

ACTIVITY 3:

EXPLORING THE HEALTH SYSTEM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

AIM: Children explore what the health system looks like in their local community.

Preparation:

- Create a community map or materials for the group to create a community map
- Organise adults and permissions for children to participate in a community walk outing

Facilitator materials and resources:

- Activity 3 presentation
- Mapping materials (poster or flipchart and markers)

Participant materials:

- Mapping materials
- Weather appropriate clothing and walking shoes

Tips for those working in Early Years settings:

- Map out the different types of people in the health system and what their jobs are. Have each child draw at least one of the healthcare workers and create a bulletin board using these.
- Hold a healthcare worker dress-up day. Invite children to wear a healthcare worker costume (e.g. doctor, nurse, chemist, a worker dressed in PPE) or something more creative like a pill or an x-ray skeleton. Talk about why the person or thing they've dressed as is important to healthcare.
- Invite a healthcare worker to your group to talk about their work.

If any of the children you're working with have personal experience of illness themselves or have a friend or family member who has been unwell over a long period of time, this activity could trigger upsetting memories and feelings for them. Please be aware of this before starting the activity and be ready to support children as necessary.

Facilitator introduction

Building on what they learned from starter activity 2, children will grow their understanding of what a health system is by investigating the health system that exists within their local community.

Guided by the curiosity of Paddington and the explorer spirit of Montgomery Clyde (the explorer who visited Paddington's Aunt Lucy and Uncle Pastuzo in Peru, and whose hat Paddington now wears), the children will make an expedition to search for the health services they have access to in their own community to ensure their right to healthcare.



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PART 1: WARM UP – REFLECTION

1. As a quick warm-up, invite children to think quietly about a time when they needed some kind of healthcare. Have they ever been to the doctor, the dentist, a mental health therapist, or the school nurse? Have they had routine immunisations or maybe a COVID vaccine? Was it easy or hard to get this care? Were they able to get the care in their own community, or did they have to travel a long way? *Encourage children to focus on the experience of accessing a health system itself, rather than their personal health information/diagnosis etc.*

2. Invite a few children who want to volunteer to share about their own healthcare experience, or an experience they've had with the health system in their own community.

PART 2: COMMUNITY MAPPING

1. Explain that, in this session, you'll put on your explorer hats, like the hat of Montgomery Clyde that Paddington wears, and make an expedition into your own community to explore the local health system and look for the services you have access to that help ensure your own right to the best possible health.

2. Show the group a simple pre-prepared map on a flipchart, showing key buildings, places, and roads, particularly the area around the school, community, or location where your group gathers. Depending on the time available, this map can be prepared in advance or could be created as a group by the children. The prepared map can be a copy of an actual map, or a hand-drawn version.

3. Looking at the map, ask children to think about how they think the health system works in their community. Where are the places they go to or might go to for healthcare? Who are the providers of health services they know? Where are they located? Ask the group to think about the map: are there any key places missing? Prompt children to think about what they pass on their way to the school, or the shops, or the park. Where is the hospital? The doctor? The local clinic? The dentist? The chemist? Ask the children to add any missing locations. Circle each of these locations on the map or mark them with a small red + which is an international sign for healthcare.



PART 3: COMMUNITY WALK

Complete this portion of the activity only where it is safe to do so and would not put the children at risk.

- 1.** Using the map created in part 2 of this activity, ask the children to map out an exploratory walk around their community (typically 10-30 minutes based on location and weather conditions).
- 2.** Lead the group to follow their map on a walk. As appropriate for age and safety, allow the children to take turns serving as the guide to the next stop. The guide can lead the way and explain why the group is going to this location, and what they believe the group may find there. Along the way, ask children to note any extra places they discover and add them to the map on their return.
- 3.** Along the route, prompt children to think one step beyond the visible health system they are mapping and consider all the behind-the-scenes elements that help make the health system work. For example, you could ask: Where do the vaccines come from and how do they get to the clinic? Who runs the hospital? Where do the doctors and nurses get their training? How do the medications get to the chemist? Where relevant, add these secondary elements to the map.
- 4.** At the end of the walk, make any additions to your community health map, and debrief the group, asking:
 - Was there anything that surprised you about the health system in your own community?
 - What did you notice that could be made better in your own community to strengthen the health system and the services available to ensure children's right to the best possible health?