

# Visiting the Courthouse



A Kids Guide to the Courts of West Virginia

# Welcome From The Justices

Going to court can be scary or intimidating for anyone — especially children. Yet children go to court every day, for all sorts of reasons.

We want to make the experience of going to court easier to understand for all children. This booklet will tell you what happens in court. You will learn who works there, what the rules are, and how you might be involved in a case. Remember that you always can ask questions if you are in court and feel afraid or confused.

We hope you will enjoy and learn from this booklet. You can read it again to help you remember what you want to know about going to court.

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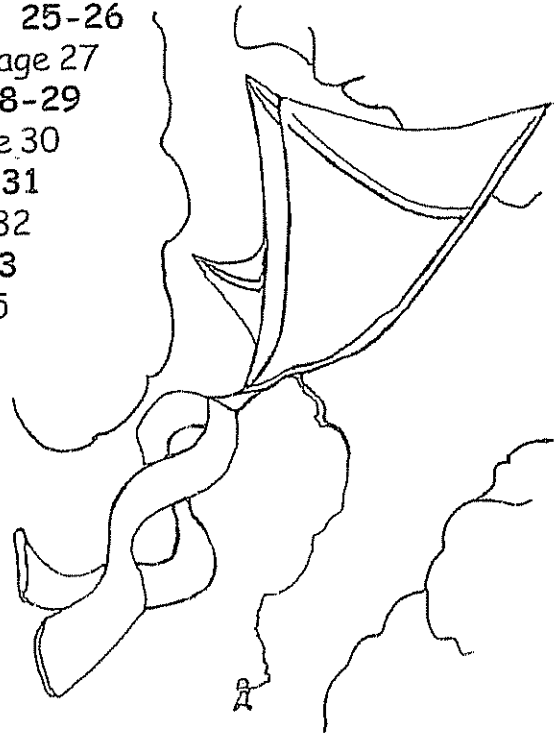
Illustrations and Graphic Design by Jeff Beary.

NOTE: The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia is updating this book.' Meanwhile, feel free to use our scanned version to access student activity sheets for your students.

Please contact April Harless at 304-340-2305 if you have any questions about the contents.

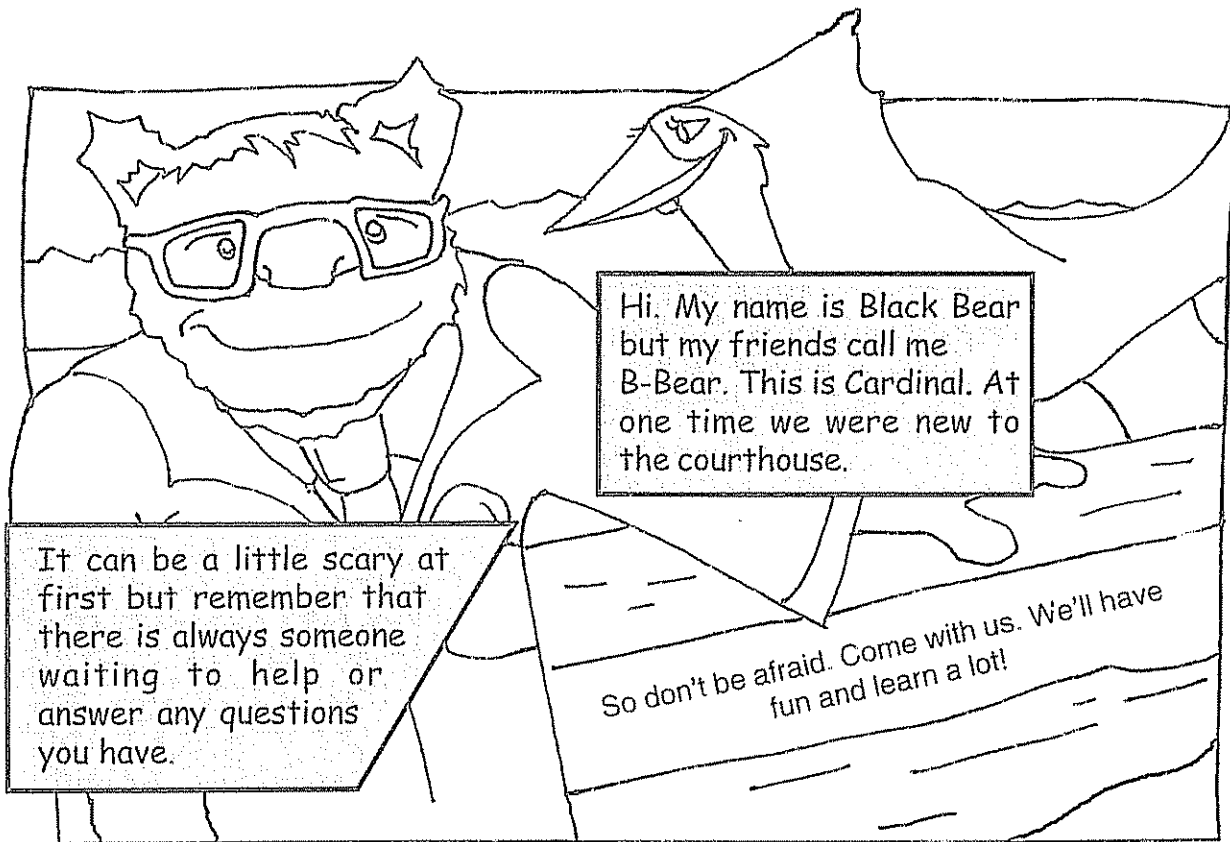
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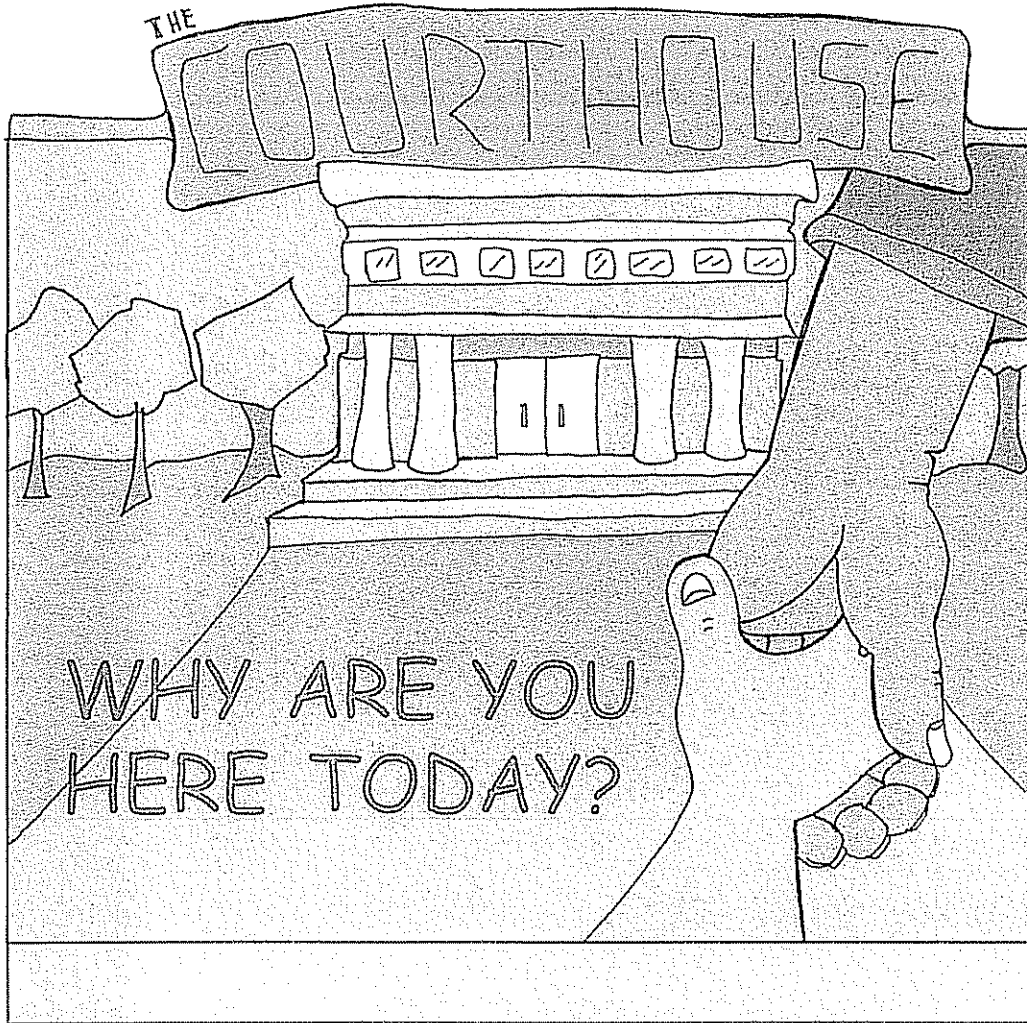


# WELCOME

Hello, It's great to have you with us today. If you are planning on visiting a courthouse soon, please take a tour of ours first. It will help you understand more about what happens inside and what you might see. These are our good friends B-Bear and Cardinal. They have been coming to the courthouse for some time. They can show you around and introduce you to our friends who play important roles in making the courthouse work. Have fun!



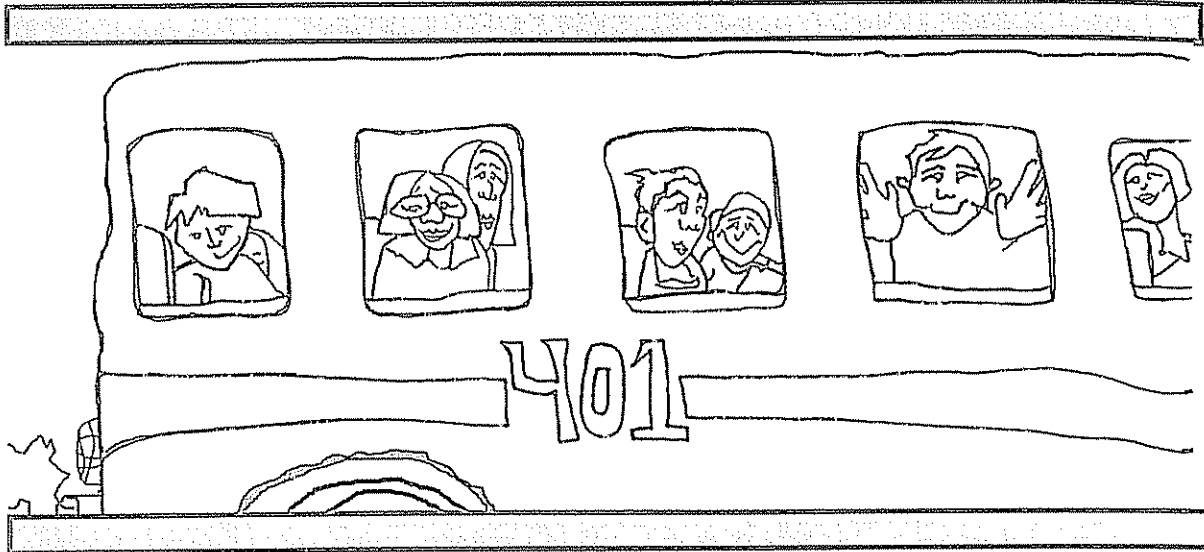
Fact: Our state bear is the Black Bear, and our state bird is the Cardinal.



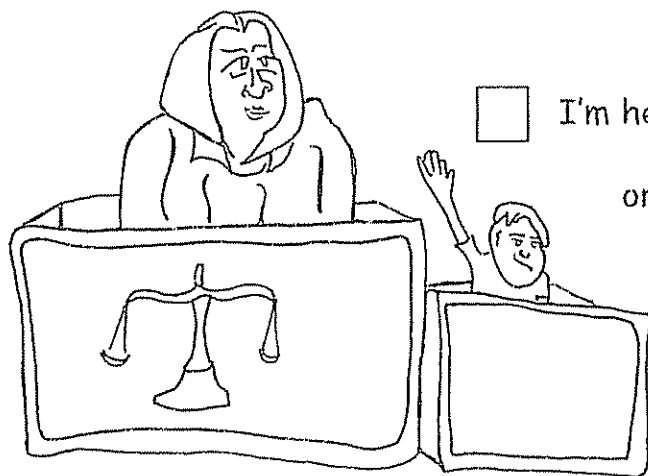
Mark the box that shows why you are at the courthouse today then color the pictures that follow.

I am at court with \_\_\_\_\_

Who has come here to \_\_\_\_\_

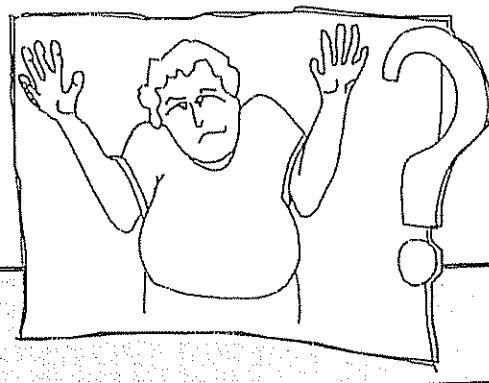


I'm at court today on a field trip with \_\_\_\_\_

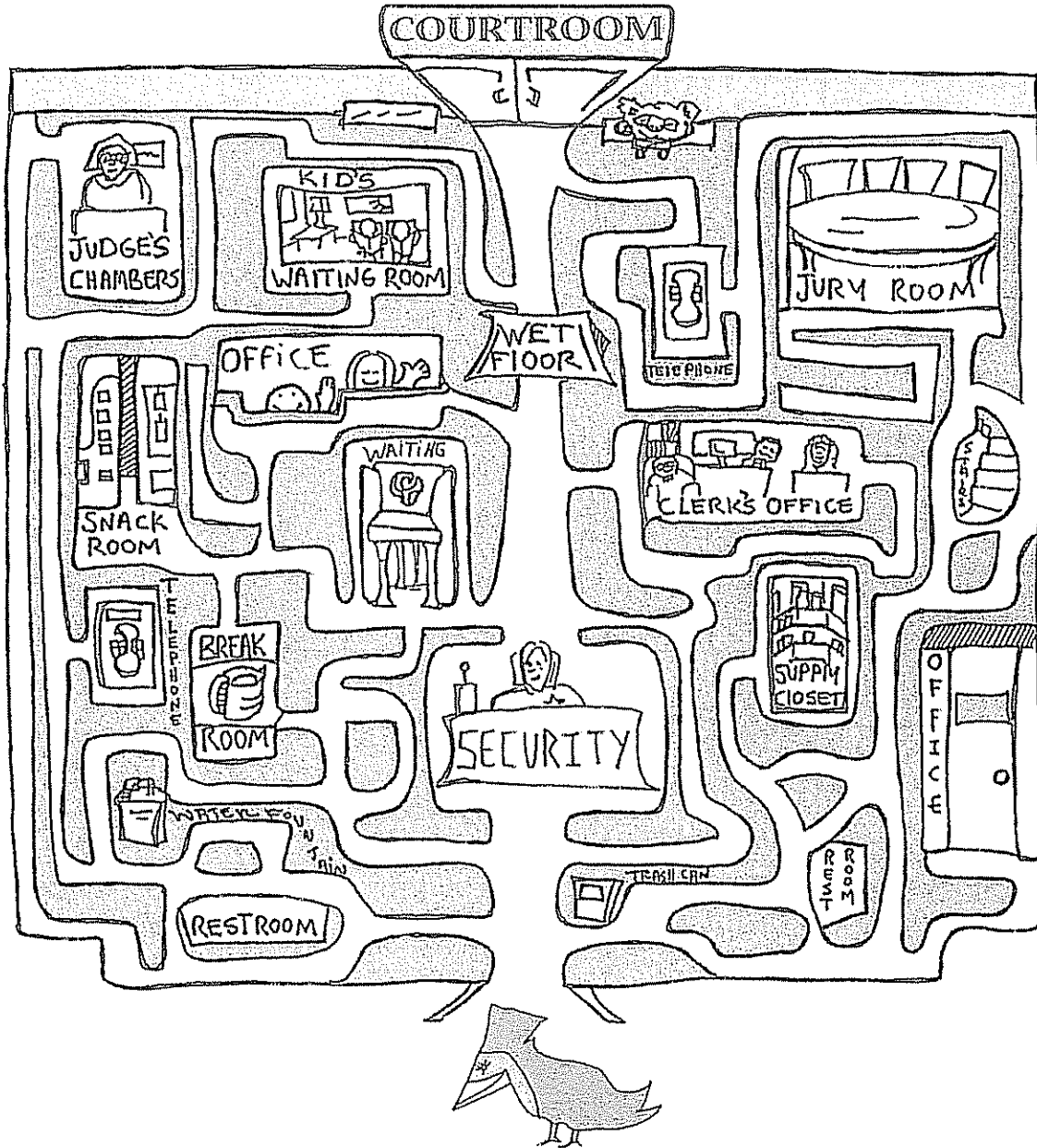


I'm here because I'm involved in a case  
or I am here to tell what I've seen.

I'm not sure why I'm at court today.



# CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY TO THE COURTROOM?



There are many halls and doors in the courthouse, but don't worry. There is always someone waiting to help you get to where you're going.

# How Should I Act in Court?

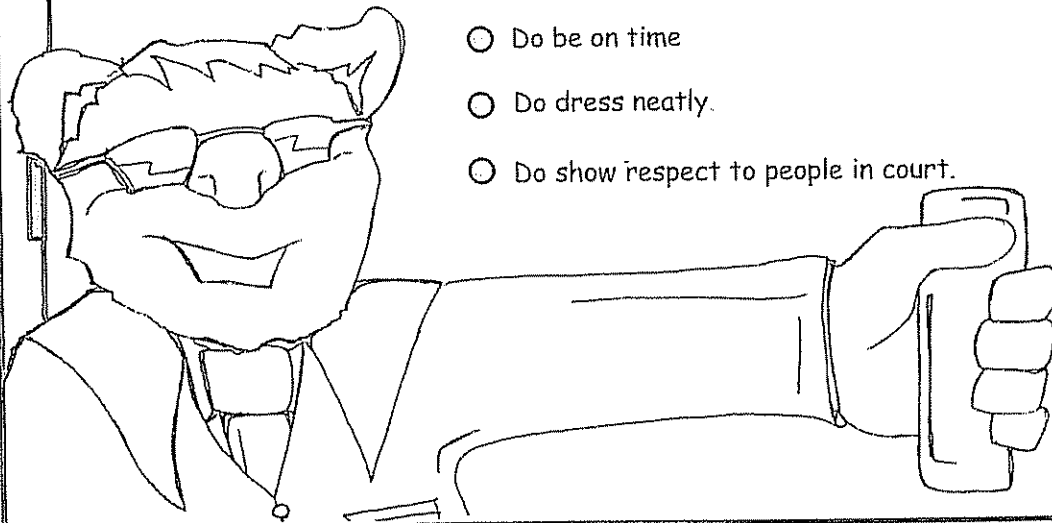
*Thanks to your help we made it to the courtroom door. Here are some very important rules that you should know before going in.*

## DON'TS

- Don't eat or drink in court
- Don't chew gum or use tobacco in court
- Don't play video games, listen to music, wear a pager, or use a cell phone in court
- Don't wear a hat in court
- Don't bring backpacks or bags to court
- Don't bring weapons to court. This includes pocket knives.
- Don't speak unless the judge or a lawyer speaks to you

## DO'S

- Do be quiet and wait. There may be other cases before yours.
- Do call the judge "Your Honor." This is what people call the judge to show respect
- Do ask questions if you don't understand something. Someone will explain it to you.



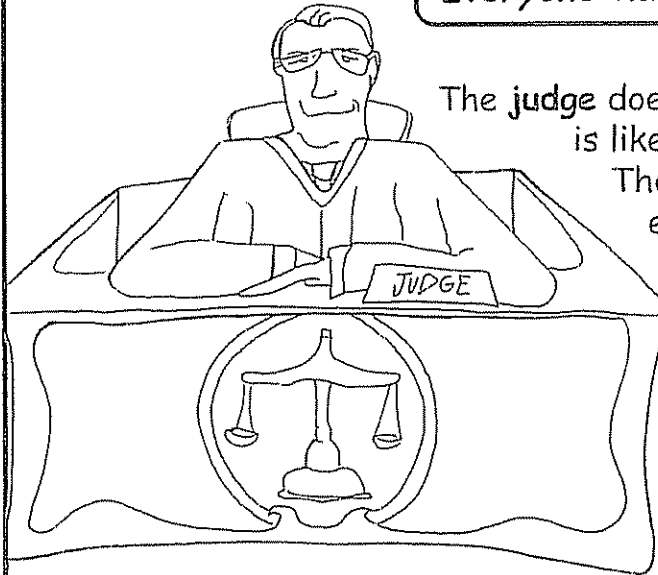
- Do be on time
- Do dress neatly.
- Do show respect to people in court.



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## WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN COURT

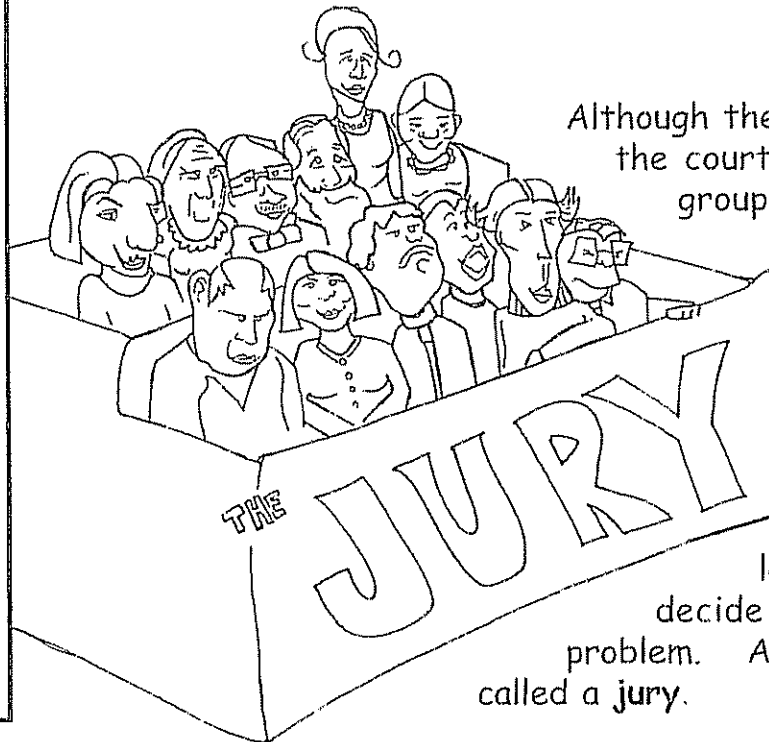
*Many people work in a courtroom.  
Everyone has a special job to do.*



The **judge** does many things. The **judge** is like a referee at a ball game.

The **judge** makes sure that everyone plays by the rules. Sometimes the **judge** makes decisions. For example, if two people come to court because they disagree about money, the **judge** might decide who gets the money. Sometimes, the **judge** will be wearing a

black robe. The **judge** usually sits at the front of the courtroom behind the **bench**, which is a big desk. The **judge's** name is often on a sign near the bench.



Although the **judge** is always in the courtroom, sometimes a group of people decides what happens. These people are called **jurors**.

**Jurors** are people who come to court to listen to each side of a problem. Then the **jurors** decide how to settle the problem. A group of **jurors** is called a **jury**.

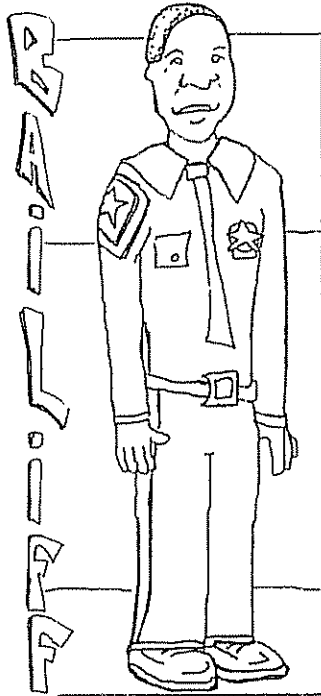
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# LAWYERS

When people go to court, they often have **lawyers**. **Lawyers** are also called **attorneys**. **Lawyers** help people settle their problems in court. It is the **lawyer's** job to talk to the **judge** and **jurors** for the people who come to court. When a **lawyer** talks for someone who has come to court, it means that the **lawyer** represents

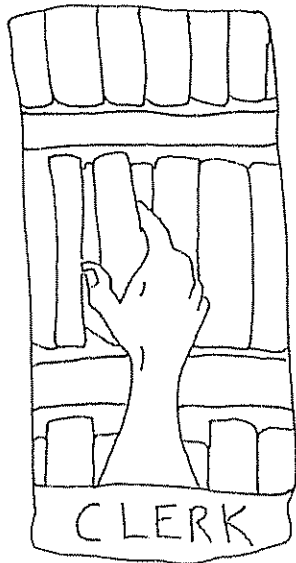


the person. Most of the time, a **lawyer** represents only one person in court. So, if many people are involved, there might be more than one **lawyer** in court. All kinds of people have **lawyers**, even children! **Lawyers** usually sit next to the person they represent in the court. However, you don't have to have a **lawyer** to go to court. You can represent yourself.



The **bailiff** is a special police officer just for the court. The courtroom you are in may have a **bailiff**. The **bailiff** makes sure the people who go to court are safe. The **bailiff** wears a uniform like a police officer's uniform.

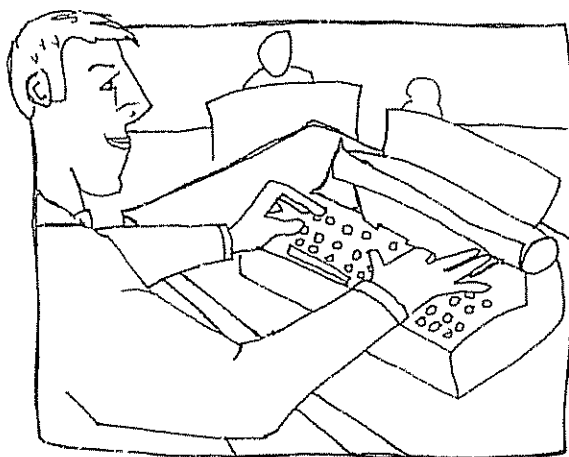
Courts also have **interpreters** for people who can't hear, can't speak, or don't understand English. The **interpreter's** job is to translate what is said in court.



Some courts have **clerks**. A court clerk keeps all the papers about the cases in the court and organizes them. The clerk keeps track of the decisions or **orders** that the **judge** makes and also keeps the court's schedule.

**Witnesses** are people who come to court to tell what they have seen or heard. For example, if some-

one is accused of stealing something, a **witness** might come to court to say what they saw happen. A **witness** raises his or her right hand and makes a special promise to tell the truth in court. This special promise is called an **oath**. **Witnesses** take a special seat in the courtroom, and the **lawyers** ask them questions. Cases that last a long time may have lots of **witnesses**.



COURT REPORTER

The court reporter is the person who writes down everything that everybody says in court. Wow! Can you imagine writing down all the words people say? The **court reporter** usually sits near the **judge** and types or speaks into a small machine. **Court reporters** type very fast. Everyone in court has to speak slowly and clearly so the **court reporter** can hear what they say. Some **court reporters** even use computers.

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# MATCH — UP

Now that you know some of the people in court, can you solve this puzzle? Draw a line to connect the name of the person with the job they do.

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- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Judge ☺          | ☺ This person types or speaks everything that is said in court into a machine.              |
| Lawyers ☺        | ☺ This person organizes all the papers and keeps track of the judge's decisions.            |
| Jurors ☺         | ☺ This person translates what is said in court.   |
| Clerk ☺          | ☺ This person makes decisions and makes sure that everyone follows the rules in court.      |
| Witnesses ☺      | ☺ These people give advice and represent some of the people who go to court.                |
| Court Reporter ☺ | ☺ This person keeps order in the courtroom and usually wears a uniform.                     |
| Interpreter ☺    | ☺ These people listen to both sides of a problem in court and then decide what will happen. |
| Bailiff ☺        | ☺ These people take an oath and tell the court what they have seen or heard.                |

Answers are on page 36

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# I AM A WITNESS

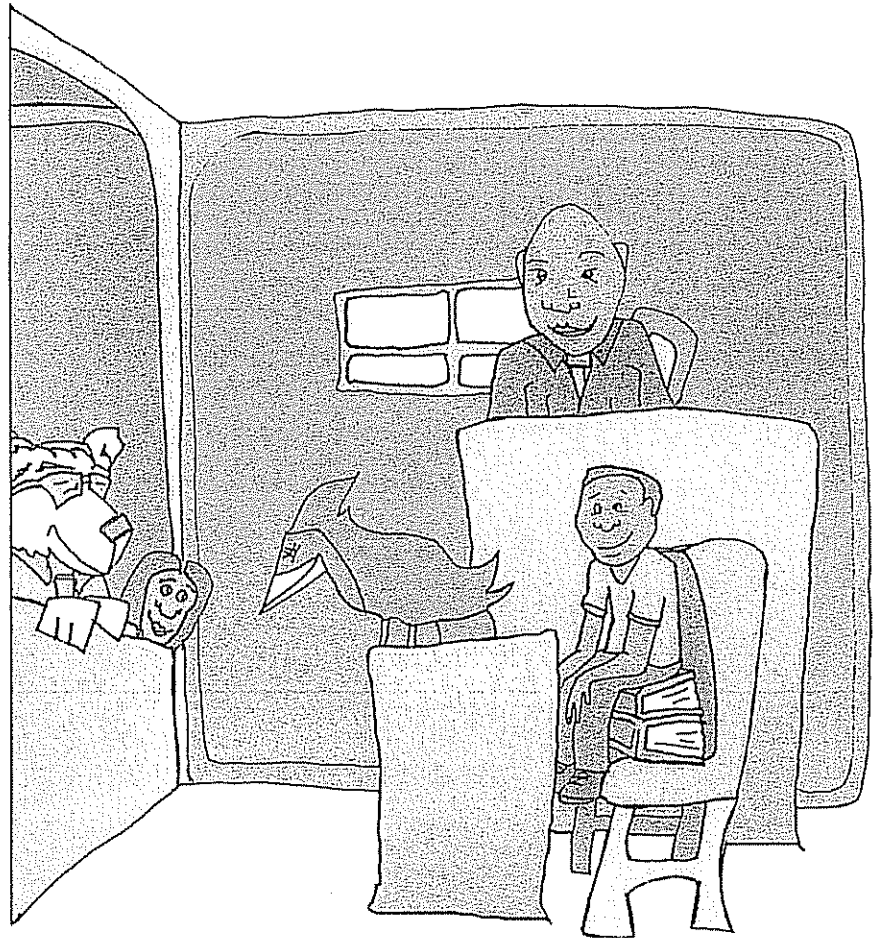
Earlier, you read about witnesses.

Children can go to court, and sometimes can be **witnesses**. The most important thing for every **witness** to do is to tell the truth. Sometimes it hurts to say what really happened, but if you are a **witness** you still have to tell the truth.

A **lawyer** can ask you a question and you may not remember the answer. If this happens, say "I don't remember." If you do not know the answer to a question, say "I don't know." It is important not to guess, and not to say something that you think the **lawyer** or the **judge** wants to hear.

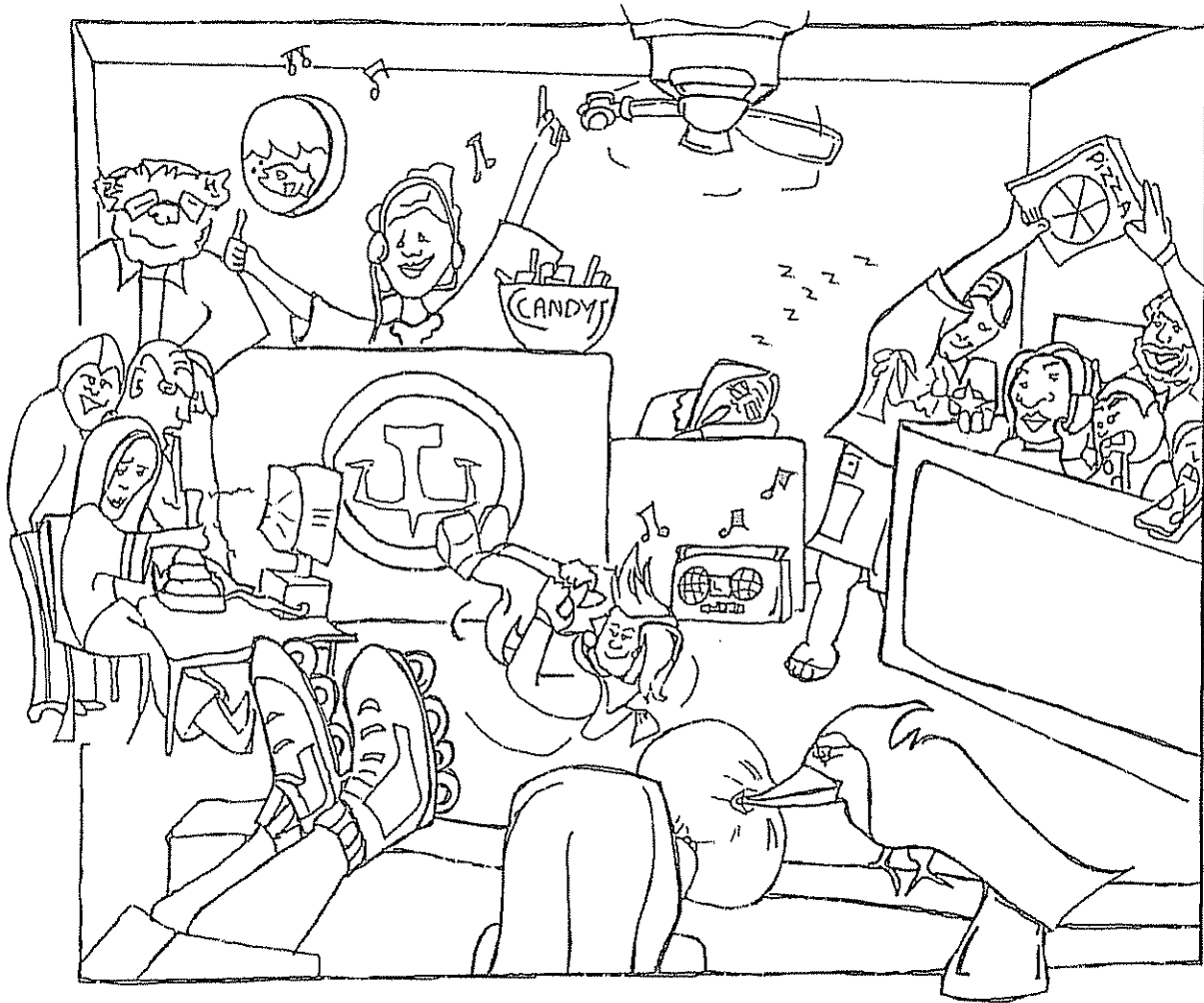
Sometimes **lawyers** use words you may not understand. Just let the **judge** or the **lawyer** know that you do not understand the question, and the **judge** will help you understand.

Sometimes children are scared to go to court. If you have to go to court, it's OK to feel scared. Adults get scared about court too. Just remember, the **judge** is there to make sure everything is fair.



# WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Circle all the things in the picture that are wrong, or that shouldn't be happening in court. You can check your answers on the bottom.



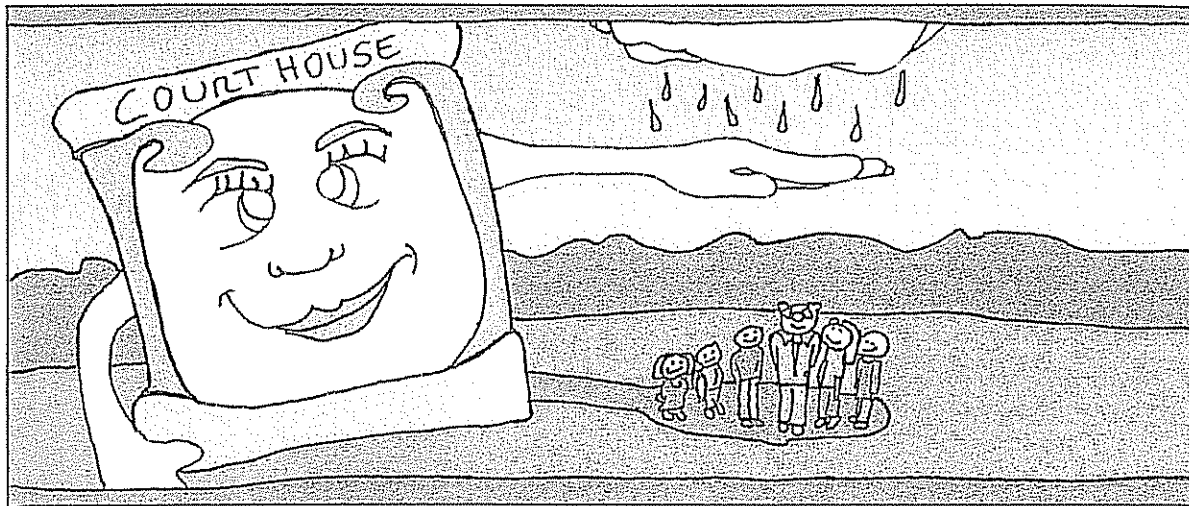
Answer: The judge listening to music and dancing, bear leaning on the bench, juror eating pizza, balliff in beach clothes, break dancing lawyer, girl chewing gum, woman on cell phone, kid playing video games, witness sleeping, boom box, kid with skates and feet up, justice scales upside down, candy on the bench, judge's gavel on the ceiling fan, and the fish on the wall

# CONNECT THE DOTS



# HOW DO THE COURTS HELP TO PROTECT KIDS?

(Abuse and Neglect)



Until children grow up, they need adults to take care of them. Some children come to court because a parent has hurt them, or not taken care of them. When a child is hit or touched in bad ways, it is called **abuse**. When a child doesn't have proper food, clothes, or other things he or she needs, it is called **neglect**. If parents don't take care of their child properly, the court may step in. When this happens, the child may have to live with relatives or another family for awhile. This temporary family is called a **foster care family**.

Usually, parents want to have their child live with them. The **judge** and the case manager will work with parents to make their home healthy and safe. If they succeed, then the child can move back home with the parents. This is called **reunification**.

Sometimes parents can't make their home safe for their child. If that happens, the child may not live with their parents anymore. The child may move into a home where they can live safely. The **judge** helps find another home where the child can live safely for a long time. The **judge** will make a **permanent plan** for where the child will live.





### What Does a Case Manager Do to Protect Kids?

A case manager is a person who tries to protect children and keep them safe. If there is abuse or neglect, the case manager may have to go to court so a judge can decide how to help the child and the family.

### What Does the Judge Do to Protect Kids?

The judge makes the final decision about what happens in a case. It is the judge's job to listen to what everyone says in court. The judge knows the law and decides what needs to happen to keep kids safe. If the judge asks you a question, it is very important for you to tell the truth. The judge needs to know the truth to make the best decision for you.

### What Do Lawyers Do to Protect Kids?

Earlier in this book you learned about the job of lawyers, who are also called attorneys. People involved in a case usually have a lawyer speak for them in court. Mothers, fathers, children, and other people involved in a case can all have lawyers. Lawyers help protect kid's rights

### What Does a CASA Do to Protect Kids?

Sometimes the judge will assign a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to help a child. A CASA is a volunteer that spends a lot of time with the child. A CASA suggests what the judge can do to make the child safe and healthy

# KIDS LIVE IN ALL KINDS OF HOUSES



Draw a picture of where you live below.



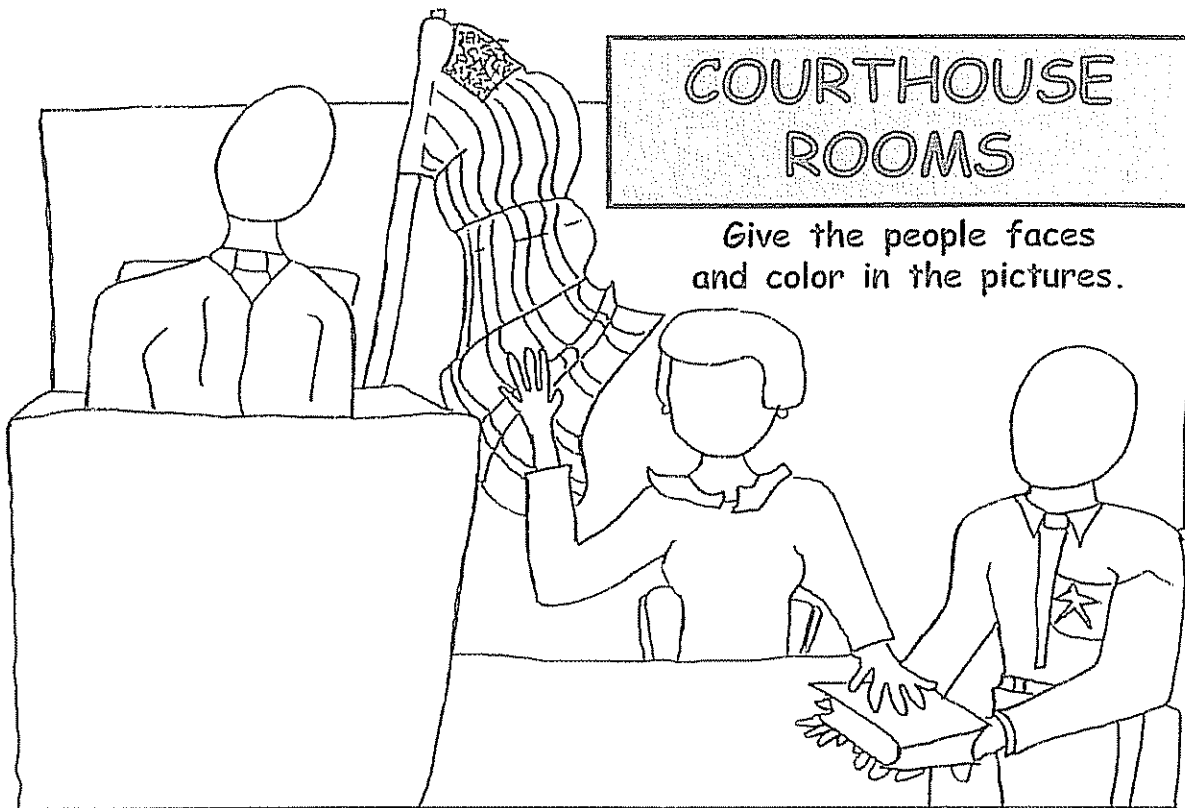
# MENTAL HEALTH HEARINGS



Mental health is what happens in people's minds and with their emotions. Mental health is just as important as physical health. Sometimes people have such big emotional or mental problems they need to go to a hospital to get better. This can happen to both adults and children. Adults can give a hospital permission to treat them. Usually, a parent can give a hospital permission to treat his or her children. These are called **voluntary admissions to a hospital**.

Sometimes people don't give a hospital permission to treat themselves or their child. In that case, a court may make a person go to the hospital for treatment. This is called **commitment**. To decide if a person needs treatment, the person goes in front of a **mental hygiene commissioner** at a **mental health hearing**.

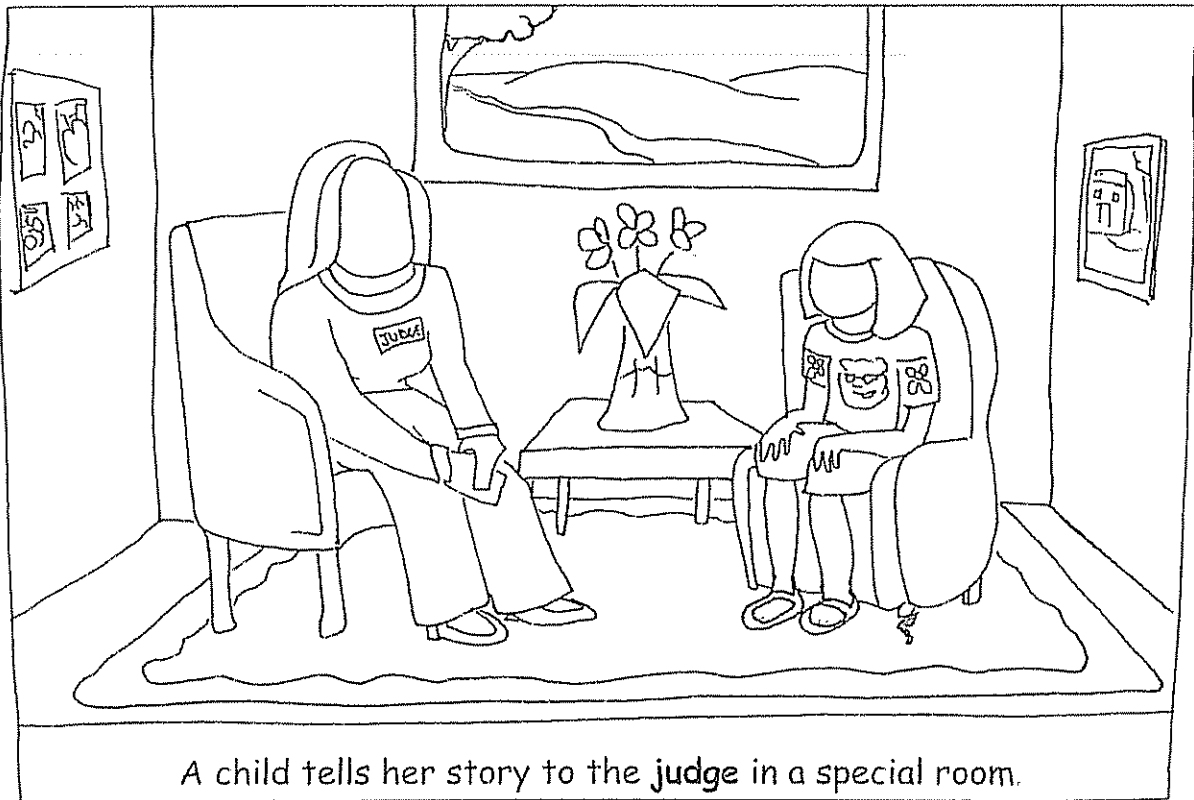
At the hearing, the **mental hygiene commissioner** hears stories and facts about a person's mental or emotional problems. The **mental hygiene commissioner** decides if the problems are so big that the person must stay in the hospital even if the person doesn't want to stay.



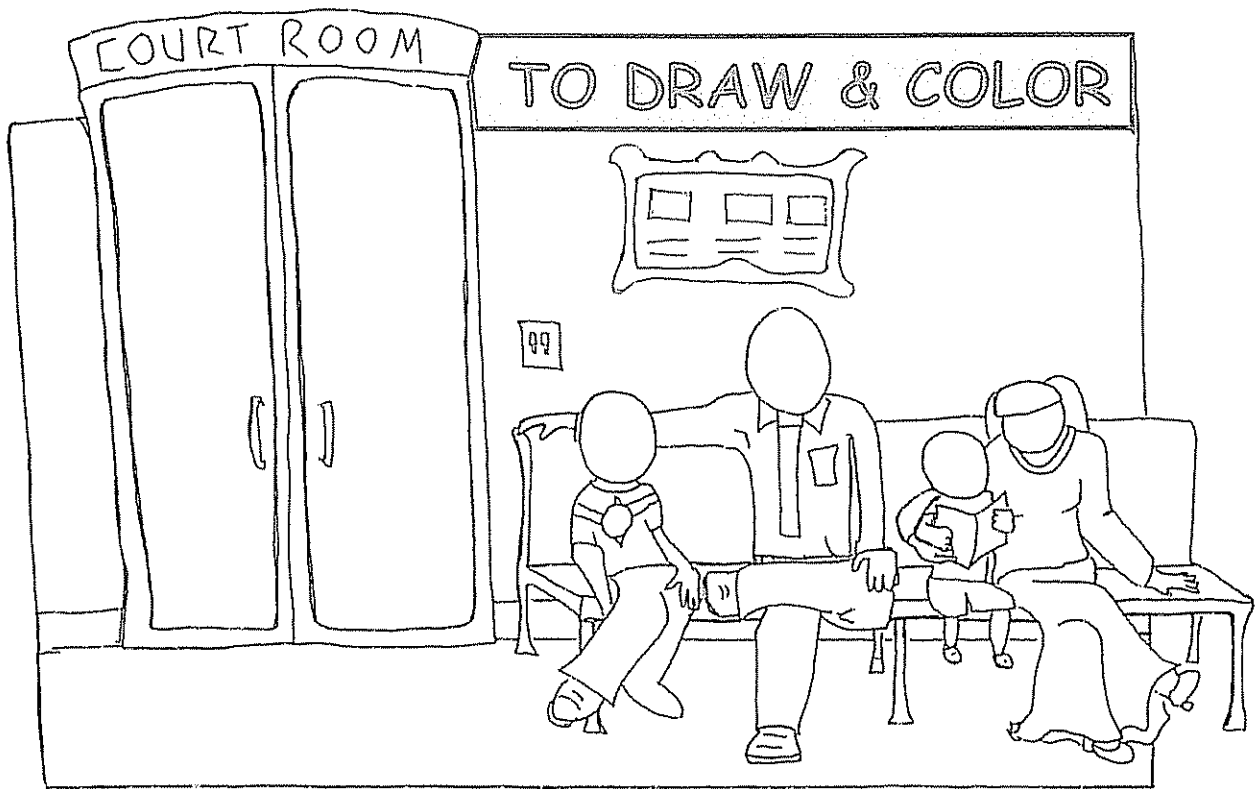
## COURTHOUSE ROOMS

Give the people faces and color in the pictures.

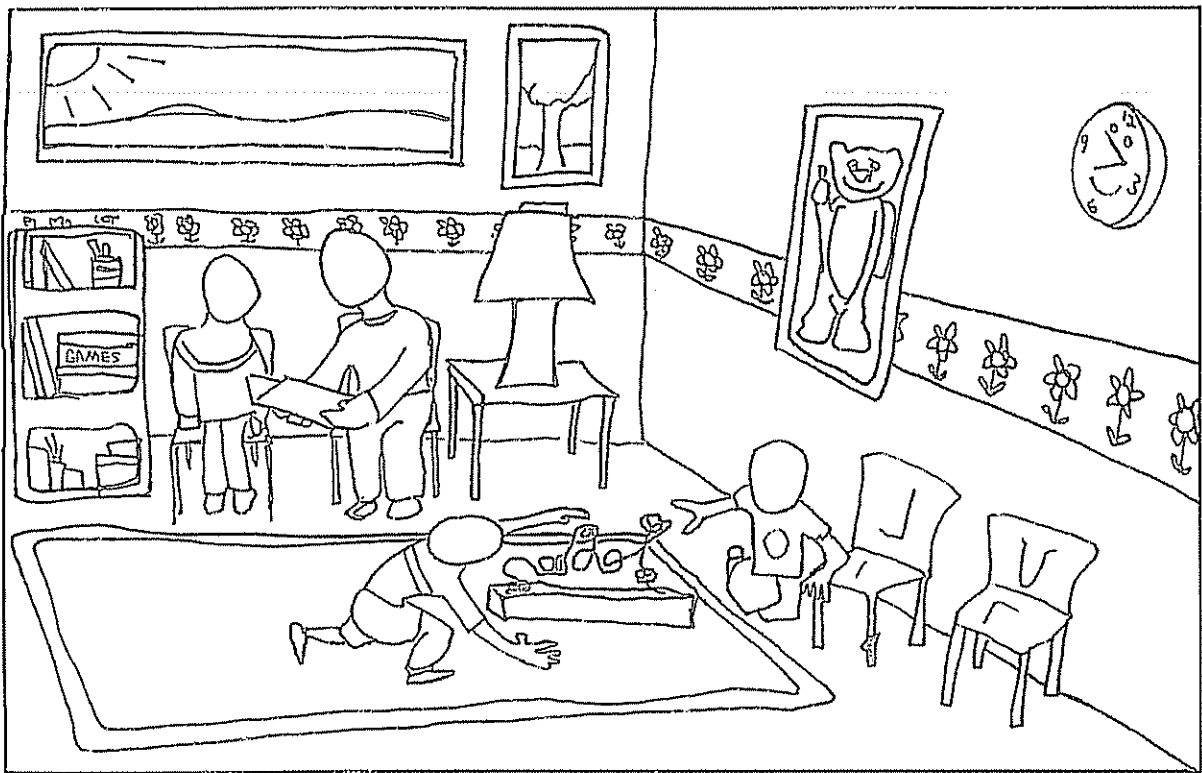
In the courtroom, the judge listens to a witness taking her oath.



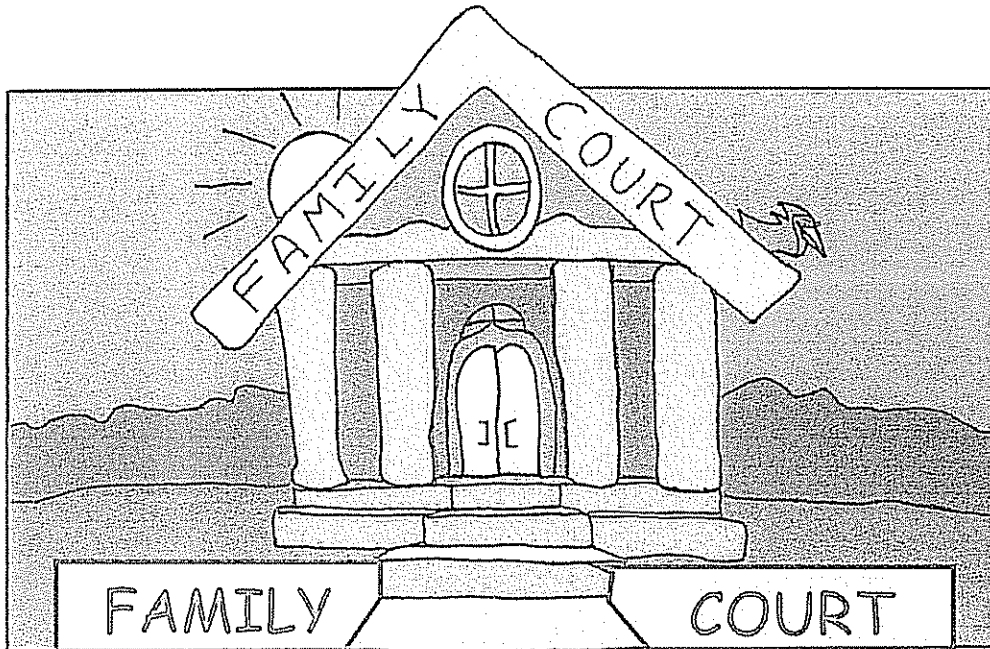
A child tells her story to the judge in a special room.



These people are patiently waiting their turn.



Some courthouses have a special waiting room for kids.



Most of the time children don't have to go to court, but sometimes they do. If you have to go to court, remember that it isn't because you did something wrong. Courts are different from other places you may have been, but you don't need to be afraid. Most court workers are nice to children.

Lots of children have parents who go to family court. If you are wondering about this, or are a little scared, it helps to talk to someone about your feelings.

If I'm afraid or scared I can talk to \_\_\_\_\_ about going to court.

I would tell them: \_\_\_\_\_

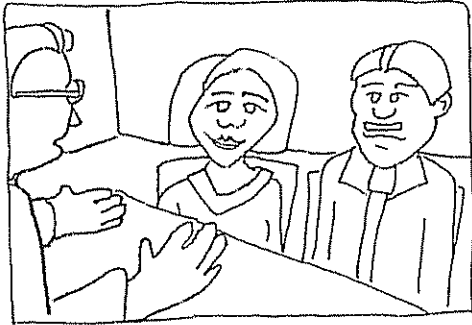


If a mother and father decide they can't live together anymore, they may choose to separate and live in different homes. If they are married and decide not to live together or be married anymore, they can get either a legal separation or a divorce.

If your parents aren't living together, they need to figure out how you can spend time with both of them. This plan about when you live with each parent is called a parenting plan.

A **mediator** is a person who may help parents plan for how they will take care of their children. The **mediator** listens to your mother's and your father's ideas about how to best take care of you. The **mediator** helps them work out a plan that will be best for you.

## MEDIATOR



Sometimes **mediators** want to meet the children. If your parent's **mediator** wants to talk to you, he or she will probably ask you a question about how things are going for you at home, at school, and with your friends. The **mediator** won't ask you if you want to live with your mom or dad. The **mediator** won't ask you to say if you like one of your parents more than the other.

Parents also have to figure out how much money they need to give each other to take care of their children after they separate. This money is called **support**.

If parents can't agree on their own, the **judge** will tell them what to do. When the **judge** tells someone what to do, it is called an **order**. The **judge** has an office in the courthouse near the courtroom. The **judge** sits at a big desk in the courtroom. This big desk is called a **bench**. The **judge** wears a black **robe**. The **judge** gets help from the **clerk**, who keeps the **judge** organized. In the courtroom, there is a special police officer called a **bailiff** who keeps everyone safe. Sometimes a **judge** can't finish a case in one day. If this happens, the **judge** will **continue** that case on another day.

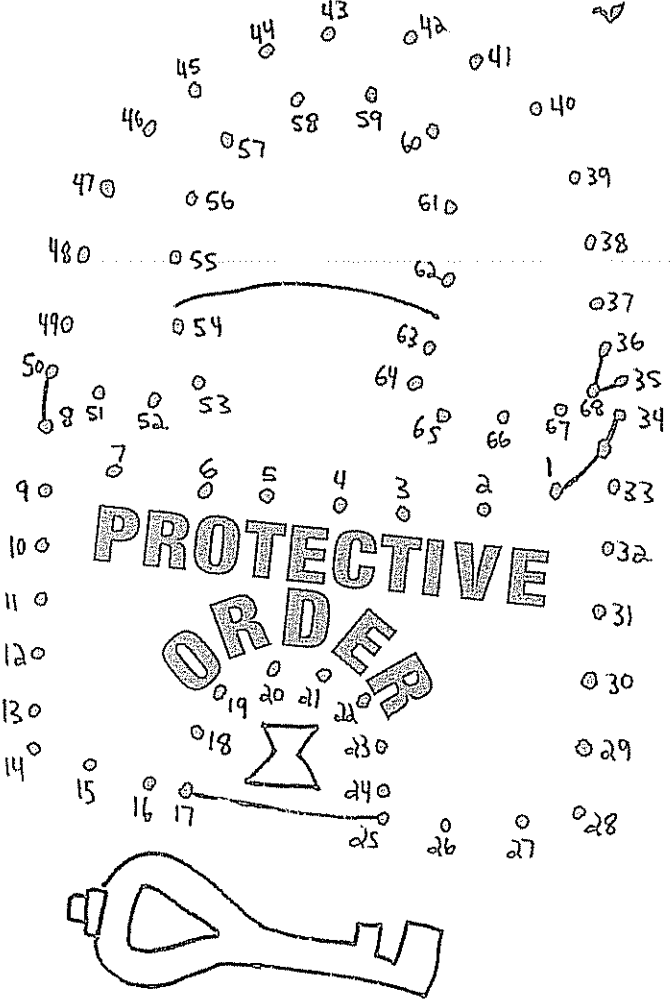
If your parents and their **mediator** can't work out a **parenting plan**, the **judge** may tell your parents to get a **custody evaluation**. A **custody evaluator** will spend some time getting to know both you and your parents. The evaluator will think about what would be the best way for you to spend time with each of your parents. Then the evaluator will tell the **judge** what he or she thinks.



# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PARENTS SCARE OR HURT EACH OTHER?

(Domestic Violence)

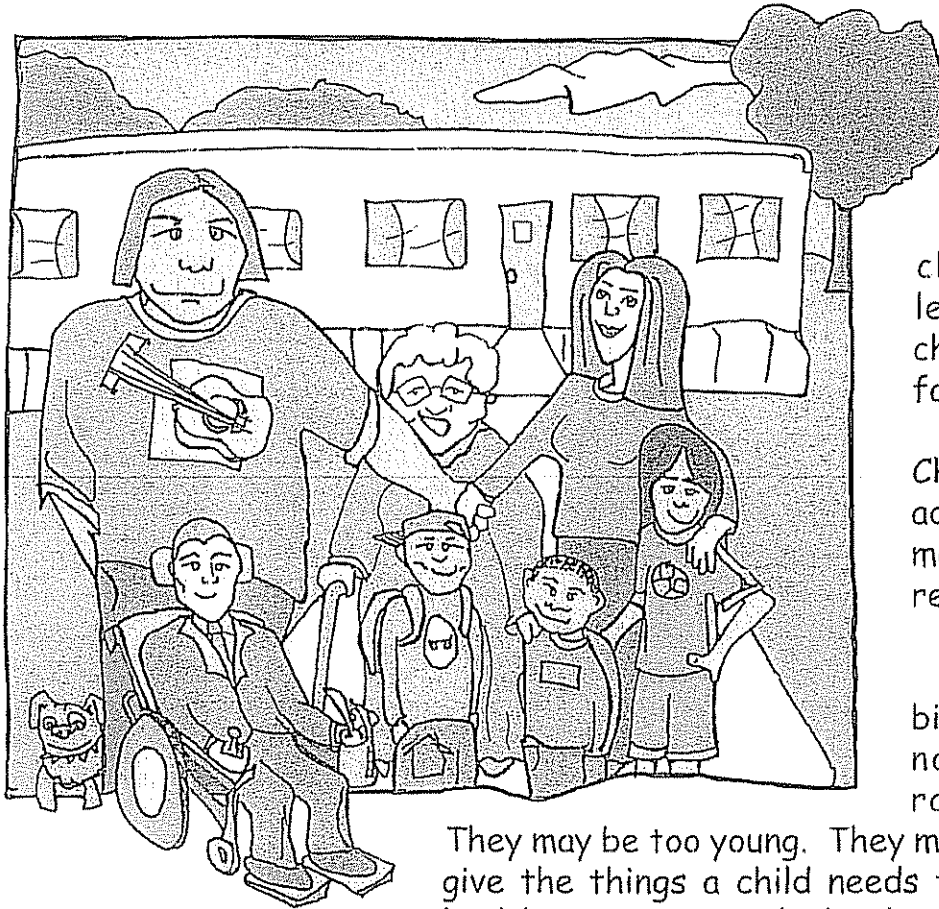
Sometimes parents, or people who live together, get scared of each other. Some parents hurt each other or their children. This is called **domestic violence**. If one parent hurts or really scares the other parent, the parent who got scared or hurt can ask the **judge** for help. The **judge** can make a court **order** that tells the violent parent to stay away from the family, and to not hurt them anymore. This kind of court **order** is called a **protective order**.





# I'M BEING ADOPTED

**Adoption** is the way a child legally becomes part of a new family. The judge decides if it is best for the child to be adopted. Before the judge makes this decision, a case manager will talk to the child. The case manager also meets the new parents and visits the new home. After adoption the child is a member of a new family. A new family can include brothers and sisters,



grandparents, and aunts and uncles.

As a member of the new family, the child has all the legal rights of a child born into that family.

Children become adoptable for many different reasons.

Sometimes the birth-parents are not available to raise the child.

They may be too young. They may not be able to give the things a child needs to be happy and healthy. Sometimes the birth-parents have died.

People adopt children because they love children and want to bring a child into their family. Adoptions can involve all types of children and families. Children can be adopted at any age. Some are babies. Others are teenagers. Even adults can be adopted. Children can be adopted into a family of a different race or religion. Children with special abilities can be adopted. Children can even be adopted from other states or countries.

WRITE ABOUT SOMEONE YOU KNOW WHO WAS ADOPTED.

You can write about yourself, a friend, or make up a story.

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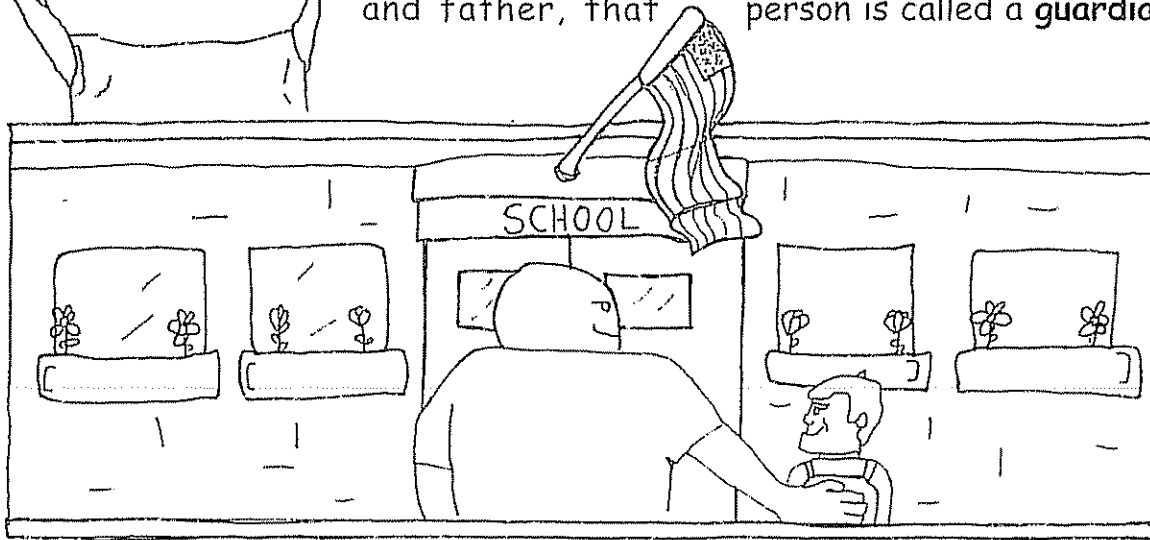
WHAT IS A PATERNITY CASE?

Occasionally, a dad's name is not written on a child's birth certificate. Other times the child's parents may not have been married to each other when the child was born. In those cases the **judge** can make a decision naming a child's father. That decision is called **paternity**.

# GUARDIANSHIPS



Sometimes kids don't have a mother or father to take care of them. This can happen if the parents have died, are very sick, in jail, or if they have drug or alcohol problems. There can be other reasons too. Another family member or a friend will need to take care of the children. This works best if a **judge** gives the friend or relative the legal right to act as the parent. When a **judge** picks someone else to care for the children instead of their mother and father, that person is called a **guardian**.



Like a parent, the **guardian** cares for the children until the mother and father can do it again or until the children grow up and don't need anyone to care for them. Like a parent, the **guardian** finds a home and a school for the children. The **guardian** provides the children with food and clothes and also takes the children to the doctor when they are sick. The children are part of the **guardian's** family. The **guardian** listens to them when they want to talk. The **guardian** also makes them do their homework and helps them when they need it.



Parents who can't care for their children still love their children. If they are able, the mother and father may visit or phone the children. If the parents are able to take care of their children again, the **judge** may return the children to their parents.

The **judge** watches over the **guardian** to make sure the **guardian** does a good job. The parents, the children, and the **guardian** may see the **judge** about any help the children need.



## WORD SCRAMBLE

Can you unscramble the letters to spell some of the terms you learned?

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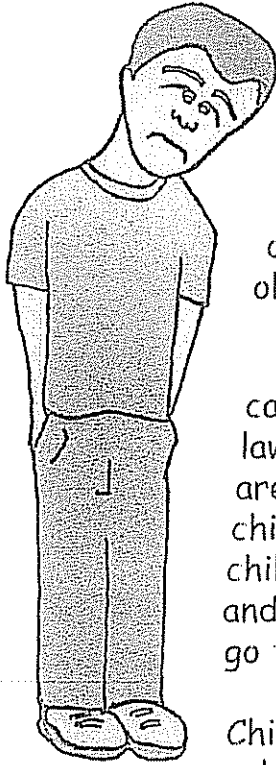
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Answers are on page 36

## SPECIAL LAWS FOR CHILDREN

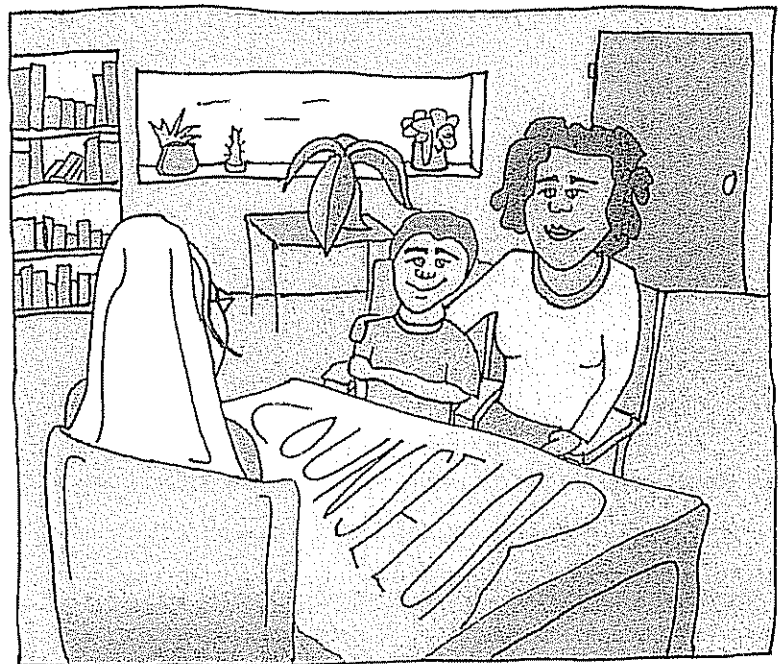


Sometimes children do things that would be OK for an adult to do, but aren't OK for a child to do. Although adults can drive cars, stay out all night, or drink alcohol, children may not do these things. A child may not drive a car until he or she is 16 years old. Kids can't stay out past curfew until they are 18 years old. People may not drink alcohol until they are 21 years old.

If you are a child and you do these things, they are called **status offenses**. That means you are breaking the law just because you are too young. Children do things that are **status offenses** for many reasons. For example, some children have problems that never seem to go away. These children feel sad, alone, and angry. They may feel so angry and alone that they disobey their parents. Some kids never go to school, or even run away from home.

Children can get help with these feelings. They can see a school counselor, a person at their church, synagogue or mosque, or any adult they trust to talk to about their feelings.

Usually status offenders are allowed to go home, but if the police detain them they can call a lawyer, their parents, or someone else to help.



## DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?



### PROBATION OFFICER

Children can get into big trouble if they disobey the law. If a police officer believes that you have broken the law you can be arrested. The officer will ask you questions and decide if you can go home or if you have to go to **juvenile hall**. Even if you get to go home, later you may have to talk to a **probation officer** about what happened. The probation officer may decide that you have to **defend** your case in court.

At a detention facility the doors are locked. Usually children have to stay there until a **judge** says they can leave.

If you get arrested, the first thing to remember is to get some help! You may need to talk to a **lawyer** about what happened. Your **lawyer** will help you talk to the police. You have the right to call a **lawyer** right away if you are locked up. Call the **public defender** if you don't already have a **lawyer**. You don't have to answer any questions until you have talked with your **lawyer**.

There are different kinds of crimes. Some are much more serious than others. **Felony** crimes are more serious than **misdemeanor** crimes. The maximum time you could be locked-up for a **misdemeanor** crime is one year. If you are guilty of a **felony** crime you can be locked-up for a much longer time, possibly even until you are an adult.

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Some crimes can be either **misdemeanor** or **felony**, depending on how bad the behavior. A fistfight is one example. If you get into a fistfight, you could be charged with **misdemeanor** battery. If you really hurt someone badly in a fistfight, you could be charged with **felony** battery.

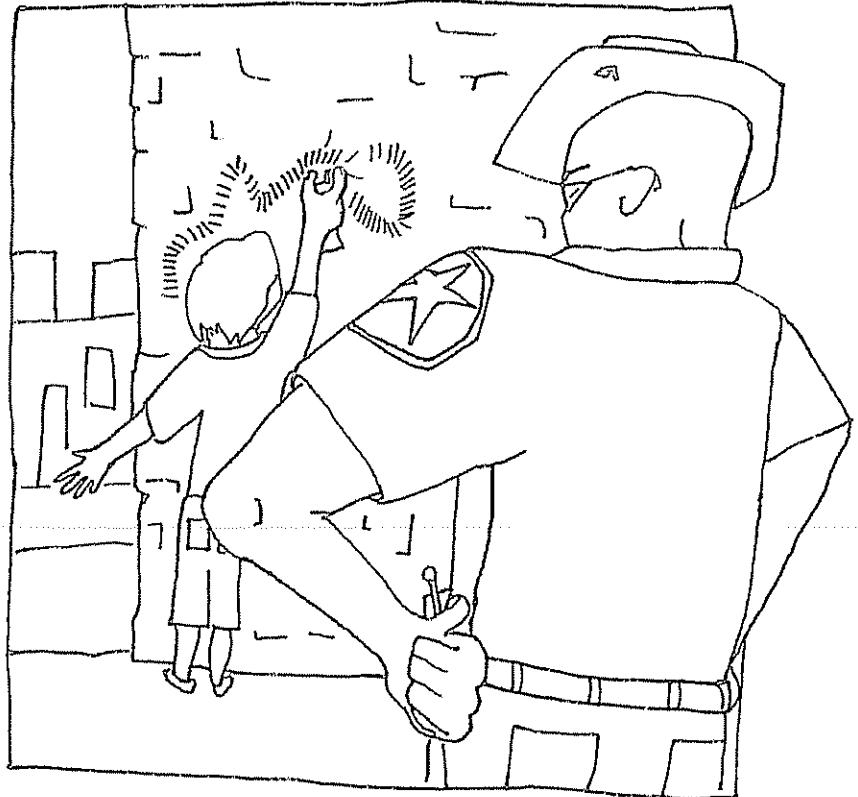
If you have to go to court to defend your case, don't be afraid to talk to your **lawyer**. There may be a trial where the **judge** hears both sides of the story and then decides if you are guilty.

If the **judge** decides that you are guilty, and the crime is not very serious, you might be put on probation. When you are on probation, you have to do whatever the **judge** and **probation officer** say. If the crime is serious or you have

been in trouble before, you could be forced to live away from home or even be locked-up. Your family usually can visit you if you cannot live at home. You and your family may even go to counseling together to understand how to improve your behavior.

No matter what, even if you get into trouble remember that it is never too late to change yourself for the better. Don't ever give up on yourself!

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# FIND-A-WORD

K K O J M A S Z K E R R Z N F F E  
 U C R W G W M H B O E L F A T E G  
 X O X E I C A B H D A G C I T L D  
 R J R P L T R Q R W G G O D E O U  
 B V R X T C N O Y I Z Z U R S N J  
 J U V E N I L E H A L L N A N Y H  
 M V N M D M R R S C V O S U E J S  
 T I K O T N O O O S I K E G F F C  
 K L S K I T E U U T N P L U F H G  
 B Y R D A T R F A W G O O T O N B  
 X G J I E T P P E I W O R E S E W  
 E U D F R M I O F D X I E S U B A  
 N E T O E C E G D B C P J T T K G  
 M U O R N L Y A M A H I R C A S A  
 G M R A N P V M N H N I L B T G S  
 P Y M N O I T A B O R P S B S Y H  
 X E B A I L I F F W R Q X B U P H  
 R E C I F F O L A I C I D U J P W

Circle the words above that are listed below.  
Check your answers on page 36.

ABUSE  
 CASA  
 COURTROOM  
 GUARDIAN  
 JUVENILE HALL  
 MISDEMEANOR  
 PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADOPTION  
 CLERK  
 EMANCIPATION  
 JUDGE  
 LAWYER  
 ORDER  
 STATUS OFFENSE

BAILIFF  
 COUNSELOR  
 FELONY  
 JUDICIAL OFFICER  
 MEDIATOR  
 PROBATION  
 WITNESS



## WHAT IS EMANCIPATION?

**Emancipation** ends the legal authority that a parent has over a child who is under 18 years old. After **emancipation**, your parent doesn't have to take care of you or pay for things that you need. **Emancipation** changes your life. You will have some new rights and also new responsibilities.

### When Can you Get a Judge to Emancipate you?

You have to be over 16 years old and living away from home. Your parents have to agree with your decision. They also could decide ~~not~~ to fight you in court. You must have a legal income that pays for food, clothes, and rent.

The **judge** has to decide if **emancipation** is best for you.

### After you are emancipated.

After you are emancipated, you will have to make lots of decisions. Some you are required to do, some you are not. You will have rights and responsibilities once you are emancipated. A right is a power guaranteed by law. This power allows you to make decisions about your life. A responsibility is something you are required to do by law.

Write the word *right* or *responsibility* next to each sentence.

1. You can live where you want?
2. You can decide when to go to the doctor?
3. You must have money to take care of yourself?
4. You can sign contracts to buy, sell, rent, or give things away?
5. You can keep the money you make?
6. You can sign up for school and get a work permit?
7. You can get a driver's license if you are old enough and you have insurance?
8. You must pay your doctor bills if you get sick and go to the doctor?

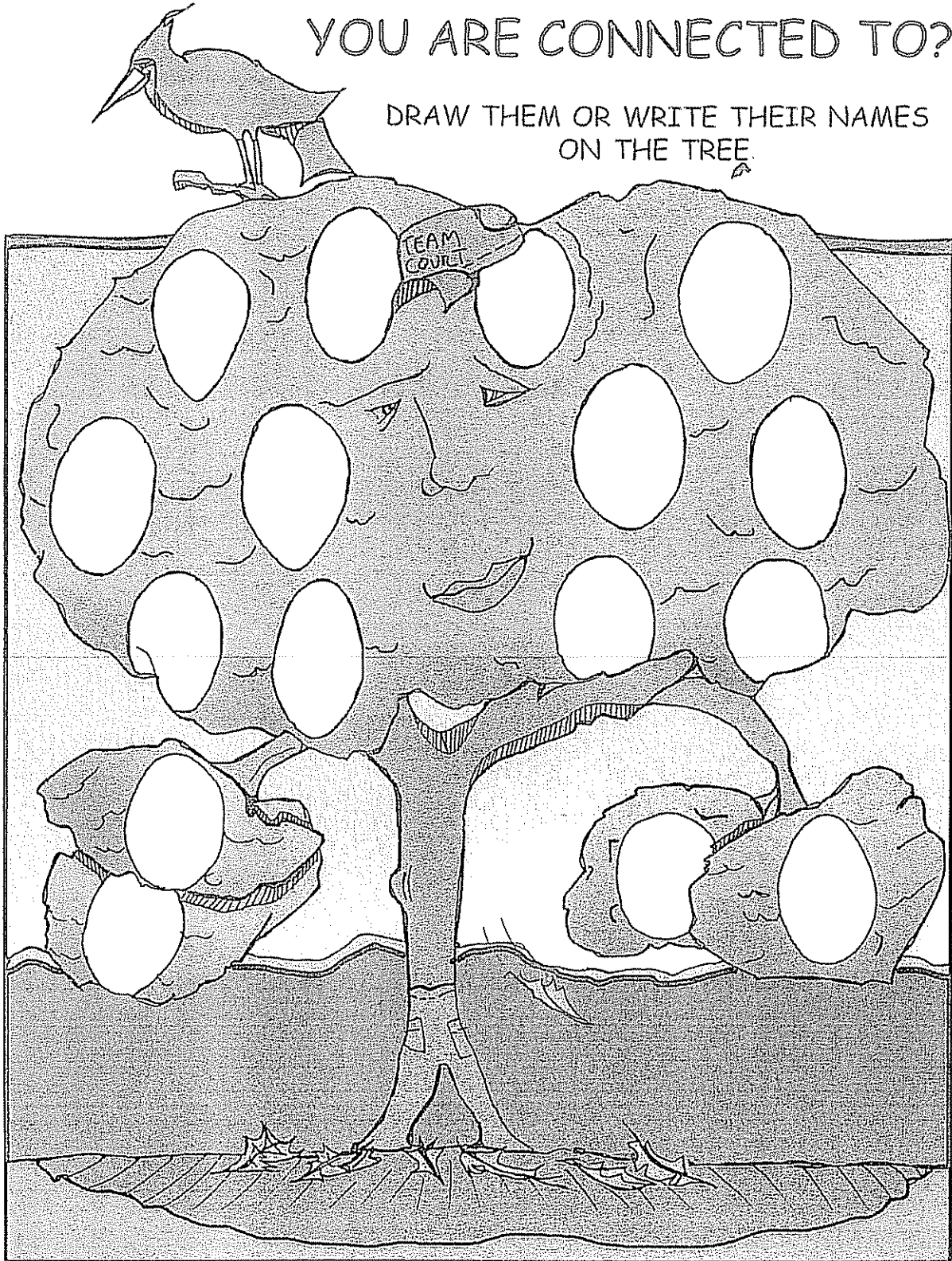
**Emancipation is not the same as being 18.**

If you are emancipated, is the answer to these questions yes or no? Circle the correct answer.

- |       |     |  |
|-------|-----|--|
| 1. No | Yes | You can work as many hours as an 18-year-old.                    |
| 2. No | Yes | You can get married without your parent's consent.               |
| 3. No | Yes | If you break a law, you will have to go to adult criminal court. |
| 4. No | Yes | You can vote.  |
| 5. No | Yes | You can buy and drink alcohol.                                   |

# WHO ARE THE PEOPLE YOU ARE CONNECTED TO?

DRAW THEM OR WRITE THEIR NAMES  
ON THE TREE.





# Glossary

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**Abuse** - when a child is hit or touched in a bad way.

**Adoption** - the way a child permanently becomes part of a new family.

**Bailiff**- a special police officer for the court. They wear uniforms and make sure everyone is safe.

**Bench** - the name for the big desk in the courtroom, where the judge sits.

**CASA** - a person who helps children by spending time with them. They tell the judge what can be done to make the child safe and healthy.

**Case Manager** - a person whose job it is to protect children. They sometimes go to court to help the child, and the family.

**Clerk** - the person who keeps and organizes all of the papers about the court cases. A clerk also keeps the court's schedule.

**Commitment** - when the court makes a person go to the hospital for treatment.

**Continue** - when a case can't be finished on one day, and it carries over to another day.

**Court Reporter**- the person who writes down everything that everybody says in court.

**Custody Evaluator** - a person who has been trained to make suggestions to the judge about how much time a child can spend with each of the child's parents.

**Custody Evaluation** - a suggestion that a custody evaluator makes for the judge. It lists the maximum amount of time that a child can spend with each parent after the parents are separated or divorced.

**Divorce** - the court grants them for married people who decide they don't want to be married anymore.

**Domestic Violence** - when parents hurt each other or their children.

**Emancipation** - when a child's parents are not legally responsible for them anymore. A child is emancipated automatically when he or she turns 18. A child over 16 may go to court and ask to become emancipated.

**Felony** - crimes that people commit where the punishment is being locked-up for longer than one year.

**Foster Care Family** - a temporary family with whom a child lives when parents can't take care of their child.

**Guardian** - a person who cares for a child, but is not the child's mother or father.

**Interpreters** - translates what is said in court for people who can't hear, speak, or understand English.

Judge - the person who makes decisions about court cases, wears a robe, and sits behind the bench.

Mental Hygiene Commissioner - the person who hears stories and facts about the mental or emotional problems that someone is having. The mental hygiene commissioner decides if the person needs to stay in the hospital.

Jurors - people who decide what happens in certain types of court cases.

Jury - a group of jurors.

Juvenile Hall - a place where children who break the law live. The doors are locked and children who live there cannot come and go as they please.

Lawyer - a person who represents, or talks for, people in court. A lawyer is also called an attorney.

Legal Separation - when two people are still married but not living together anymore.

Mediator - a person who helps parents plan for how they will spend time with, and take care of, their children when the parents are separated or divorced.

Mental Health - what goes on in people's minds and with their emotions.

Misdemeanor - crimes that people commit where the punishment is being locked-up for no more than one year

Neglect - when a child doesn't have the proper food, clothes, or other things they need.

Order - when the judge makes someone do something.

Parenting Plan - a plan that parents make so they can share time with their children.

Paternity - deciding who a child's father is.

Permanent Plan - a plan that decides where a child can live for a long time.

Probation Officer - a person children visit regularly when they get into trouble. A probation officer tells you what you are allowed to do, and where you are allowed to go.

Protective Order - a judge's special order that tells a parent who hurt his or her family to stay away from the family and to stop hurting them.

Public Defender - a free lawyer for people who can't afford to hire one.

Reunification - when a child moves from a foster care family back into his or her parent's home.

Status Offenses - when children do things that are against the law just because of their age.

Voluntary admissions to a hospital - when people give permission for a hospital to treat themselves or their children.

Witnesses - come to court to tell what they have seen or heard.



# GOODBYE!

Thanks for visiting our courthouse today.

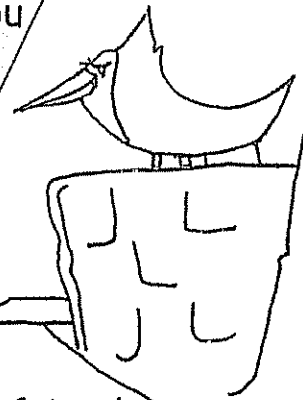
It was great to be able to show you around and introduce you to our friends inside.

You can open this book and visit us again anytime.

We hope that you had fun and learned a lot.

To all our new friends,  
Cardinal and I say...

Goodbye!!!

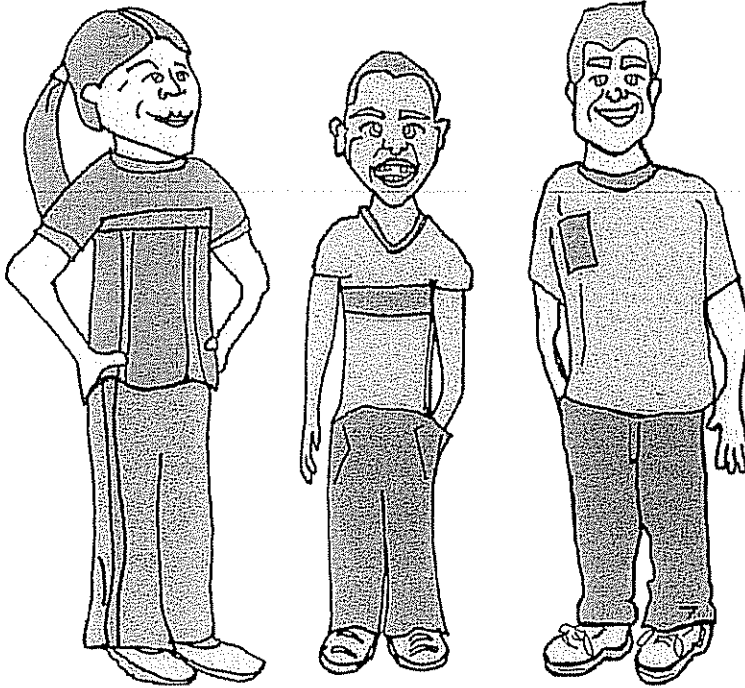


## About This Book

*Visiting the Courthouse* is an activity book intended to give children a positive introduction to the court system.

It discusses the people inside a courthouse and their specific jobs. It also talks about different situations and reasons why children or their parents may attend court. Whether a child is attending court as a visitor, witness, or is involved in a case, this

book may help a child become more comfortable about his or her visit.



Children of all ages may enjoy this book whether they look at and color the pictures, play the activities and games, or read the text.

**We hope West Virginia's children will have fun and benefit by using this book.**