

## INTRODUCTION

The *Survival Signs* Curriculum, by Janie Haugen, gives teachers a step-by-step method to help students become familiar with PCI's *Indoor Survival Signs* and *Outdoor Survival Signs* posters. The curriculum instruction method gives detailed explanations of both the visuals and the words on each sign. The corresponding "hands-on" activities help reinforce the meaning of the 80 Survival Signs. All activities promote active learning and open-ended discussions.

PCI's product design philosophy is – *the power of visual teaching*. Hence, whenever possible, the survival signs have international symbols, or other illustrations, to assist students in learning the meaning and purpose of the signs. The overall purpose of this program is to prepare students of all abilities to follow the directions on common community survival signs.

Students who are nonreaders, or who have limited reading skills, rely on the visuals on survival signs to determine each sign's meaning. For many students, this learning method of studying the symbols or illustrations on the signs allows them to travel safely in the community.

In Ms. Haugen's early teaching experience, the survival signs in her classroom relied heavily on the assumption that all students had the ability to read. Thus, many of the survival signs did not have international symbols on them to assist students with limited or no reading skills.

After watching her students struggle with trying to "read" the nonvisual survival signs, she developed the eighty visual *Survival Signs* posters. Now she has written a curriculum to assist instructors who need a simplistic way to teach the eighty basic survival signs.

When Ms. Haugen taught her students to use the symbols and pictures on the signs, students who could not previously read the words "Beware of Dog," could explain the meaning of the sign with an illustration of a snarling dog. While not all students used the exact words, "Beware of Dog," they could all say it stands for "Don't go in. There is a mean dog." Success had been met, not in *exact* reading but in *functional* reading.

This program provides an easy-to-use Community Trip Record Chart that allows teachers to keep track of the location of each sign on field trips. Over the years the information on these charts will prove invaluable to teachers when choosing sites for future survival sign field trips.

Ms. Haugen suggests that teachers add the fun element of taking photographs on all survival signs field trips. Her students found that reviewing the photographs of the signs, especially if they were included in some pictures, was a means of reliving an enjoyable adventure. The teaching benefit of the photographs was that the students were reinforcing the meanings of the signs by reviewing the photos again and again.

The *Survival Signs* Curriculum used in combination with PCI's *Survival Signs* Posters, *Survival Signs* Worksheets, and *Survival Signs* Bingo, gives instructors an assessment tool, teaching methods and materials, and reinforcement practice. The *Survival Signs* programs allow teachers to ascertain if their students are learning and maintaining the meaning of the 80 survival signs.

## GETTING STARTED

**1. USING CORRESPONDING SURVIVAL SIGNS POSTERS:** Either of the two types of *Survival Signs*, Indoor or Outdoor, can be presented first. Decide how many posters will be covered in each lesson. Gather the posters and turn to the corresponding pages in this guide.

**2. USING THE INSTRUCTION METHOD:** Each sign is described beginning with the visual symbol(s) to allow students with limited reading skills to participate. Many times the explanations of the visuals on a sign are very similar to the meanings of the words on the sign. The explanations of the signs are designed to be simplistic in nature so that students of all ages and abilities can benefit from this program.

Depending on the language comprehension skills of participants, some words or phrases have lower or higher level word choices in parentheses (e.g., ...that some students who use this school crossing have hearing impairments [are deaf or have limited hearing ability]). This adaptive instruction format allows teachers maximum flexibility when presenting the lessons.

**3. USING THE ACTIVITIES SECTION:** On #1 of the “Activities” section, the teacher should name two places in the community that have the sign. The teacher should state the actual names of the places (e.g., Mark Twain Middle School instead of the word school). The places listed are for reference only as teachers should tailor this program to their community.

The other activities include discussion starters or additional “hands-on” practice. Many of the activities ask students to share personal experiences they have had dealing with the survival signs in their community. Additional study time will help students fully understand the purpose of each sign. Discussion time gives teachers an opportunity to stress why everyone in the community needs to obey the signs.

**4. GOING ON COMMUNITY TRIPS:** Taking this book on field trips gives teachers the opportunity to review the meaning of the survival signs in the same format as taught in the classroom. Teachers should scout trip areas prior to the outings to find out if prior permission is needed or if there is a cost to enter the area (e.g., the city zoo).

**5. USING THE COMMUNITY TRIP RECORD CHART:** The charts allow teachers to develop a comprehensive data bank of places where survival signs are located in their community. The teacher should record the students’ ability to locate the signs being studied, to describe the purpose of the signs and to follow the directions on the signs.

Teachers can photocopy the record chart blackline master on page 8 if additional field trip chart pages are needed. After hole punching the chart, the page should be added to this curriculum book between the corresponding sign pages.

**6. USING REINFORCEMENT TECHNIQUES:** Have students play PCI’s corresponding *Survival Signs* Bingo game or complete the *Survival Signs* Worksheets. Both programs are sold separately from the *Survival Signs* Curriculum and Posters.