

Directions for I-SPY Access

Summary: The I-Spy Access Activity is designed to promote student awareness of accessibility in their community. An I-Spy Access Worksheet is provided for this activity as well as suggestions for follow-up review, discussion and community awareness activities. The teacher will need a flip chart and markers to document the discussion.

Using the I-Spy Access Worksheet: Students should complete the I-Spy Access Worksheet as a homework assignment or as part of a school trip. Students may want to supplement any drawings and notes with photographs of access solutions and access barriers that they identify.

- Homework for Younger Students: With the help of family members, students should draw a picture of the access features they observe. Family members can help the student write the name of the location. Allow at least a couple of days so students have time to examine a variety of community locations. Refer to the access examples listed in the older student implementation notes.
- Homework for Older Students: Distribute the I-Spy Access Worksheet. Students will have a specific amount of time to complete the worksheet as a homework assignment. Students can record their observations by writing descriptions of the location and type of access feature. Allow at least a couple of days so students have time to be in a variety of community locations.

While explaining the assignment, review the various types of accessibility features students may discover in their community. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Curb cuts and ramps.
- Hand rails.
- TTYs – they may see the equipment at a place of business, or see a TTY.
- Store signs and street addresses in Braille, large print and with images.
- Large print or Braille materials.
- Braille signage — elevators, ATM machines, rooms within public buildings.
- Automated doors.
- Elevators.
- Accessible parking spaces.

- Lowered counter heights.
- Emergency alarms equipped with light alerts.
- Accessible stalls in restrooms.
- Picture menus.
- Accessible websites and information: Encourage students to ask about the availability of items that may not be obvious to the general public. Examples include Braille or large print menus or brochures, sign language-interpreted information, captioning of television or films and signs or service information that includes pictures as well as words. Although some of these items are more of an “available upon request” type of item, students should ask about or look for signs indicating their availability.

Class Discussion: Have students come to school ready to present their findings. Facilitate a large group sharing activity where each student describes one of the accessible features that he or she discovered. Use the following questions to prompt student discussion as needed:

- Can anyone give some examples of physical or attitudinal barriers experienced by children and adults with disabilities?
- If you were a person with _____ (type of disability) would you be welcomed in your community? What reasons can you give for your answer?
- Did you notice any differences in accessibility for children and adults? (For example, were store checkout counters accessible to adults, and video game machines or playground equipment accessible to children who are blind or who use wheelchairs?)
- What locations in your community need the most improvements in order to become accessible and welcoming to all community members?

As students describe their accessible feature, make a two-column list on the board. In the left column, write the type of location such as supermarket, restaurant, or park. In the right column, write the type of access observed such as accessible parking space, Braille signage, or visible emergency alert system.

Wrap-up and Next Steps: After student sharing is complete, ask students to summarize their feelings after their review and discussion about accessibility for people with disabilities in their community. Following this activity, students could write letters to the local paper highlighting the positive things they observed and their suggestions for improving accessibility, as well as their thoughts on why each is important. They could also arrange a presentation and discussion of their findings with a local disability advocacy group or community accessibility council, either at school or at another location.