

Lesson 1

FIREFIGHTERS ARE COMMUNITY HELPERS

Teacher Information

A firefighter is a community helper who protects people from fire and keeps them safe. Firefighters work for the fire department and can help us in many ways by putting out fires, teaching people to prevent fires, rescuing people from fires, and responding to medical emergencies. Firefighters wear special clothes and equipment to keep them safe. They wear special protective coats, gloves, pants, hoods, and boots. They also wear protective helmets, use alarm devices to signal for help if they are in trouble, and use special breathing apparatus to allow them to breathe when they go into a fire or smoke.

Some children are scared by the look and sounds of firefighter equipment. Explaining how the equipment helps a firefighter stay safe while working is important. Becoming familiar with the role of the firefighter and the sight and sound of the equipment can lessen a child's potential fear during a fire and encourage cooperation during life-saving fire rescue incidents.

Teaching Points

- Firefighters help the community stay safe from fire.
- Firefighters wear special gear (clothes and equipment) to help them stay safe from fire and smoke.
- The equipment can look and sound scary, but it keeps the firefighter safe.
- We do not need to be afraid of firefighters even though their equipment can look and sound scary.

Objectives

Each child will be able to:

- explain how firefighters are community helpers.
- explain how a uniform helps a community helper stay safe.
- acknowledge that children do not need to fear firefighters, even when they are wearing gear.

Materials

- Book: *Whose Hat Is This?* by Sharon Katz Cooper
- Pictures of community helpers
- Masks worn by various community helpers

Procedure**Hook** (4-5 Minutes)

1. Read book: *Whose Hat Is This?* by Sharon Katz Cooper
2. Explain that the clothing and equipment workers wear can be called “gear.” Discuss the different types of gear the characters wear in the story. Ask students why the workers wear special gear. Talk about the different ways each worker’s gear helps to keep the worker safe.

Body (10-12 Minutes)

3. Show pictures of community helpers (umpire, construction worker, chef, dentist, firefighter) with minimal gear. Ask students to identify each picture.



After each picture is identified, ask students what the people have in common:

- Community helpers
 - Wear special clothing
 - Have special equipment to do their jobs
4. Briefly discuss how each helper works in the community and how the gear and equipment protects the helpers and helps them work.
 5. Discuss whether or not the equipment makes the workers look scary. Ask if any children are afraid when someone is wearing a scary mask or scared by loud noises. Reassure the children about their fears. Discuss how firefighters’ gear can be scary but the gear is important. Gear keeps firefighters safe so they can help people in the community.
 6. Use different types of masks to help children understand that masks can make people look scary but a friendly helper can be under the mask. If possible, demonstrate with actual masks used by a dentist, an umpire, and a firefighter. Cover the teacher’s face with a mask and remove it to reveal the friendly helper underneath.

Wrap Up (3-4 Minutes)

7. Sing the *Helpers* song to the tune of “I’m a Little Teapot” with the children and review the main points of the lesson.

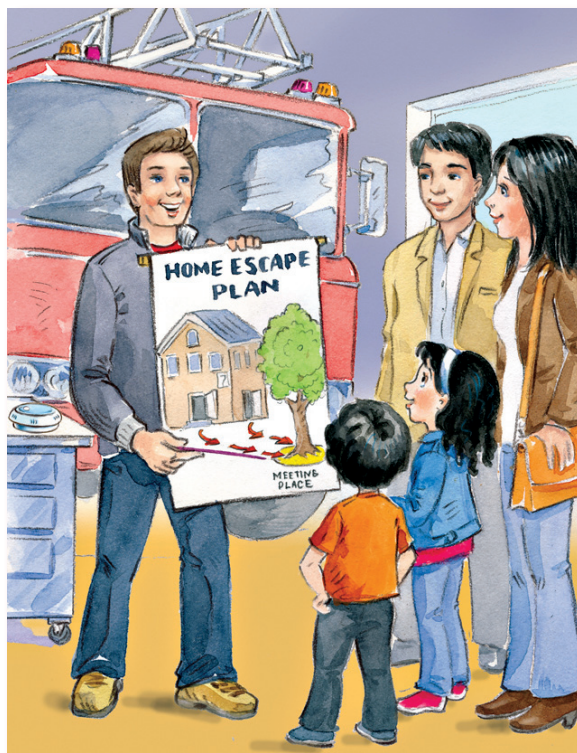
*Look at all the stuff firefighters wear
Boots, helmets, masks, and all that gear.
They might look scary but I know
They are helpers on the go.*

Discussion questions related to main points:

- How do firefighters help the community?
- What are some example of firefighters’ gear?
- Why do firefighters wear special gear?
- Why might some kids find the gear firefighters wear scary?
- What can you say to a friend who might be scared by the firefighter’s mask or loud equipment?

Optional Extension Activities

- **Visit from a firefighter** — Having a firefighter visit the classroom with her or his clean gear would be very helpful. The firefighter can show each piece of gear to the children and explain its purpose. The children can help the firefighter get ready for work and add each piece of gear. This will allow children to see how a real firefighter will look in full gear. **Note:** The firefighter should be sure to bring only clean gear. Do not allow children to wear the firefighter’s helmet. It may be too heavy for the child.
- **Create a center activity** with a firefighter template to create a large sized firefighter cut-out. Children can dress the firefighter in safety equipment (turnout gear, helmet, SCBA, and so on) piece by piece. Children can explain to peers how the equipment protects firefighters. The children should remove the gear to reveal the friendly firefighter underneath.
- **Read the book** *Clothesline Clues to Jobs People Do* by Kathryn Heling to reinforce the message about gear workers wear to be safe. Have children color in pictures of gear worn by firefighters and hang the pictures on a classroom clothesline or allow children to hang dress up gear on a clothesline.



Family Letter

FIREFIGHTERS ARE COMMUNITY HELPERS

Dear Family,

We will be learning about fire safety through the *Learn Not to Burn®-Preschool* program. The children will learn age-appropriate ways to stay safe from fires. Topics include knowing the sound of a smoke alarm, practicing a family fire drill, and staying away from hot things such as matches and lighters.

Today, we learned about firefighters. The children learned how firefighters are community helpers. They also learned about the special gear firefighters wear to stay safe. It is not uncommon for children to be scared by the look and sounds of the gear. Our activities help children become familiar with the gear. This can lessen the fear a child may have if interacting with a firefighter during a rescue.

Please talk with your child about the important jobs firefighters do in the community. If your child is fearful about firefighters, comfort her or him by reviewing how gear helps the firefighter stay safe. Remind your child there is a helpful person underneath.

Together we can keep your family safe from fire.

Sincerely,

Family Fire Safety Activity

Play a GUESSING GAME with your child about community helpers. This game is a great way to fill time while riding in the car, waiting at a restaurant, or when settling down at bedtime. Allow the game to serve as a conversation starter about firefighters and the important jobs they do. Gently address any fears your child may bring up.

Person 1: Say, "Guess what community helper I'm thinking of."

Person 2: Respond with "What sound does it start with?"

Person 1: Sound out the first letter of the helper's name. "It starts with the ____ sound." (Be sure to say the sound not the name of the letter.)

Person 2: Respond with "One more clue, please."

Person 1: Provides a clue such as "This helper delivers letters," "This helper drives a noisy truck," or "This helper keeps pets healthy."

Person 2: Guesses the community helper.



Fire safety fun for families at Sparky.org!









