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# A Month of Community Helpers with Zandi!

## Materials Needed:

- **Art Supplies:** Construction paper (various colors), child-safe scissors, glue sticks, crayons, markers, washable paint, paper plates, cardboard boxes (various sizes), toilet paper/paper towel rolls, cotton balls, craft sticks.
- **Dramatic Play Items:** Old clothes for dress-up (shirts, hats), toy medical kit, toy tools, play food, empty food boxes, stuffed animals, envelopes, toy cars/trucks (especially fire truck, police car, ambulance).
- **Sensory Bin Items:** Dry pasta, beans, sand, or water; small toy figures of people and vehicles.
- **Books:** A selection of age-appropriate books about different community helpers (check your local library!).
- **Miscellaneous:** Play-Doh, baking ingredients (for Week 4), a large piece of cardboard or poster board for a community map.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this month-long unit, Zandi (age 3) will be able to:

- Identify at least 5-7 different community helpers and the primary tool or vehicle they use (e.g., "A firefighter drives a fire truck.").
- Engage in imaginative play, acting out the roles of various community helpers.
- Express appreciation for the people who work in her community through conversation and creative activities.
- Develop fine motor skills through related crafts and gross motor skills through movement activities.

## Week 1: Safety Heroes (Firefighters, Police Officers, Paramedics)

**Focus:** Understanding the people who help us in emergencies and keep us safe.

- **Day 1 (Firefighter):**
  - **Main Activity:** Practice "Stop, Drop, and Roll." Make it a fun game! Then, use a garden hose outside to pretend to be firefighters putting out "fires" on the sidewalk or fence.
  - **Craft:** Create a fire truck from a rectangular cardboard box. Let Zandi paint it red and glue on paper plate wheels.
  - **Story Time:** Read a book about firefighters.
- **Day 2 (Police Officer):**
  - **Main Activity:** Set up a "road" with masking tape on the floor. Zandi can be the police officer, directing traffic (toy cars) and making sure everyone is being safe.
  - **Craft:** Make a police officer badge from a star-shaped piece of yellow paper glued onto a circle of blue paper. Attach a safety pin to the back (for the parent to handle).
  - **Music & Movement:** Sing songs like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Traffic Light."
- **Day 3 (Paramedic):**

- **Main Activity:** Use a toy medical kit to be a paramedic. Her stuffed animals or dolls can be the "patients" who need help. Practice putting on bandages.
  - **Craft:** Create an ambulance from a shoebox painted white. Draw or glue on a red cross.
  - **Outing Idea:** If you see an ambulance or police car while out, point it out and talk simply about how they are going to help someone.
  - **Day 4 (Sensory & Sorting):**
    - **Activity:** Create a sensory bin with red (fire), blue (police), and white (paramedic) colored rice or pasta. Hide small toy vehicles inside for Zandi to find. Help her sort the vehicles by color or type.
  - **Day 5 (Review & Play):**
    - **Activity:** Let Zandi choose her favorite safety helper to dress up as. Spend the day in imaginative play based on her choice.
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## Week 2: Health & Wellness Helpers (Doctors, Nurses, Dentists, Veterinarians)

**Focus:** Learning about the people who help keep our bodies and our pets healthy.

- **Day 1 (Doctor/Nurse):**
    - **Main Activity:** Set up a "Doctor's Office" for stuffed animals. Zandi can give them a check-up, listen to their heart with a toy stethoscope, and check their temperature.
    - **Craft:** Make a doctor's headband with a circle "mirror" made of aluminum foil.
    - **Story Time:** Read a book about going to the doctor (like "Corduroy Goes to the Doctor").
  - **Day 2 (Dentist):**
    - **Main Activity:** Use white Play-Doh to make a set of "teeth" inside a pink Play-Doh "mouth." Practice "brushing" them with a toothbrush. You can also use large marshmallows as teeth.
    - **Craft:** Glue white pom-poms or marshmallows onto a pink paper cutout of a mouth to create a happy, healthy smile.
  - **Day 3 (Veterinarian):**
    - **Main Activity:** This is a great day to expand the doctor's office into a "Vet Clinic." Zandi can be the vet who takes care of all her stuffed animal pets, giving them check-ups and lots of cuddles.
    - **Craft:** Make animal "x-rays" by gluing Q-tips in the shape of a bone onto black construction paper.
  - **Day 4 (Healthy Habits):**
    - **Activity:** Talk about what doctors and dentists tell us to do. Sort play food into "healthy" and "treat" piles. Practice washing hands properly while singing the ABCs.
  - **Day 5 (Review & Play):**
    - **Activity:** Let Zandi choose which clinic she wants to run today: the people clinic or the animal clinic! Follow her lead in pretend play.
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## Week 3: Community Builders & Keepers (Mail Carriers, Construction Workers, Sanitation Workers)

**Focus:** Discovering the people who build our community and help it run smoothly.

- **Day 1 (Mail Carrier):**
    - **Main Activity:** Create a simple mailbox from a cardboard box. Have Zandi "write" (scribble) letters and draw pictures for family members. Then, she can be the mail carrier
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who delivers them to different rooms in the house.

- **Craft:** Decorate the mailbox! Use paint, markers, and stickers.
- **Outing Idea:** Take a walk to your mailbox and watch for the real mail carrier. Give them a friendly wave!
- **Day 2 (Construction Worker):**
  - **Main Activity:** Use blocks, LEGOs, or even empty cardboard boxes to build a city. Put on a hard hat (an upside-down colander works great!) and use toy tools.
  - **Craft:** "Cement" painting! Mix a little bit of sand into gray or black paint for a fun texture. Let Zandi paint with her hands or a toy truck.
- **Day 3 (Sanitation Worker):**
  - **Main Activity:** Go on a "clean-up walk" around your yard or a safe area. Give Zandi a small bag and child-safe gloves to help pick up litter (like fallen leaves). Afterwards, help her sort recyclables (clean plastic bottles, paper) from trash.
  - **Craft:** Make a garbage truck from a shoebox and bottle caps for wheels.
  - **Music & Movement:** Watch a video and dance to a song about garbage trucks.
- **Day 4 (Sensory Play):**
  - **Activity:** A construction-themed sensory bin! Use sand, dirt, or dry black beans as the base. Add toy construction vehicles, rocks, and craft sticks.
- **Day 5 (Build Our Town):**
  - **Activity:** On a large piece of poster board, draw simple roads. Use the buildings Zandi built and the vehicles she made to create a whole town. Let her decide where everything goes.

## Week 4: Food & Knowledge Helpers (Farmers, Bakers, Librarians, Teachers)

**Focus:** Celebrating the people who provide our food and help us learn.

- **Day 1 (Farmer):**
  - **Main Activity:** "Plant" a small garden. This can be as simple as planting a bean seed in a cup with a wet paper towel. Or, create a sensory bin with dirt, play vegetables, and toy farm animals.
  - **Craft:** Make "tractor tracks" art by dipping the wheels of a toy tractor in paint and driving it across paper.
  - **Story Time:** Read a book about a farm, like "Big Red Barn."
- **Day 2 (Baker/Chef):**
  - **Main Activity:** Bake something simple together! Cookies or muffins are perfect. Let Zandi help with pouring pre-measured ingredients and stirring.
  - **Craft:** Create a chef's hat from a band of white paper and a piece of tissue paper puffed up and taped on top.
- **Day 3 (Librarian/Teacher):**
  - **Main Activity:** Set up a "library" at home. Zandi can be the librarian, organizing her books and "checking them out" to her stuffed animals. Then, switch roles and let her be the teacher, reading a story to her "class."
  - **Craft:** Make a personalized bookmark with stickers and drawings.
  - **Outing Idea:** A trip to the local library is a perfect way to celebrate this helper!
- **Day 4 (Community Meal):**
  - **Activity:** Let's have a pretend feast! Zandi can be the chef who prepares a meal with her play food. Set the table and invite all the stuffed animals. Talk about where the food comes from (farmer) and who cooked it (chef).
- **Day 5 (Community Helper Celebration!):**
  - **Activity:** This is the big day! Let Zandi choose her absolute favorite community helper

from the whole month. Help her create a simple costume and spend the day playing that role. You can look at the town map you made and talk about all the amazing people who help us every day.

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## Assessment (Informal & Play-Based)

Observe Zandi throughout the month. There are no tests here! Just watch for understanding and engagement during play.

- Can she point to a picture of a firefighter and say "firefighter" or "fire truck"?
- Does she incorporate helper roles into her free play (e.g., pretending to be a doctor to a doll without being prompted)?
- When asked, "Who helps us when we are sick?" can she point to or name a doctor or nurse?
- Does she show excitement when seeing a real community helper vehicle, like a mail truck or garbage truck?

**Most importantly, is she having fun? At this age, a positive and joyful connection to learning is the greatest measure of success.**

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