



## 3–5 Years

### Social Studies: Knowledge of Social and Physical Environments

**WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED:** Weeks 10–30

#### BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Understanding of Physical Environments
- Understanding of Social Environments

## OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Understanding of Physical Environments

In what ways does the child show understanding of physical environments as he/she:

- engages with materials in the room (any free play period after Week 10, Day 4)? Example: The child looks through a book and says “I have a bed like that in my room.”
- describes his/her shoebox home (Week 11, Day 4 center activity)?
- works with a map of the center neighborhood (any free play after Week 15, Day 5)? Examples: The child draws a map of the center neighborhood; arranges blocks to represent a map; plays with the center neighborhood map used in Week 15, Day 5
- converses at a mealtime (any mealtime after Week 16, Day 4)? Example: The child says “My dad bought pasta at the Commissary. The Commissary is on the street where we live.”
- makes a representation of one of the community’s geographical features (Week 20, Day 5 group activity)?

### Understanding of Social Environments

In what ways does the child show understanding of social environments as he/she:

- prepares to eat a meal (any transition to mealtime after Week 22, Day 4)? Example: The child says “Yolanda brings the lunch cart to us every day.”
- pretends to be a community helper (Week 23, Day 5 group activity)?
- plays with vehicles and signs (or other materials) and follows rules or laws (any free play after Week 26, Day 5)? Examples: A child says “You have to stop at the stop sign” when another child drives his car past the stop sign, not slowing or stopping his car; a child tells others at her table engaged in cutting, “We need to throw away our leftover paper—we cannot throw it on the floor.”
- notices a flag in the room, center, or outside (any free play period after Week 28, Day 4)? Example: The child says “That flag stands for our country.”



- sorts ballots used for a name voting activity (Week 30, Day 5 center activity)?

## FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Reinforce

The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of knowledge of physical and social environments.

### Understanding of Physical Environments

- Invite children to sketch a design of a home and then build it out of 3-D materials, such as blocks, clay, or craft sticks. The sketch does not need to be realistic, this activity is an opportunity to learn more about the building process.
- Place books about homes in the block area or art area. Examples: *Building a House* by Byron Barton, *Houses and Homes* by Ann Morris, *DK Readers L1: Homes Around the World* by Max Moore, and *Homes Around the World* by Teacher Created Materials. Invite children to point out characteristics of houses that they see in the books. Encourage children to draw houses or build houses with blocks.
- Read *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton. Encourage children to think about how neighborhoods begin.
- Provide pictures of places in neighborhoods and invite children to make a representation of one or more of the places. Examples: grocery store, hardware store, department store, or community building.
- Invite children to play in the block area. Encourage children to think about how blocks could represent different geographical features of the community. Examples: Place a long board on top of two short boards to represent a bridge and use an oval piece of blue construction paper to represent a body of water. Add train tracks to the block area if train tracks are part of the community's geography.

### Understanding of Social Environments

- Invite children to pretend to be a community helper. Encourage children to pretend to use tools (or drive vehicles) that the community helper would use.
- Encourage children to describe uniforms and patches as they engage in dress up with different uniforms. Invite children to explain who would wear different uniforms and what might be done by people in the uniform.
- As children play, invite them to describe how they are following rules and laws, such as signing in a pretend child at the center or pretending passengers are buckled in their seatbelts.
- Play patriotic tunes as background music while children play in the classroom.



- Offer voting opportunities when appropriate in the classroom. Examples: which book to read, what rest time music to play, and what materials to provide for outside time.

## Reintroduce

*The following activities are designed to support the development of knowledge of social and physical environments among children who find it challenging to show knowledge of social and physical environments. The activities are also appropriate for all children.*

### Understanding of Physical Environments

- Use the Week 10, Day 4 group activity to review characteristics of a home. Use pictures of typical homes in your community instead of, or in addition, to reading *Homes*.
- Repeat the Week 13, Day 4 group activity. Reintroduce the concept of neighborhood. Read *Places in My Neighborhood* by Shelly Lyons. Draw attention to pictures that represent places in the child's neighborhood.
- Repeat the Week 16, Day 4 group activity. Reintroduce the word community. It might be helpful for children to identify some specific things in the named neighborhoods. Examples:
  - Rita lives in Pleasant Hills. There is a large swimming pool in Pleasant Hills.
  - Madelyn lives in Red Rover. The firefighters who come to our center to talk about safety are from Red Rover. Their fire station is in Red Rover.
  - Carlos lives in Beavertail. There is a library in Beavertail. I like to visit the library in Beavertail.
- Repeat the Week 19, Day 4 group activity. Describe your community's geography. Help children list geographical characteristics in their community. Add simple pictures or drawings to the chart, listing characteristics of a community's geography.

### Understanding of Social Environments

- Repeat the Week 22, Day 5 group activity. Reintroduce the concept of a community helper. Focus on pictures of favorite community helpers while leading the activity.
- Repeat the Week 24, Day 5 group activity. Encourage parents to describe his/her uniform.
- Repeat the Week 26, Day 5 group activity. Invite children to describe times they have known someone to follow a rule or law.
- Post a picture of an American flag or hang a flag in your classroom to support discussion of how the flag stands for our country's land and people.
- Repeat the descriptions of choice and voting in the Week 29, Day 4 group activity. Emphasize how each of us makes choices throughout the day. If possible, repeat Week 29, Day 4 with a group of children so that the voting portion of the activity can be completed. Remind children of what they might do if they feel disappointed in the voting results.