neighborhood?



Children who watch television may think most people work as police officers or doctors. Teachers can help children understand more about their communities and think about what they might like to do when they grow up by helping children identify a variety of community workers and the many services they provide (see the Illinois Early Learning and Development Benchmarks 15.A.ECa and 15.A.ECb).

-  **Begin with workers children have observed.**
Help the children list the jobs their parents or other family members do. Work with them to find a tool or picture of a tool that a particular worker would use, such as a computer print-out for the office worker, a spoon for the restaurant worker, a hammer for the construction worker, play money for the retail worker, a toy tractor for the farmer, or a toy stethoscope for the nurse. Let the children tell the group how the tool is used.
-  **Encourage parents to come into the classroom to talk about their jobs.**
Before the parents come, discuss possible interview questions with the children. Where do they work? What do they like about their job? What is hard about it?
-  **When possible, consider field trips to workplaces.**
Start with your school or program. Who are the people who work to make sure children are safe and comfortable at school? Consider taking children to an office building, the post office, the public library, or a grocery store. Encourage children to ask their interview questions of the workers they meet.
-  **Read books to the children about a variety of occupations.**
Discuss with the children: How is that job useful? What do you need to know to do it? Would our neighborhood be different if no one provided that service? Create a mural starting with a family, adding drawings of all the people whose work helps the members in the family. Don't forget teachers!
-  **Focus on a familiar product, such as a book or a carton of milk.**
What workers did it take to make this product and get it to your classroom? Invite the children to find out.
-  **Discuss what types of jobs children might like to do when they grow up.**
Let them draw and dictate stories about themselves in a possible job or act out the jobs in dramatic play. Provide costumes and props.
-  **Make a chart of all the occupations discussed.**
Include information learned from the interviews, field trips, and books. Add to this chart throughout the year.
-  **For related Web resources, see "Who Are the People in *Your* Neighborhood?" at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.**

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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