

# ACCESSING COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Lesson Length:** 1 hour + Extension Activities

**Vocabulary & Expressions:** Words and phrases used to describe community services and situations where people need to access those services

**Language/Culture Point:** I don't have \_\_; I need \_\_.

**Objective:** Students will be able to call the 2-1-1 hotline to get information about community services and help themselves/others access what they need

**Materials:** Sticky notes, various items/pictures representing city services offered through 2-1-1 (housing/food/healthcare/counseling/employment), copies of the local 2-1-1 script, cell phone/telephone with speakerphone, Scenario Cards: Calling 2-1-1, chart paper, *pictures or items representing situations that need 2-1-1/3-1-1/9-1-1, local 3-1-1 script*



## STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Sticky notes	- Mind Mapping

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask students, "What are basic things you need to live in this community? What things does a family need?" Prompt students with examples, such as, "I need fresh food for my children. I need clean water. I don't have a car so I need public transportation to get to work."
2. Write the words "Basic Needs" in the middle of a circle on the board and conduct a Mind Mapping activity with the class.
3. Choose one of the basic needs you mentioned, write it on a sticky note, and add it to the Map.
4. Ask students to do the same by writing down on sticky notes 3 things they/their families need and adding them to the map.
5. Go over the map with the class.

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## STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Various items/pictures representing city services offered through 2-1-1 (housing, food, healthcare, counseling, employment)	- Authentic Materials - Using Pictures - Chalk Talk

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Use a combination of authentic materials and pictures to tell a story about calling the local 2-1-1. You can get information about your local 2-1-1 service at:

 <http://www.211.org>

A sample script could be:

Sometimes we need help with basic things and community services: clothes, food, money for rent or electricity [show utility and other bills, grocery store receipt or sample food budget for a family of 4, items of clothes]. The community can help if someone is in a crisis [show pictures of a home on fire]. Usually the help is temporary because there's not enough money to help families permanently [show a calendar with 3 months of receiving money marked off and no money after 3 months]. We can call a special number, 2-1-1, to learn about community services. We have to use the telephone or computer.

2. Use pictures or Chalk Talk to tell a few quick stories of individuals accessing services through 2-1-1. Examples could be a mother calling for a healthcare referral for her child, a father calling about rent assistance for his family, or parents calling to learn about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

## STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes		



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## TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask students, “What are some things people needed in the story? What are some ways 2-1-1 may be able to help a person?” Have students help you make a list of the basic needs that the people in the story needed help with.

## STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Copies of the local 2-1-1 script</li><li>- Cell phone/telephone with speakerphone</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Authentic Materials</li></ul>

## TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students, “We are going to practice making a phone call to 2-1-1.” Explain that you need to have some information ready to tell the operator, such as what you need and where you live.
2. Call 2-1-1 on speakerphone. Go through the automated voice system several times (press the star button at the end of the 4 options), but don’t press a number for assistance just yet. Below is the script for 2-1-1 automated system serving Central Texas:  
Thank you for calling 2-1-1 Texas. To continue in English, press 1. (Spanish selection is option 2, and said in Spanish.)  
Option 1: For information and referral regarding local community services resources, please press 1.  
Option 2: For information about food stamps, Medicaid, CHIP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and other State of Texas benefits and services, or to apply for these benefits, please press 2.  
Option 3: If you are calling to report possible fraud or abuse in State of Texas services and programs such as food stamps and Medicaid, please press 3.  
Option 4: To register for evacuation transportation assistance, please press 4.  
\*Key: To repeat the selection options, please press the star on your telephone keypad.  
(Note: Only option 1 is the local social services for food, utilities, counseling, and medical assistance. Option 2 will send the person to a state agency for Health and Human Services.)

*Using a pre-paid cell phone, often just calling 2-1-1 will not work; the person must call a local number, listed on the state 2-1-1 United Way website.*




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*Translators: Callers who speak languages other than English or Spanish can ask for a translator through the local community services option.*

3. Give students a copy of the script to follow along as they listen to the automated system again.

## STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE


Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Copies of the local 2-1-1 script</li><li>- Scenario Cards: Calling 2-1-1 </li><li>- Cell phone/telephone with speakerphone</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Authentic Materials</li><li>- Role Play</li><li>- Scenario Cards</li></ul>

## TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Using the Calling 2-1-1 Scenario Cards, model how to draw a card and read it aloud.
2. Call 2-1-1 and model how to select the appropriate option. When the operator picks up, answer based on the card you drew and ask for a translator. For example, “I need help with (paying rent). Can I have a translator in \_\_?” Because this is only a practice scenario and you do not want to actually talk to a translator, when the operator confirms that you can have one, thank him/her and say you’ll call back later.
3. Have individual students practice reading aloud the Scenario Cards, and then practice what to say when talking to the operator. Help the class with, “Thank you, I’ll call back later.”
4. Ask for a volunteer to actually talk to the 2-1-1 operator. Put the call on speakerphone, listen to the options, and as a class decide which option to push based on the card. Let the student take over once the operator answers. The student should state the service(s) needed, ask for a translator, and state that he/she will call back later.

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## STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10-15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Copies of the local 2-1-1 script</li> <li>- Scenario Cards: Calling 2-1-1 </li> <li>- Cell phone/telephone with speakerphone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authentic Materials</li> <li>- Role Play</li> <li>- Scenario Cards</li> </ul>

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Students should get in small groups of 2-3 and using the Scenario Cards, practice calling the 2-1-1 system to find out about different services.

## STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes		


### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Show or draw pictures of situations with “have” and “don’t have.” Highlight the connection between *not having* something and *needing* something. State things you don’t have and ask students what you need. For example:
  - I don’t have money. What do I need? (Answer: I need money/help.)
  - I don’t have a winter coat. What do I need? (Answer: I need clothing.)
2. Draw and give examples to highlight the third person singular: “He doesn’t” and “She doesn’t.”



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## STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Scenario Cards: Calling 2-1-1 	- Scenario Cards - Line Up

### TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Number the Scenario Cards and give each student one card.
2. Have students Line Up by forming a single line according to the number on their card.
3. Start with #1 and move down the line by saying to each student, "Thank you for calling 2-1-1. How can I help you?" Each student should respond with, "I need help with \_\_," answering based on the scenario described on his/her card.

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## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES: CALLING 3-1-1/COMMUNITY SERVICES TOUR

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chart paper</li> <li>- Pictures/items representing 2-1-1, 3-1-1, and 9-1-1. For example: utility bills, groceries, a tree that has fallen, a pothole, a burning building, etc.</li> <li>- Local 3-1-1 script</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using Pictures</li> <li>- Word Sorts</li> <li>- Brainstorming</li> <li>- Role Play</li> <li>- Field Trip</li> </ul>

### TEACHING ACTIVITY #1

1. Have three pieces of chart paper, one each for 2-1-1 (community services and access to public benefits), 3-1-1 (non-emergencies that require city services), and 9-1-1 (emergencies).
2. Use pictures and realia to demonstrate the difference between 2-1-1, 3-1-1, and 9-1-1. For example:
 

Sometimes we need help, but it is NOT an emergency. Maybe a traffic light is not working or there is a pothole in the street [show or draw pictures]. Maybe a power line or tree has fallen onto the street [show or draw pictures]. Maybe you have noisy neighbors [show or draw pictures]. We can call the number 3-1-1 if it is not an emergency....
3. Have students sort pictures and items according to which category they belong to: 2-1-1, 3-1-1, or 9-1-1.
4. Give students a copy of the 3-1-1 script. Clarify vocabulary and have students brainstorm situations when they might need to call 3-1-1.
5. Have students Role Play calling 3-1-1 using the situations they came up with.

### TEACHING ACTIVITY #2

Take the students on field trips to places that offer community services. Many students may not be comfortable using the phone to access information/resources and would prefer to see things in person. Taking students to a local food bank, Health and Human Services office, or local nonprofit may help them feel more at ease by giving the services a “face.”

