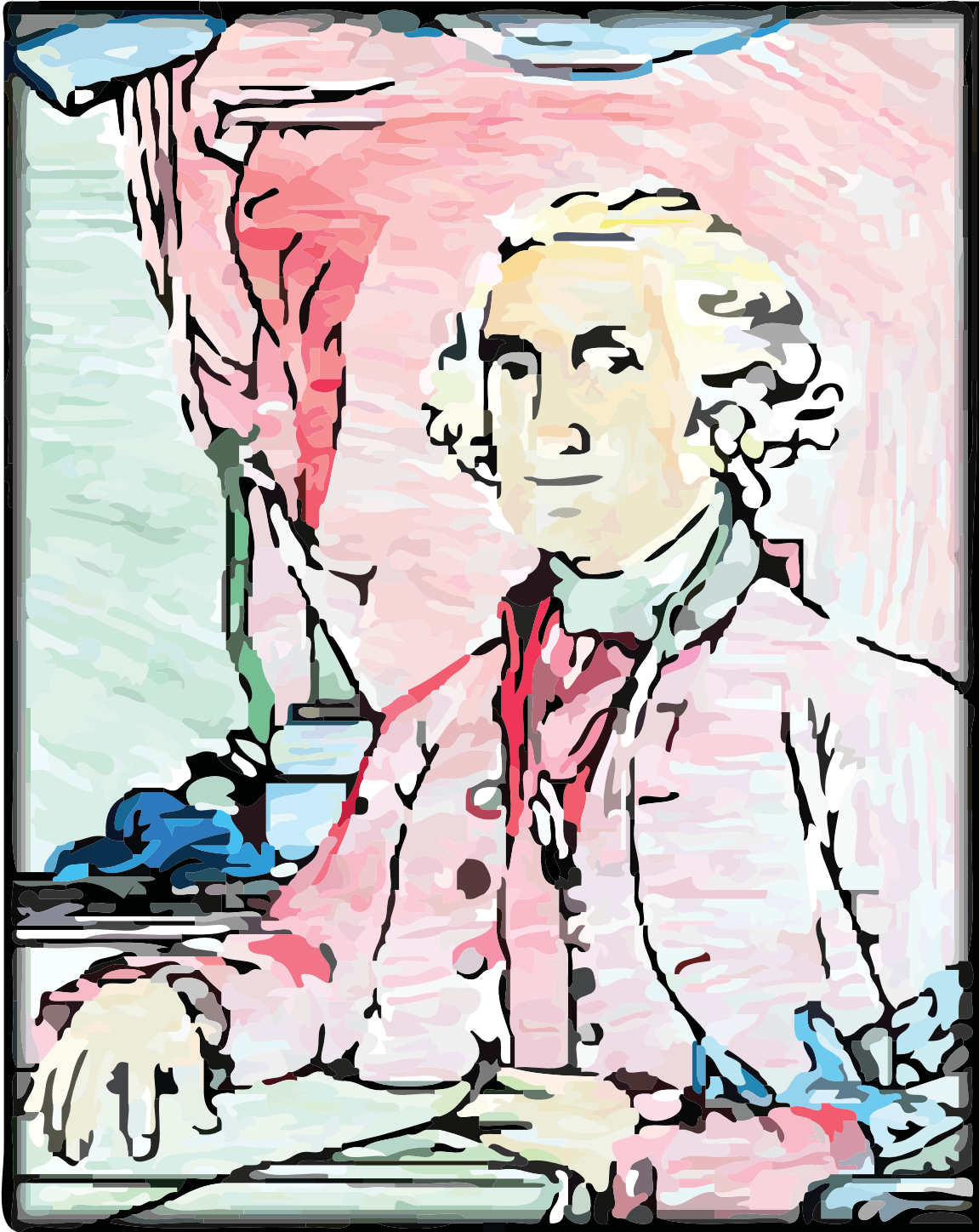


# What's Happening in Court?



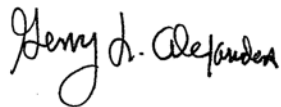
An activity book for children who are going to court in Washington

# Welcome from the Judges

Going to court can be scary or unfamiliar for anyone - especially young people. Yet young people 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 young people. This book will tell you what happens in court: who works there, what the rules are, and how you might be part of a case. Remember that you always can ask questions if you are in court and you feel afraid or confused.

I hope you enjoy this book, learn from it, and have fun with it. You can keep this book to help you remember what you want to know about going to court.



Chief Justice Gerry L. Alexander  
Supreme Court of Washington

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## Acknowledgement

This publication is based on a book written in 1999 by the legal staff of the California Office of the General Counsel, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). What's Happening in Court? was illustrated by San Francisco artists Andrew DeWitt and Robert Gutierrez and was produced by the dedicated staff of the AOC. The project was made possible by the generous support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with additional funding from the Foundation of the State Bar of California.

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For additional copies or more information about the book, please call the Administrative Office of the Courts at 360.705.5331 or write to the address below. Copies are also available online at: [www.courts.wa.gov](http://www.courts.wa.gov).

Public Trust and Confidence Committee  
Attn: Administrative Office of the Courts  
P.O. Box 41170  
Olympia, WA 98504-1170

# What's in This Book?

Welcome From the Judges .....	inside front cover
On My Way to Court .....	2
Why Am I Here? .....	4
Who Are the People in Court? .....	6
How Should I Act in Court? .....	10
What Does a Witness Do? .....	12
What Is Juvenile Dependency? .....	14
Courthouse Rooms to Decorate .....	18
Family Law Court .....	20
Special Court Words .....	24
Guardianships .....	26
Being Adopted .....	28
What is Emancipation .....	30
Special Laws for Youth .....	32
Did I Do Something Wrong? .....	34
Answer Key .....	36
Facts About Me .....	38
Some Important Information .....	inside back cover
About This Book .....	back cover

# On My Way to Court

These are the rules of the game:

Be the first player to get to the courthouse by following the path that has a picture of how you got to the courthouse.

1-4 players can play.

You need 3 coins.

Use coins or erasers or other small objects as game pieces.

Drop 3 coins on a flat surface.

Count the number of heads and move forward that number.

If there are 1 head and 2 tails, move forward 1 space.

If there are 2 heads and 1 tail, move forward 2 spaces.

If there are 3 heads and no tails, move forward 3 spaces.

If there are no heads and 3 tails, do not move.

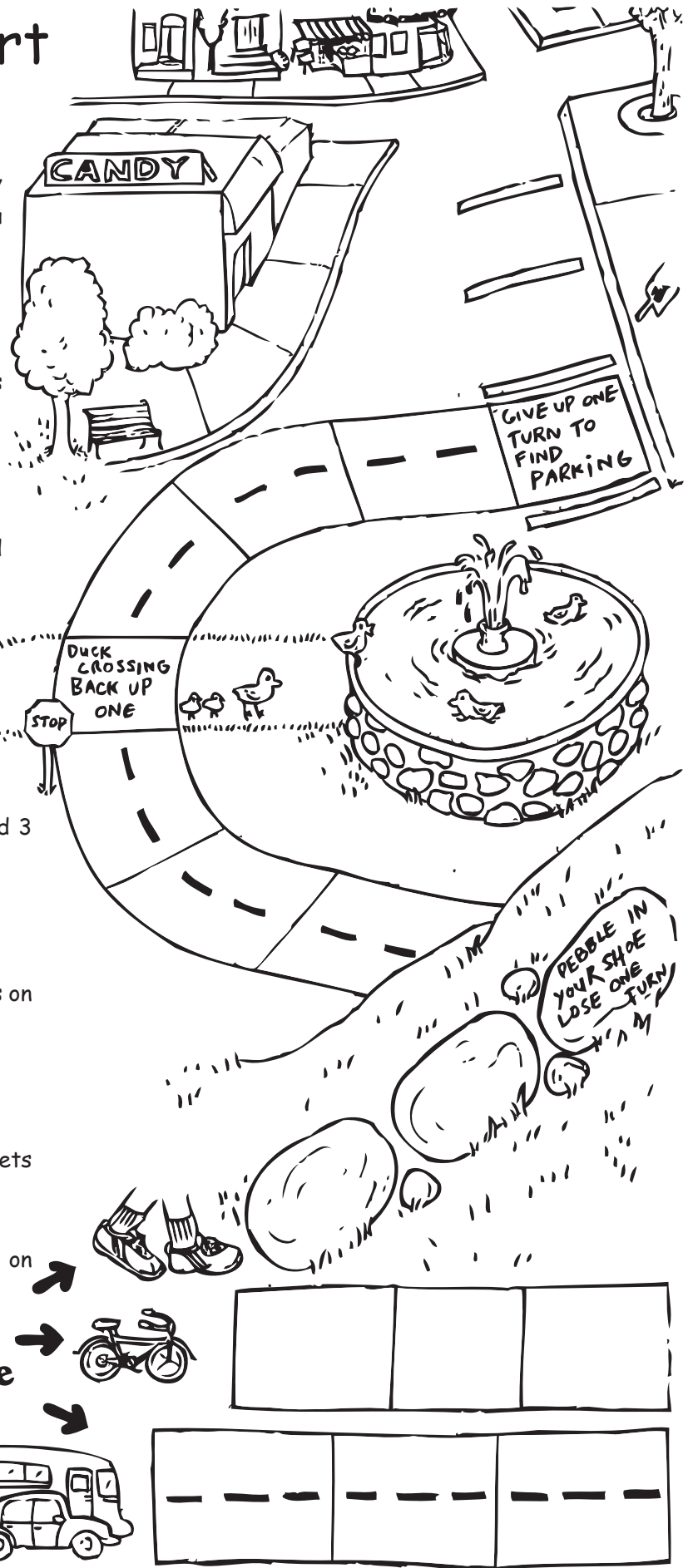
When you land on a space, follow the instructions on that space.

The first player to get to the courthouse wins.

At the end of the game, make sure everyone gets their game pieces back.

Circle on the game all the objects that you saw on your way to court today. If you saw a horse, then circle the horse.

If what you saw today is not here, draw a picture of it on the game.



YOU SET OFF  
THE METAL  
DETECTOR. GO  
BACK ONE.

YOU'RE  
HERE!

GIVE UP  
ONE TURN  
TO PARK  
YOUR BIKE

GIVE UP  
ONE TURN  
TO SMELL  
THE FLOWERS

CROSS WALK  
LOSE ONE  
TURN

MUD!  
SLIDE  
FORWARD  
ONE

YOUR  
CHAIN  
CAME OFF.  
MOVE  
BACK ONE

TUNNEL  
GO TO THE  
OTHER  
SIDE

BIKE  
CROSSING  
LOSE ONE  
TURN

TRAFFIC JAM!  
MOVE BACK TWO

# Why am I here?

I am at court today with

\_\_\_\_\_

who has come here because

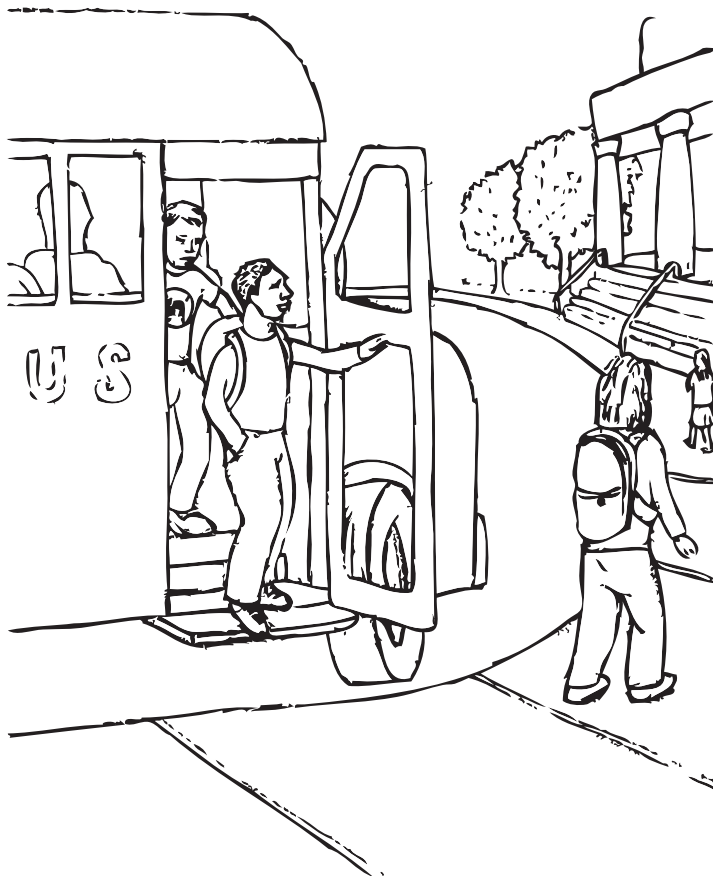
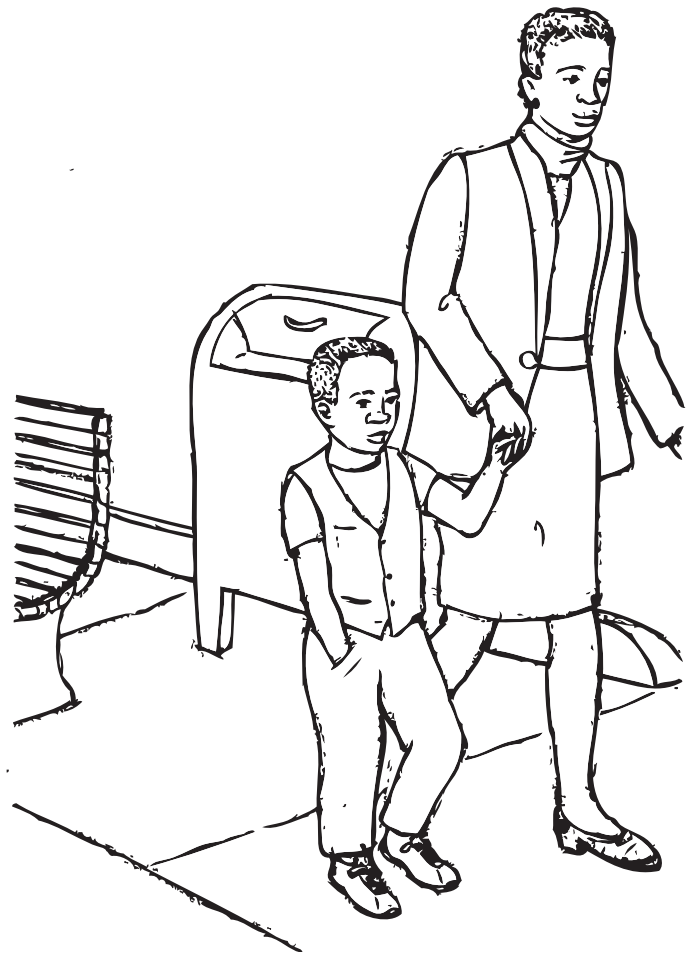
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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I am at court today on a field trip with

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

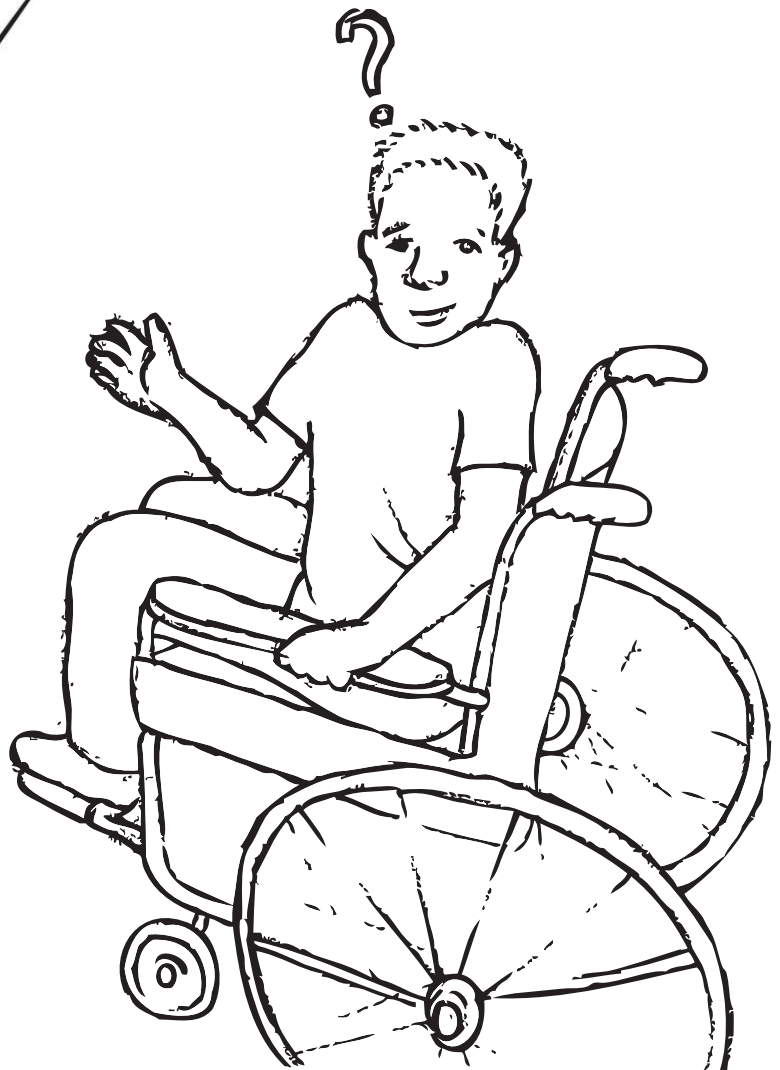
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



I am at court because I am a part of a case or I am here as a witness to tell what I have seen or heard.

I do not know why I am at court today.



# Who Are the People in Court?

Many people work in a court. Everyone has a job to do.

First, there is the **judge**. In many courts, the judge will be wearing a black robe. The judge usually sits at the front of the courtroom on the **bench**, which is a very large, raised desk. The judge's name is often on a sign near the bench.

The judge does many things. First, the judge is like a referee, or an umpire at a ball game. The judge makes sure that everyone is treated fairly.

Sometimes the judge is also the person who makes the decision about the problem (called a case) that the people came to court to solve. For example, if two people come to court because they disagree about money, the judge might be the person who finally decides who gets the money.



Other times, a group of people, instead of the judge, decides who wins the argument. These people are called **jurors**. Jurors are people who come to court to listen to each side of a disagreement. Then the jurors decide how the disagreement will be settled. A group of jurors is called a **jury**.





When people go to court, they often have **lawyers**. Lawyers also are called attorneys. Lawyers give advice to people about their disagreements 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

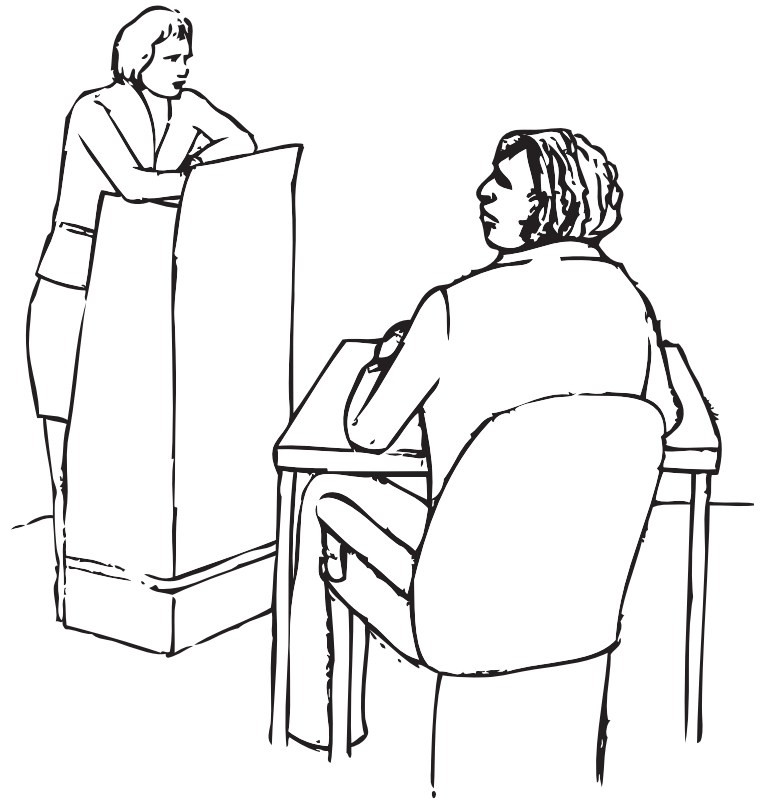
"represents" the person. Each lawyer represents only one person in court. So, if many people are involved in a disagreement, there might be more than one lawyer in court. All kinds of people have lawyers, including young people! Lawyers usually sit next to the person they represent in the court.

Some courts have uniformed bailiffs. You probably can spot the bailiff very easily. The bailiff is the person who tells everyone to stand up by saying, "All rise" when the judge comes in. The bailiff makes sure the people who go to court obey the rules.

Courts also have interpreters for people who don't speak or understand English. The interpreter's job is to tell the person in their own language what is said in court and tell the court what the person is saying.



In many courts there is a 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 on a small machine. Even though court reporters type very fast, everyone in court must speak slowly and clearly so the court reporter can hear what they say.



All courts have clerks as well. A court clerk keeps all the papers about the cases in the court and organizes them. The clerk keeps track of the names of the lawyers, the people who come to court to testify and anybody else who was a part of the case.



Witnesses are people who come to court to tell what they have seen or heard. For example if someone is accused of stealing something, a witness might come to court to say what they saw happen. When witnesses come to court, they have to raise their hand and make a special promise, called an oath, to tell the truth. They take a special seat and the lawyers ask them questions. Cases that last a long time may have lots of witnesses.

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

Lawyers or attorneys

These people come to court to tell the truth and talk about what they have seen or heard.

Judge

This person types everything that is said in court into a machine.

Bailiff

This person organizes all the papers in the court files and keeps track of the judge's decisions.

Jurors

This individual says in the person's own language what is said in court.

Clerk

This person's job is to make decisions and make sure that everyone is treated fairly in court.

Witnesses

These people help by giving advice and talking in court for the people who have disagreements.

Court reporter

This person says "all rise" and makes people obey the rules.

Interpreter

These people listen to both sides of a disagreement in court and then decide who wins.

# How Should I Act in Court?

- Be on time.
- Dress neatly.
- Don't go in alone. Make sure there is an adult with you.
- Show respect to the people who are there.
- Don't eat or drink in court.
- Don't chew gum.
- Don't listen to music in court.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- There may be other people in court who have cases before you. You will have to be quiet and wait.
- You can read a book or play quietly with this book while you wait.
- When it is your turn, call the judge "Your Honor." This is what people call the judge to show respect.
- Don't speak unless the judge or a lawyer asks you to.
- If you don't understand something, say that you don't understand. Someone will explain it again for you.

## What's Wrong with this Picture?

Circle the things in the picture that are wrong or that should not be happening in court. Then you can write them here:

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# Not Like This!



# What Does a Witness Do?

You read about witnesses on page 8. Young people can go to court and sometimes they can be witnesses, too. The most important thing for every witness to do is to tell the truth. Sometimes it is hard to say what really happened, but if you are a witness you have to tell the truth.

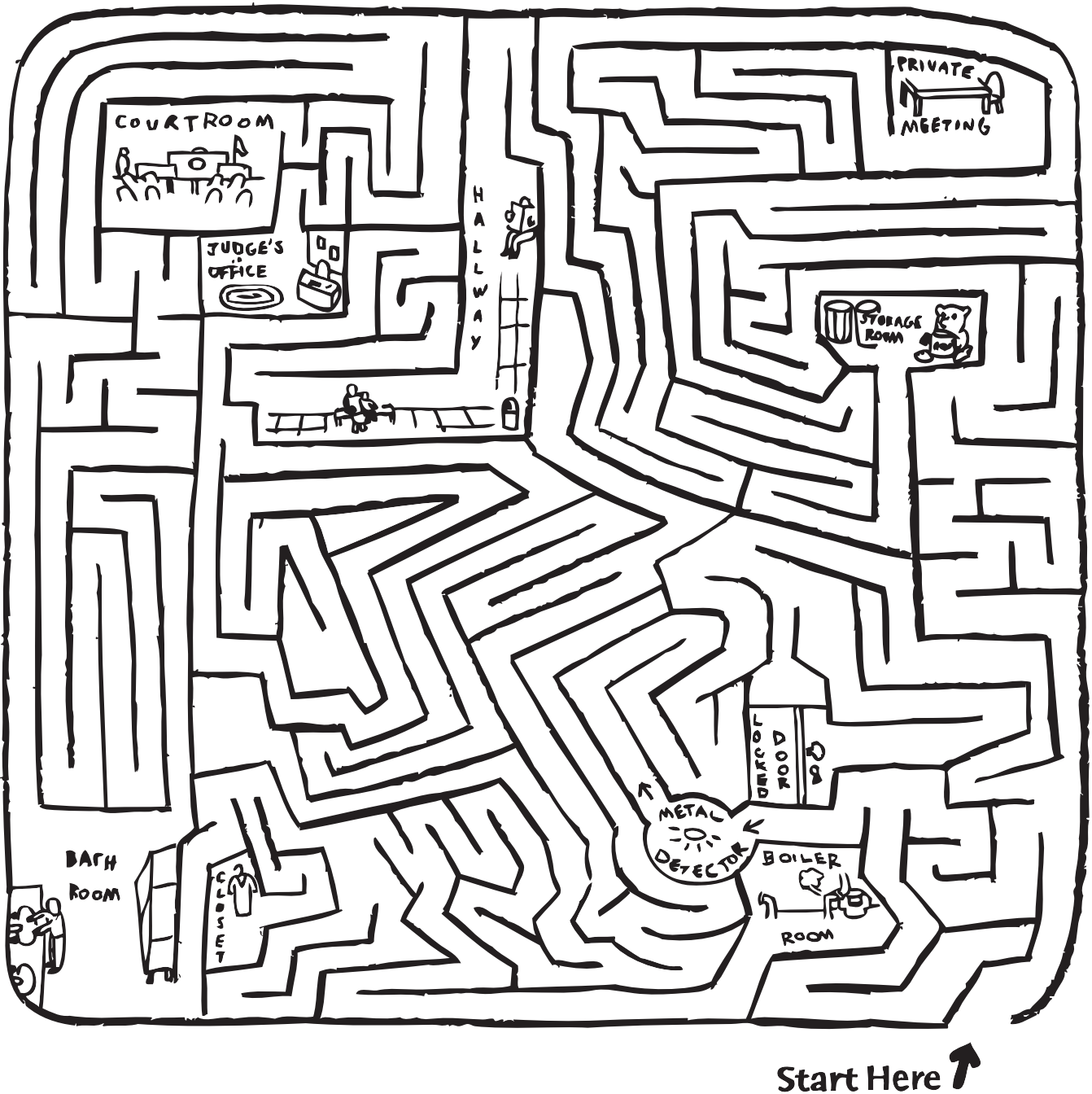
Sometimes a lawyer can ask you a question and you do not remember the answer. If that ever happens, all you have to do is say you don't remember. If you do not know the answer to a question, you can say, "I don't know." It is important to tell the truth and not to guess. Do not give an answer just because you think that is what the lawyer or the judge wants to hear. Lawyers sometimes ask questions in a funny way. If they do, you may not understand what they mean. That's okay, too. Just let the judge or the lawyer know that you do not understand the question, and the judge will explain, or clear up the issue.

Sometimes young people are scared to go to court. If you need to go to court, it's okay to feel scared. Some adults get scared about court, too. Just remember the judge is there to make sure everything is fair.

Young people usually go to court for many reasons. If problems are handled by the court, they are called cases. It could be a criminal case, where someone is charged with a crime. Or it could be a family law case if a mother and father need the judge to decide something. Sometimes it is a case where someone in the family hurt someone else in the family. These cases are hard for everyone.



Can you find your way to the  
Courtroom?



(The courthouse isn't really this confusing!)

# What is Juvenile Dependency?

A juvenile dependency case is when a young person comes to court because someone thinks that their parents might have hurt them or not taken care of them. Until a child grows up, he or she is dependent on adults and needs their protection. If parents can't or won't take care of the child properly, the juvenile court may help the family. The child may become "dependent" on the court for protection. When this happens, the child may live with relatives or with another family for a while. This temporary family is called a kinship or foster care family.

Usually, parents want to have their child live with them. The judge and helpers known as social workers will work with parents to make their home healthy and safe. When the home is safe, then the child may move back home with the parents. It is called reunification.

Sometimes parents can't make their home safe for the child. Then the judge and others may find another home where a young person can live safely until they become an adult. They make a permanent plan for a young person.

## What does the Social Worker do in Juvenile Dependency Court?

A social worker is a person who tries to protect young people and keep them safe. A social worker may help young people who are being hit or touched in inappropriate ways. This is called abuse. The social worker also may help children who don't have enough food, clothes, or other things that they need. This is called neglect. If the abuse or neglect is serious, the social worker may have to find another place for the young person to live. Then the family and the social worker may go to court so that the judge can decide how best to help the young person and the family.

## What does the Judge do in Juvenile Dependency Court?

You read about judges on page 6 of this book. Judges in dependency court do all the jobs judges usually do, except that there is no jury in dependency court. The judge is the one who 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 what the law is and decides what needs to happen to keep young people safe. You can talk to a judge at the hearing on your case or ask a question. 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.



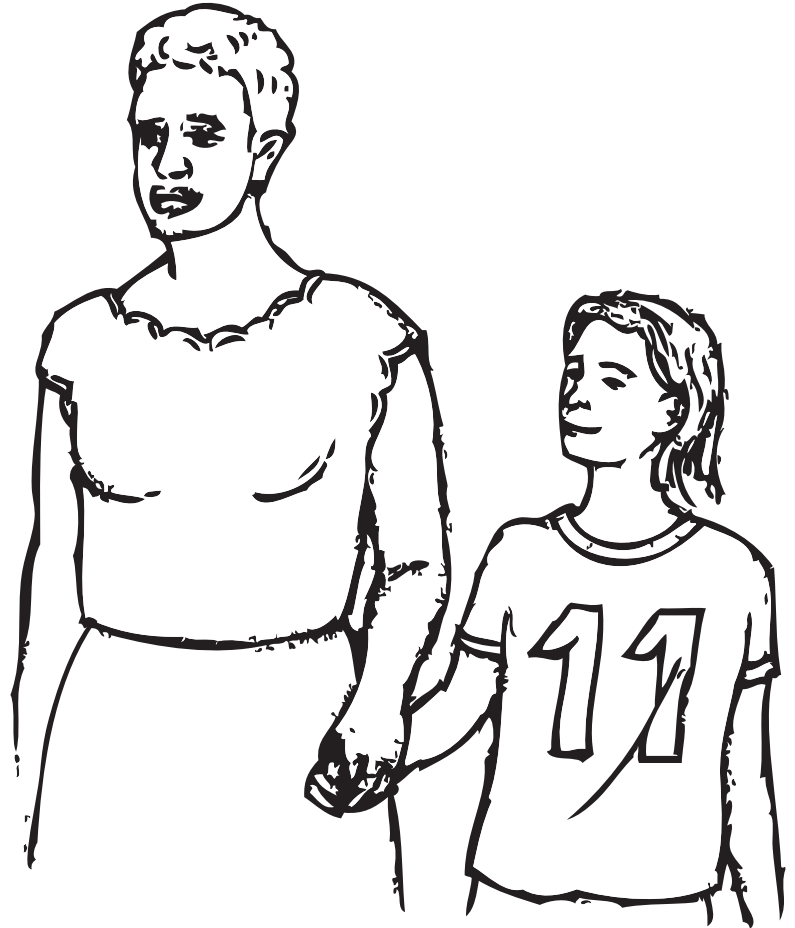
**Draw a picture of the place you live.**

## What do lawyers do in juvenile dependency court?

On page 7 of this book, you learned about the job of lawyers, who also are called **attorneys**. People involved in a case usually have a lawyer to speak for them in court. The people in the dependency case who might have a lawyer are the young person, mother, father, social worker, and sometimes others.

## What Does a CASA Do in Juvenile Dependency Court?

Sometimes the judge will assign a **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)** to help with a dependency case. CASAs are people who volunteer to help by talking to people, especially children, to get more information to help the judge make the best decision. CASAs spend a lot of time with the children they work with. They listen to the young people and tell their stories and needs to the court. The CASA also suggests to the court what can be done to make the young people safe and healthy.



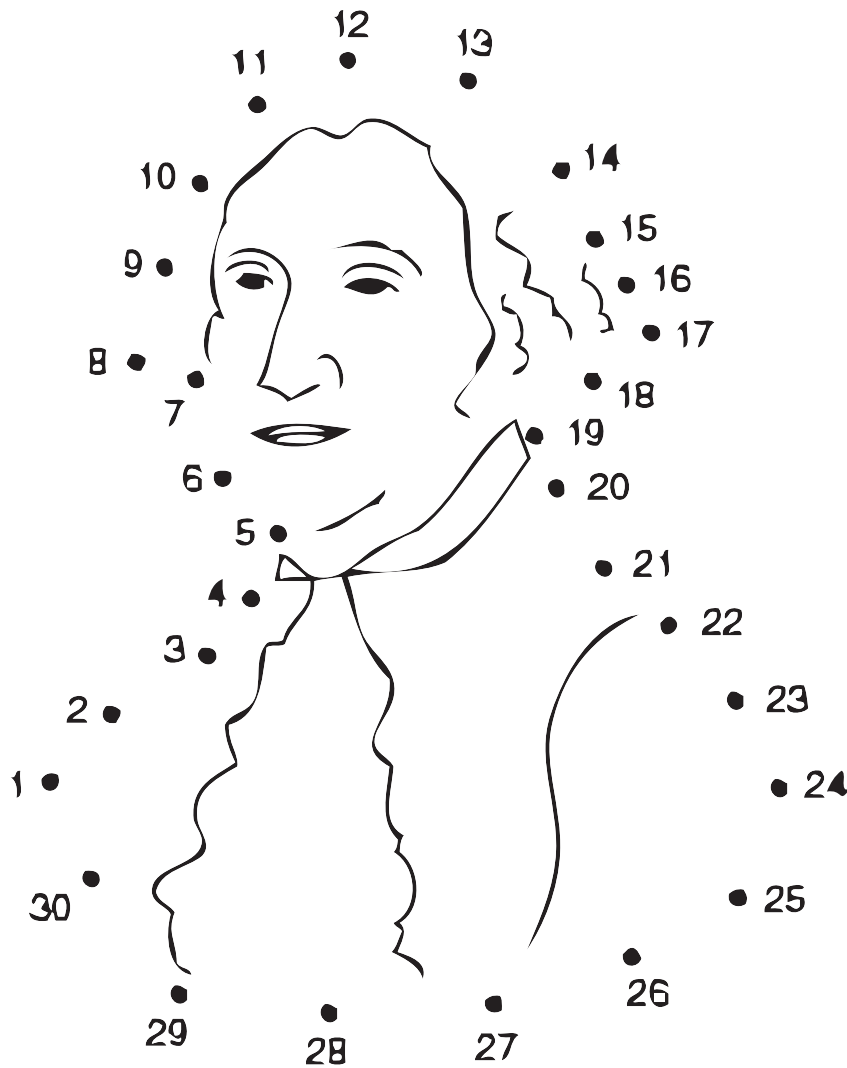
## What Does a Guardian Ad Litem do in Juvenile Dependency Court?

Sometimes the judge will assign a **Guardian ad Litem (GAL)** to help with a dependency case. A Guardian ad Litem is hired to help with the case. The GAL does the same things that the CASA volunteer does. The GAL talks to people involved in the case and spends a lot of time with the children involved. The GAL also tells the young person's story in court and makes suggestions to the court about what can be done to make the young person safe and healthy. In Washington State, some county courts use CASA volunteers and some use GALs. Both types of people are very helpful to the court and are present to help make sure the young people in the case are safe and well cared for.

# What Do Children Do in Juvenile Dependency Court?

This book tells about witnesses on pages 8 and 12. A child might be a witness. If you are a witness, the lawyers and sometimes the judge will ask you questions. Of course, it is very important to tell the truth when you answer questions in court. You even make a special promise, called an oath, to tell the truth before you answer questions. It is also important to answer just the questions that you understand. If you don't understand a question, it is OK to say so and have the question explained to you.

If you are afraid to answer questions in the courtroom, be sure to tell the lawyer, if you have one, or the judge. They will do everything they can to make you feel more comfortable. They may let you answer questions in the judge's office or have your *CASA* or *GAL* sit with you in court.

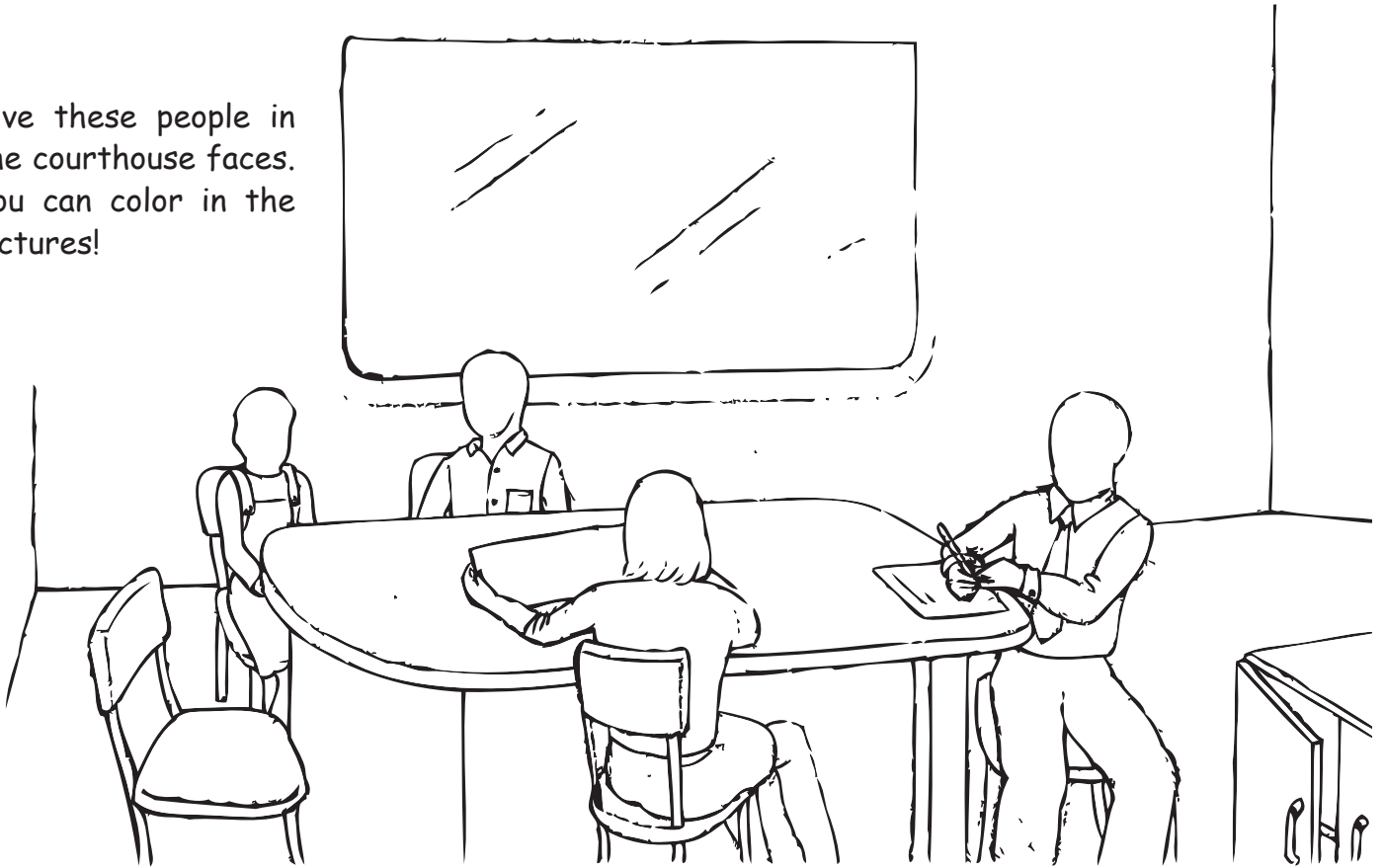


Connect the dots to draw the picture on the Washington state flag.

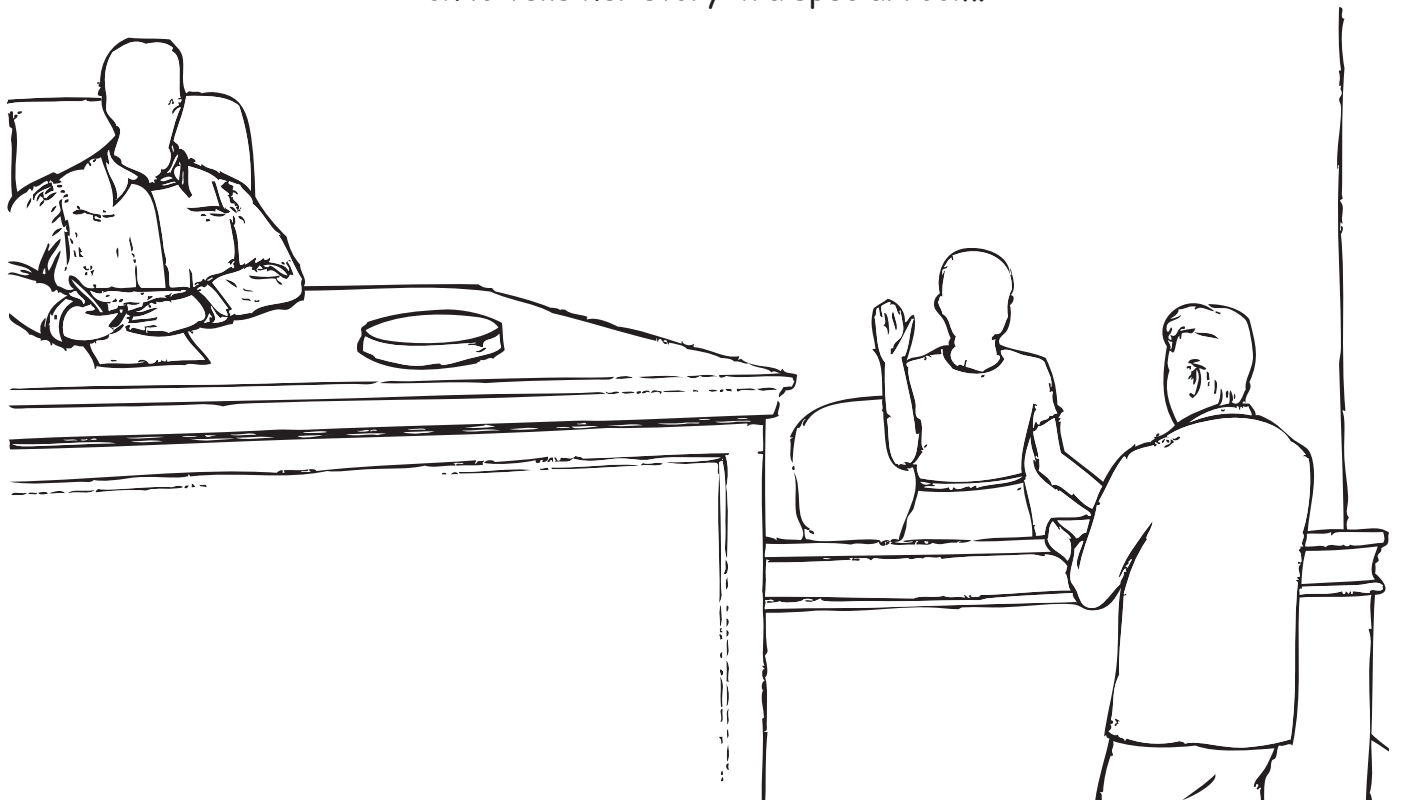
*Courtesy US Printing Office*

# Courthouse Rooms to Decorate!

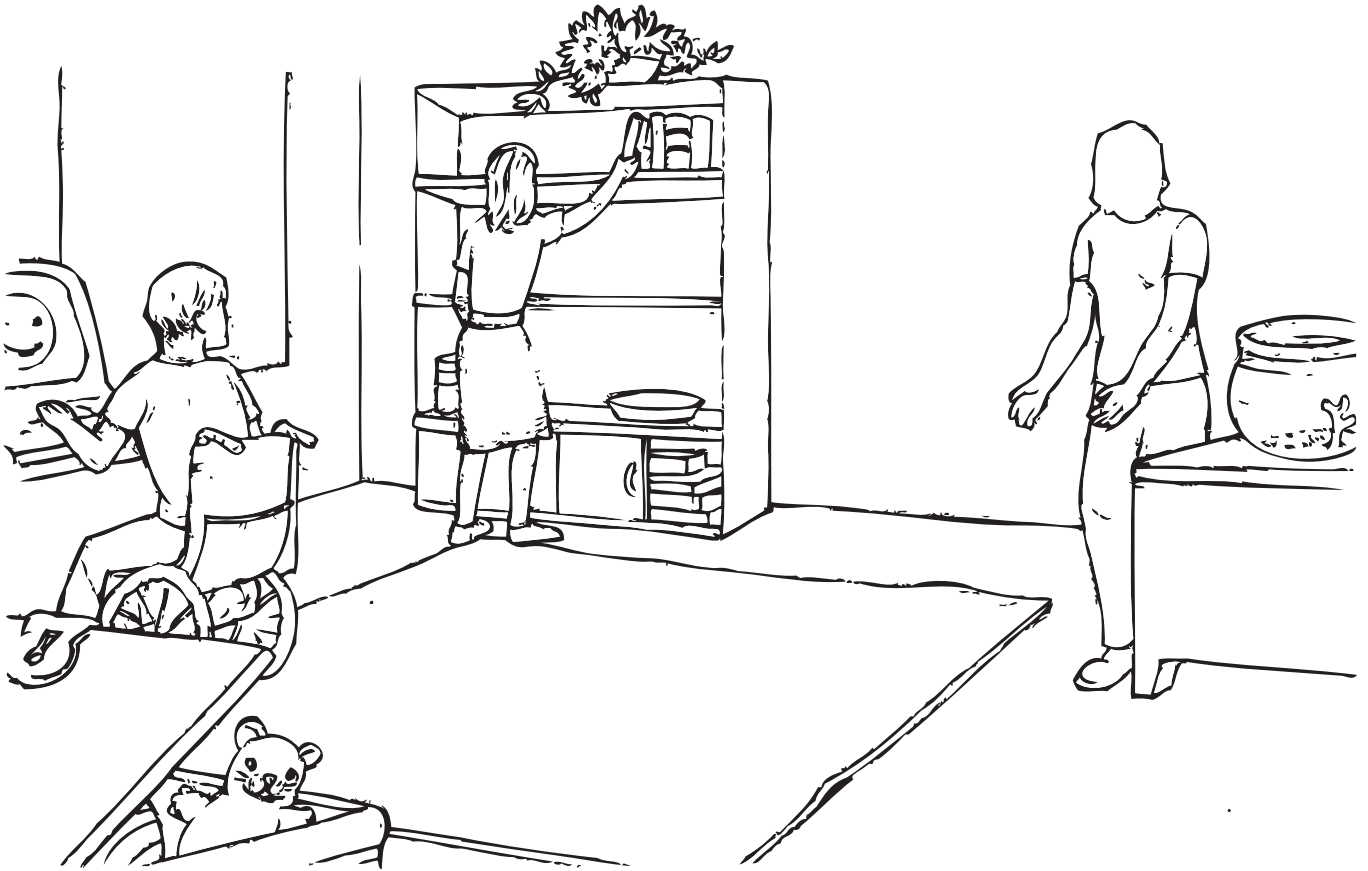
Give these people in the courthouse faces. You can color in the pictures!



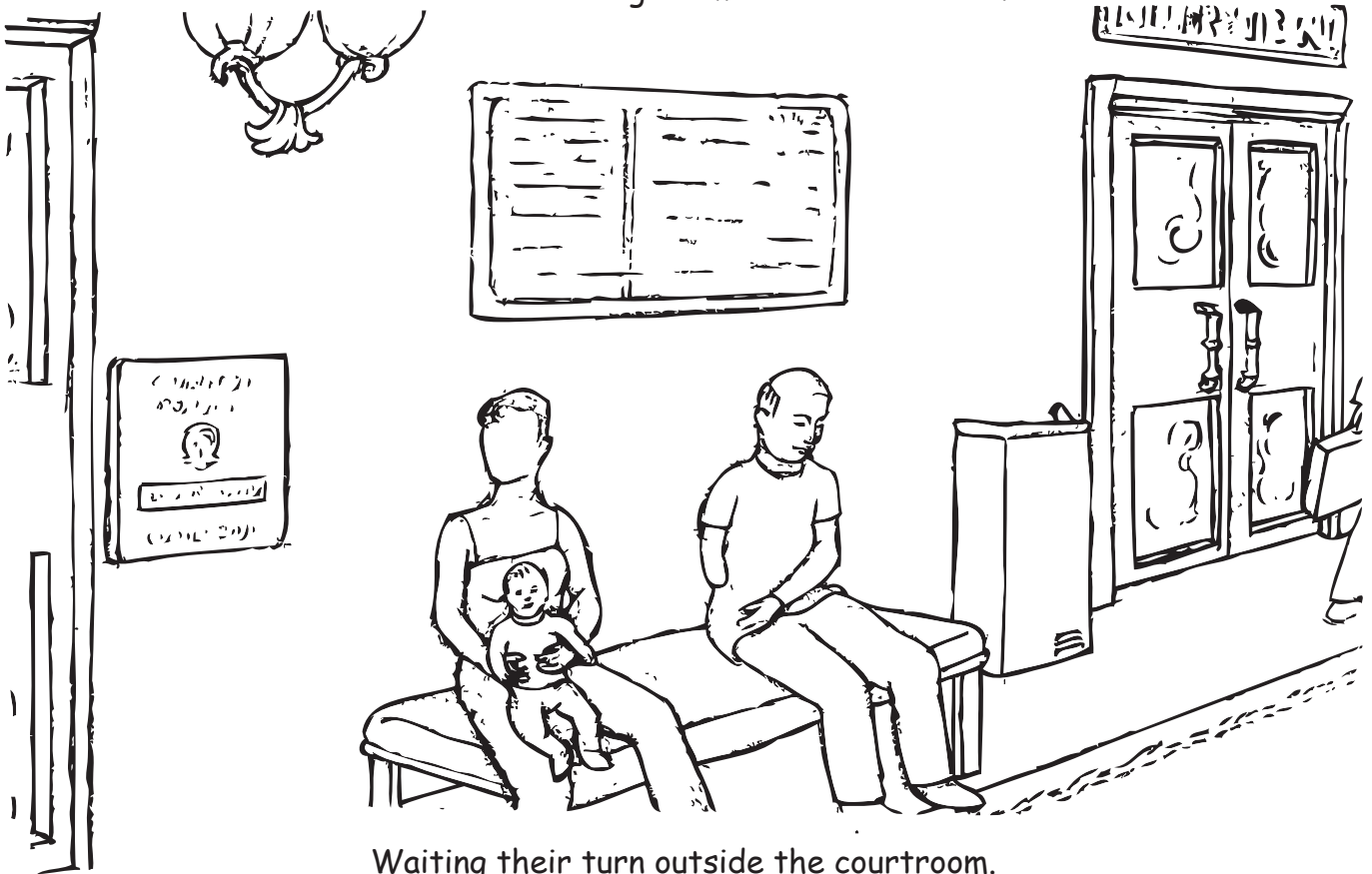
A child tells her story in a special room.



In the courtroom, the judge listens to a witness being sworn in.



A children's waiting room in the courthouse.



Waiting their turn outside the courtroom.

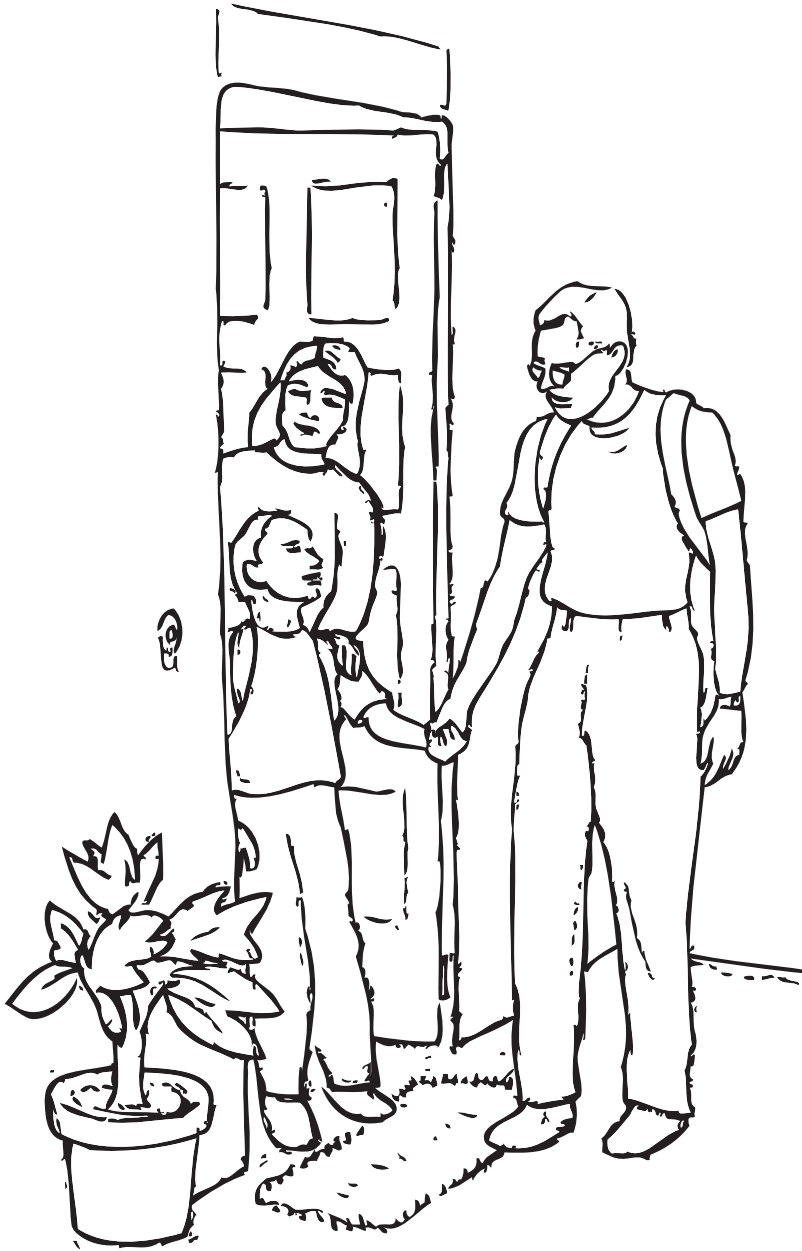
# Family Law Court

When a mother and father decide they aren't going to live together anymore, they may decide to separate and live in different homes. If they've been married and don't want to live together or be married anymore, they can either get a legal separation or a divorce. Divorce is also called dissolution. To get a divorce, married people go to court. In court, the judge will help the parents plan for how they will take care of their children. A judge also will decide how they will share the things they owned while living together.

Most of the time, children don't have to go to court even if their parents have a case there, but sometimes they do. If you need to go to court, remember, it is not because you have done something wrong. Courts are different than other places you may have been, but you don't have to be afraid. Lots of children have parents who go to family court. If you're wondering about this or are a little scared, it helps to talk to someone about your feelings about going to court.

If your parents aren't living together, Family Court helps decide how you can spend time with your parents. A plan about where and when you live with your parents is called a parenting plan. If you live mostly with one parent, you usually will get to spend time with the other parent. The plan for how often you spend time with your other parent is part of the parenting plan.





If your parents need help deciding about where and how you will spend time with your parents, they can see a court mediator. The mediator is a person who listens to your mother's and your father's ideas about how best to take care of you. The mediator helps them work out a plan that will be best for you. Sometimes mediators also want to meet the children. If your parents' mediator wants to talk to you, he or she probably will ask you questions about how things are going for you at home, at school, and with your friends. The mediator will not ask you to choose which parent you want to live with or to say if you like one of your parents more than the other.

If your mother and father cannot agree on a parenting plan even after the mediation, the judge will have to decide on a parenting plan for the children. Sometimes the court will ask a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or Guardian ad Litem (GAL) to help provide information about the best possible parenting plan. The CASA or GAL are adults who may talk to you, your parents, and sometimes other people as well to get information that will help the judge

decide the best place for you to live. The CASA or GAL will give a report to the judge. The judge will consider the report and use it to help make a decision on the parenting plan.

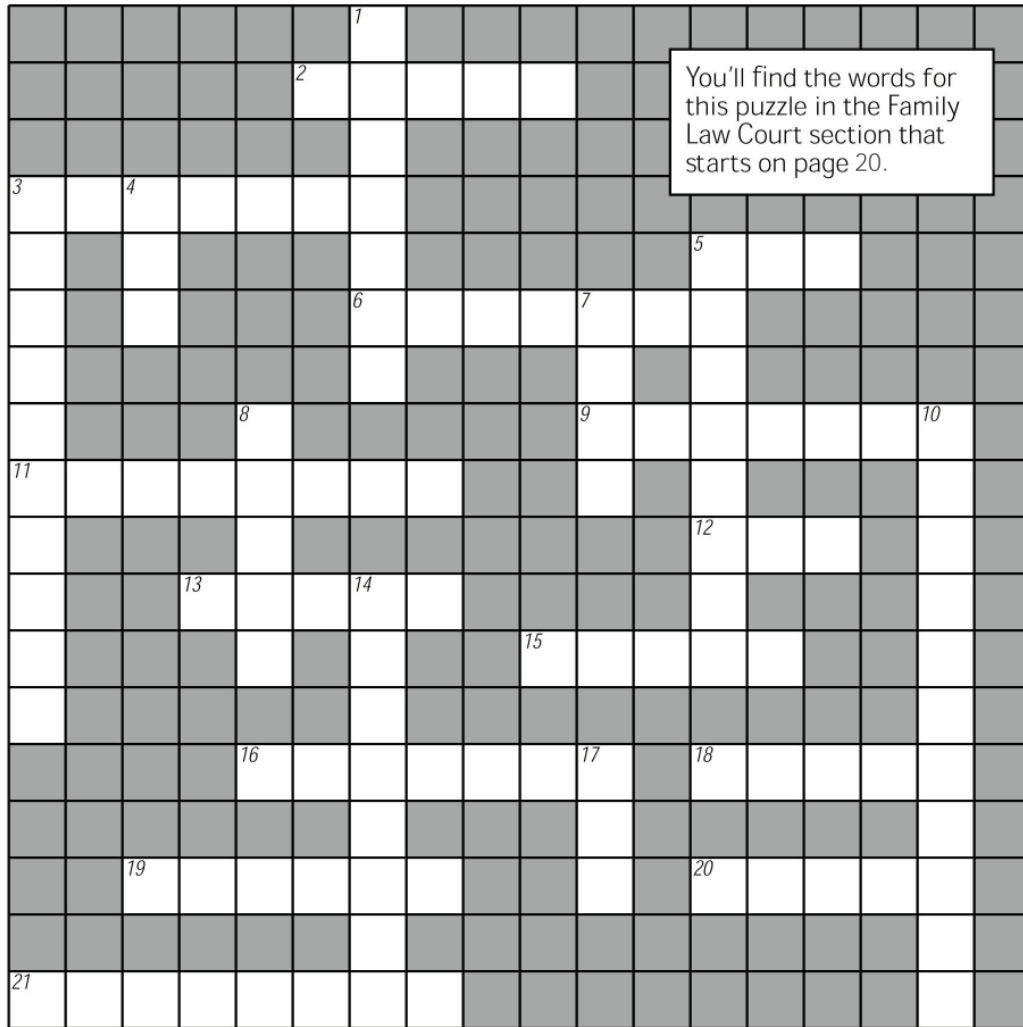
The judge and the parents decide how much money they need to take care of you after they separate. This money is called child support.



Write a story about a person going to family court.  
Maybe you know someone who went to family court to fix a problem.



# Crossword Puzzle



## Across

- The person who makes decisions when parents cannot agree is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Money one parent pays the other to help take care of children is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- A short name for mother is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Getting unmarried is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- Person for the court who says, "All rise."
- Another name for a lawyer is an \_\_\_\_\_.
- A judge's order to protect somebody is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- The judge sits on the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The person who helps the judge stay organized is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- A person who tells what they know or saw to the judge is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- The place where the judge works is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Someone you can talk to is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Spending time with a parent you don't live with is

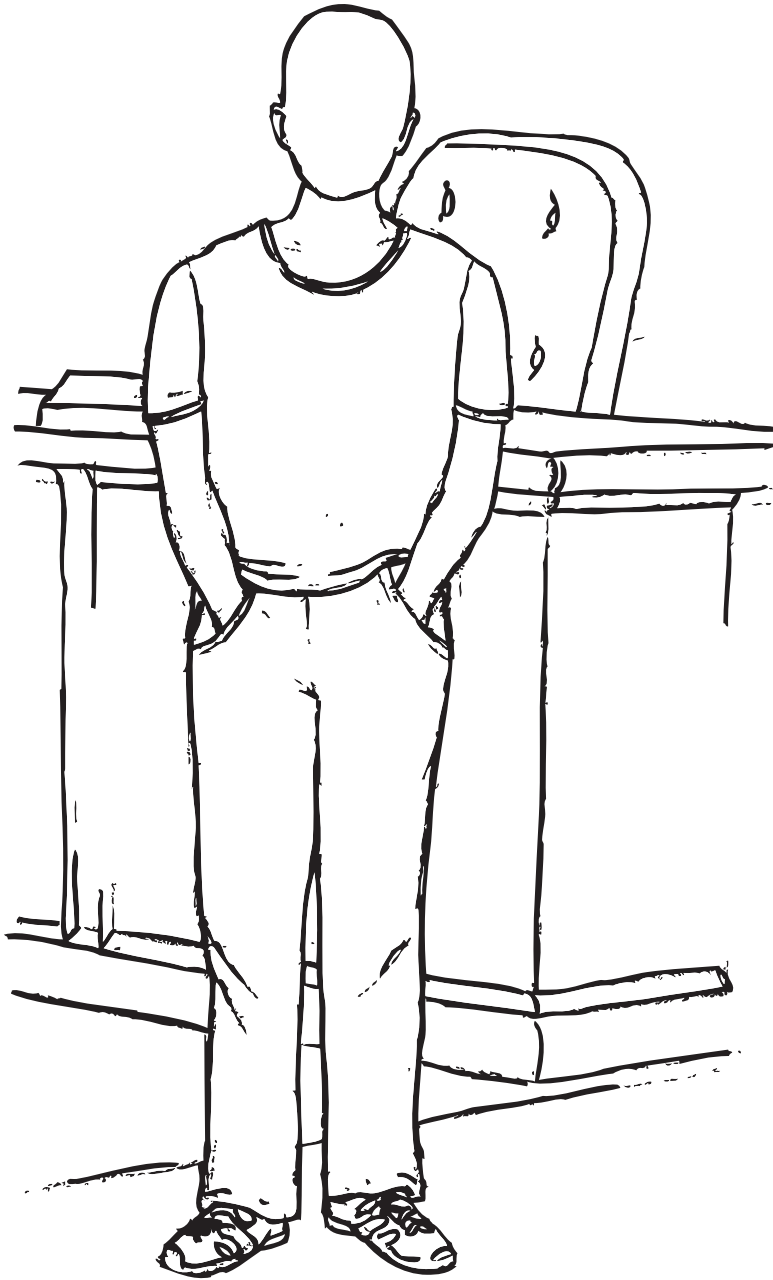
called a \_\_\_\_\_.

- The person who types up everything that is said is a court \_\_\_\_\_.

## Down

- The plan for where a child lives is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- Parents who decide to live in different places are having a \_\_\_\_\_.
- A nickname for dad is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The person who helps parents decide together where children will live is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The clothing that the judge wears is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- What the judge tells you to do is called an \_\_\_\_\_.
- The person who helps the parent with child support is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- If a case can't be heard that day, then the judge will \_\_\_\_\_ it.
- A short name for a sister is \_\_\_\_\_.

# Special Court Words . . .



## **Paternity**

Sometimes if your parents were not married, a judge may have to decide who your parents are. If it is not certain who your father is and there is no father's name on your birth certificate, they may go to court to have a judge decide who is the legal father. This decision is called paternity or parentage.

## **Domestic Violence**

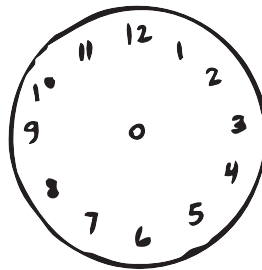
Some parents hurt each other or their children. This is called domestic violence. If one parent hurts or really scares the other parent, that other parent can ask the judge for help. The judge can make a court order that tells the parent who is hurting or scaring the family to get help or to stay away and not hurt the family anymore. This kind of court order can be called a domestic violence protection order, a restraining order, or sometimes a TRO, for temporary restraining order.

## **Custody Evaluation**

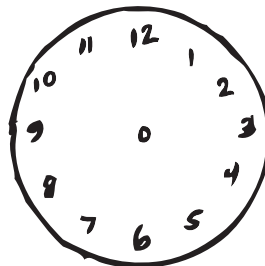
If your parents and the mediator can't work out a parenting plan, the judge may tell your parents to get a parenting plan evaluation. The evaluator will spend some time getting to know both you and your parents. After that, the evaluator will think about what would be the best way for you to spend time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

# Draw the hands on the clocks for...

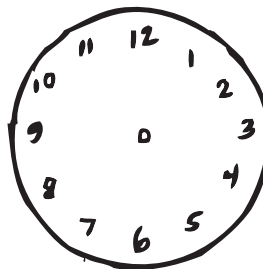
What time you woke up.



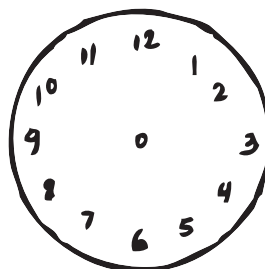
What time you left your house.



What time you got to court.



What time it is now.



# Guardianships

Sometimes a mother or father cannot take care of their children. This can happen if the parents have drug or alcohol problems, are in jail, are very sick or have died. 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 selects someone else to care for children instead of their mother and father, that person is called a guardian. This plan is called a guardianship.

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

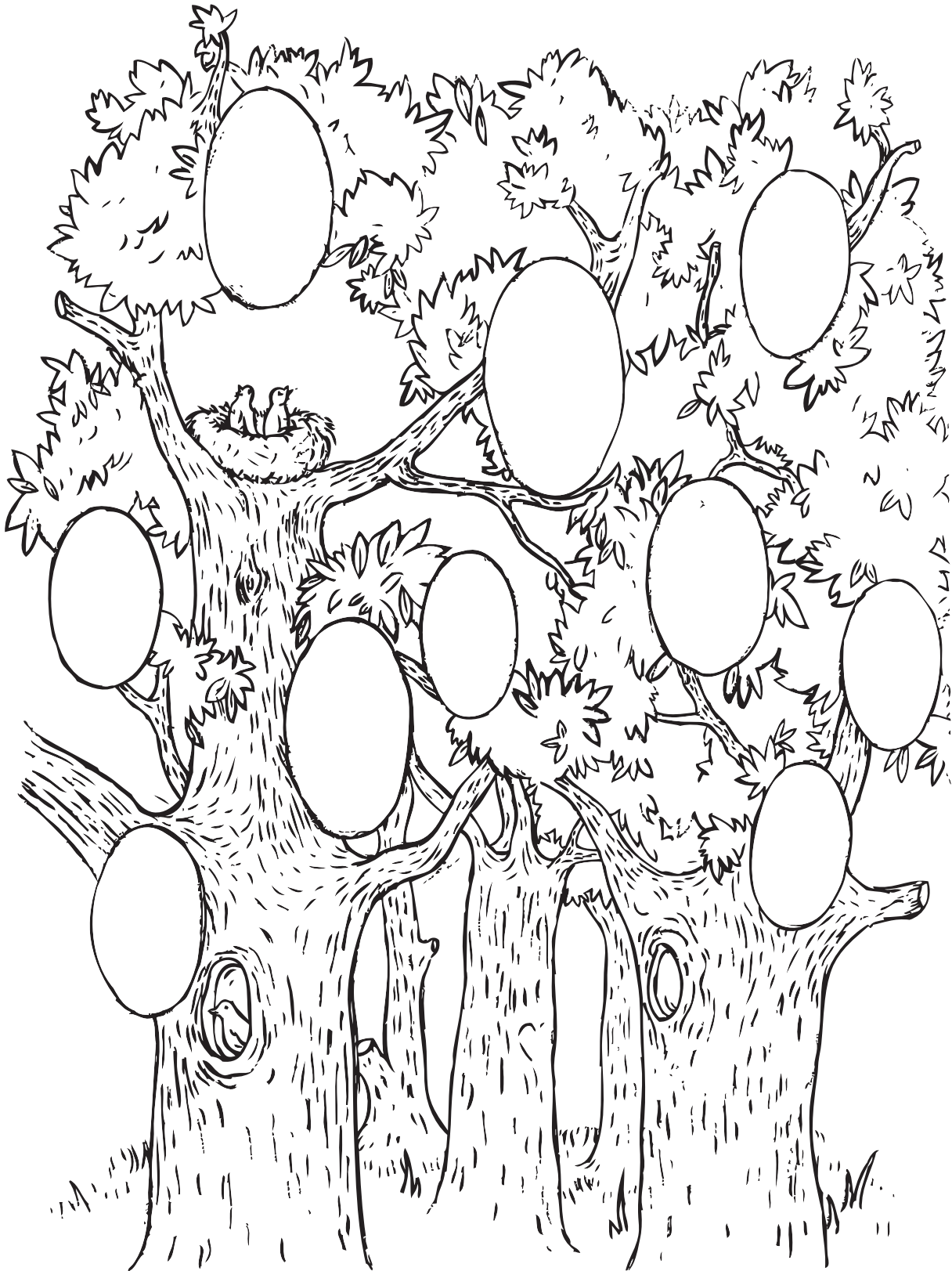
to them when they want to talk and helps them with their homework and other things if they need help.

The fact that parents cannot take care of their family does not mean that they do not love you. If they are able, the mother or father may visit or phone the children at the guardian's home or other allowed places. If the parents get better, the judge may allow the parents to take care of the children again.

The judge gets information from the guardian to make sure the guardian is doing a good job. The parents, the children, and the guardian may see the judge to talk about any help the children need.



Who are the people you are  
connected to?



Draw or write their names.

# 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 social worker will talk with the child. The social worker also meets the potential new parents and visits the new home. After adoption a 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 can be adopted for many different reasons. Sometimes the **birth-parents** are not able to raise the child. For example, the parents may be too young. They may not be able to take care of the child so the child can 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. **Foster parents**, the birth-parents' family, or anyone else who wants to include a child in their family can adopt children.

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 be adopted from other states or countries.





Write about someone you know who is adopted. You can write about yourself if you are adopted, or you can make up a story.

# What Is Emancipation?

Emancipation ends the legal authority that a parent has over a child who is under 18. 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 many new responsibilities.

## When can a Judge emancipate you?

You have to be at least 16 and be able to live away from home. If you want to live on your own, your parents have to agree with your decision. They also could decide not to argue against you in court. You have to have a legal income that pays for food, clothes, and rent. The judge has to decide that emancipation is best for you.

## After You Are Emancipated, Which of These Are Rights? Which Are Responsibilities?

Right - the power to have or do something (if you want) that is guaranteed by law.

Responsibility - an obligation or something you must do.

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 the 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 have insurance. \_\_\_\_\_
8. You must pay your doctor bills if you get sick. \_\_\_\_\_

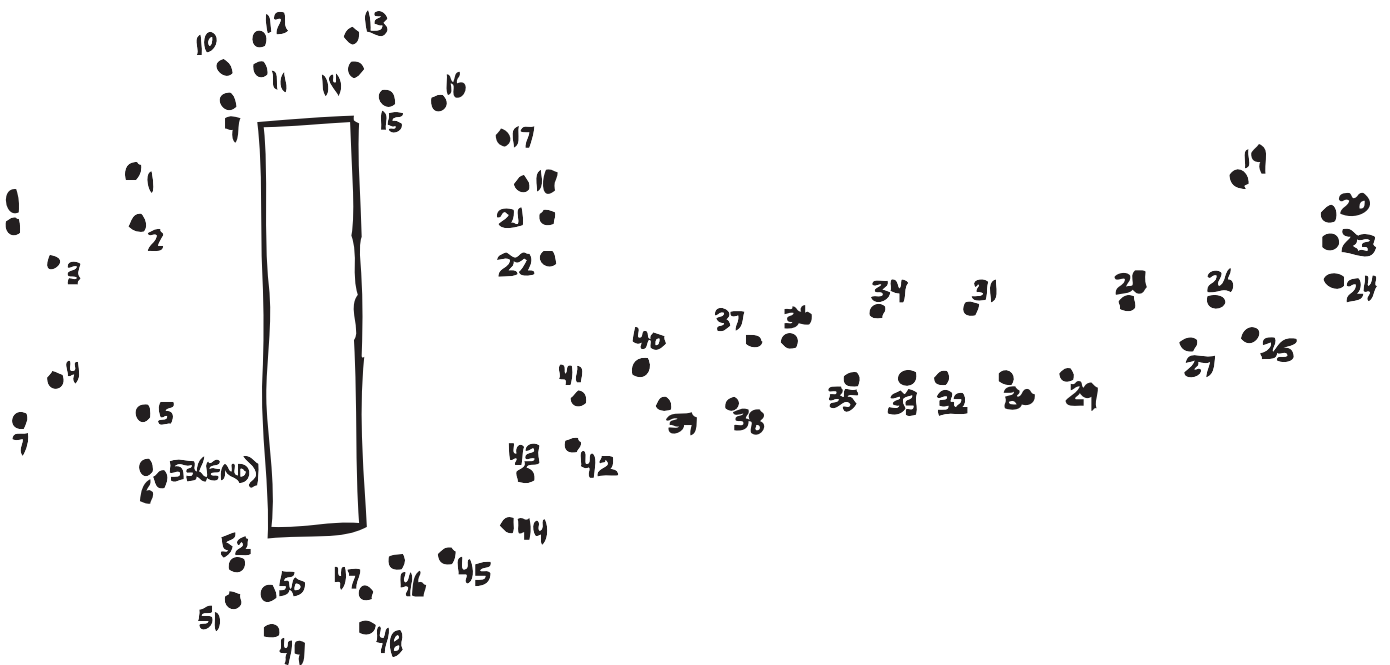
*Answers on Page 37*



# Emancipation Is Not the Same as Being 18

If you are emancipated, is the answer to these questions YES or NO?  
Circle the right answer.

1. Do you still have to attend school until you are 18? YES NO
2. Can you work as many hours as an 18-year-old? YES NO
3. Can you get married without your parent's consent? YES NO
4. If you break a law, will you have to go to adult criminal court? YES NO
5. Can you vote? YES NO



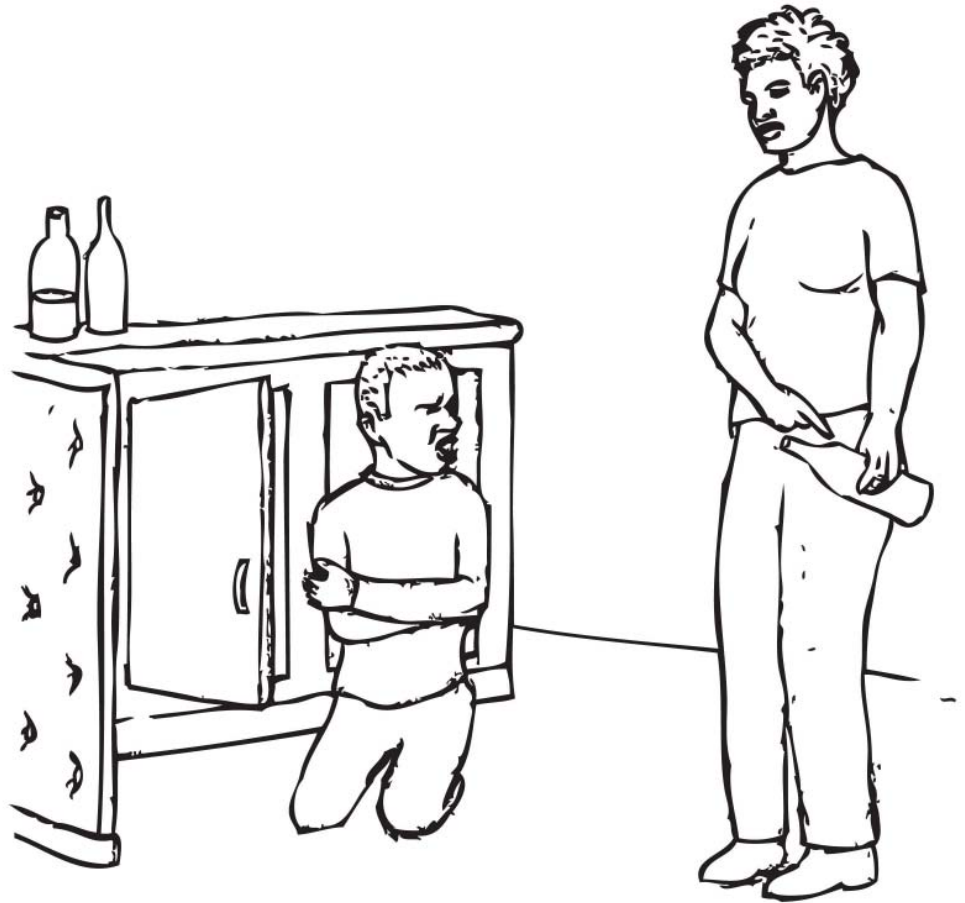
# Special Laws For Youth

Sometimes children do things that would be OK for an adult to do but not for a child. Although an adult may drive a car, stay out all night or drink alcohol, a child may not. A child may not drive until age 16, may not stay out past curfew until age 18, and may not drink alcohol until age 21. If you are a young person and you do these things, they are called **status offenses**. This means that you are breaking the law because of your age.

In Washington, attendance at school is also mandatory if you are enrolled in a public school. Unexcused absences are called truancy and will require attendance workshops or court action, depending on the number of unexcused absences.

Young people do things that are status offenses for many reasons. Some young people have problems. They can feel sad, alone, or angry. They may feel so angry and alone that they disobey their parents, don't go to school, or even run away from home. But because of their age, it is against the law for young people to do these things. Young people can get help with these feelings. They can see a school counselor, a doctor, 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 you are arrested and held by the police you can call your parents, a lawyer, or someone else to help you.



# Find-a-Word

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

The words may be  
HORIZONTAL

V  
E  
R  
T  
I  
C  
A  
L

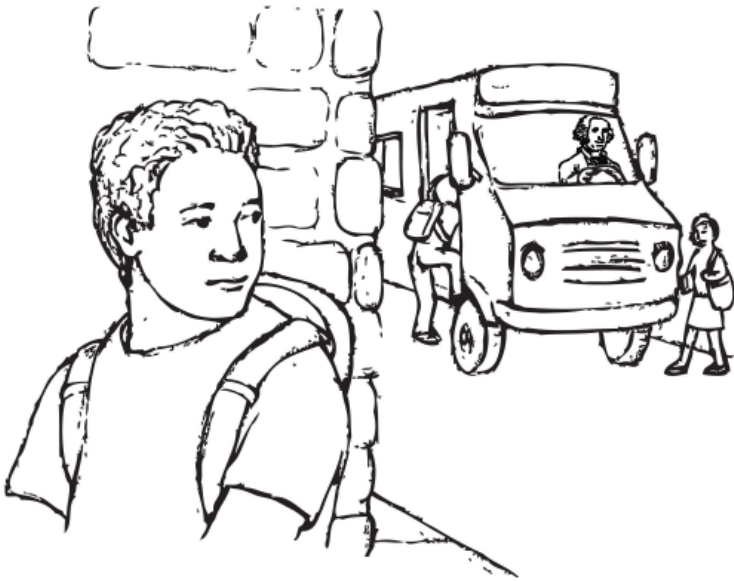
D  
I  
A  
G  
O  
N  
A  
L

or  
SDRAWKCB

Circle these words when you find them

- |                                 |                               |                   |                |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| ALCOHOL                         | DISOBEY PARENTS               | POLICE            | SPEEDING       |
| ASSAULT                         | DUI (driving under influence) | PROBATION OFFICER | STATUS OFFENSE |
| BUI (bicycling under influence) | GRAFFITI                      | PROBLEMS          | TEACHER        |
| COUNSELING                      | JUDGE                         | RESTITUTION       | TRUANCY        |
| COURT                           | JUVENILE HALL                 | SKIP SCHOOL       | URINE TEST     |
| CURFEW                          | LAWYER                        | SMOKING           |                |

# What if I Break the Law?



Young people can get into trouble if they disobey the law. If a police officer believes that you have broken the law, the officer can arrest you. The officer will ask you questions and decide if you can go home or if you have to go to a detention center. In detention, all of the doors are locked. Usually, youth have to stay there until a judge says they can leave. If the court decides you broke the law, you may be sent to detention.

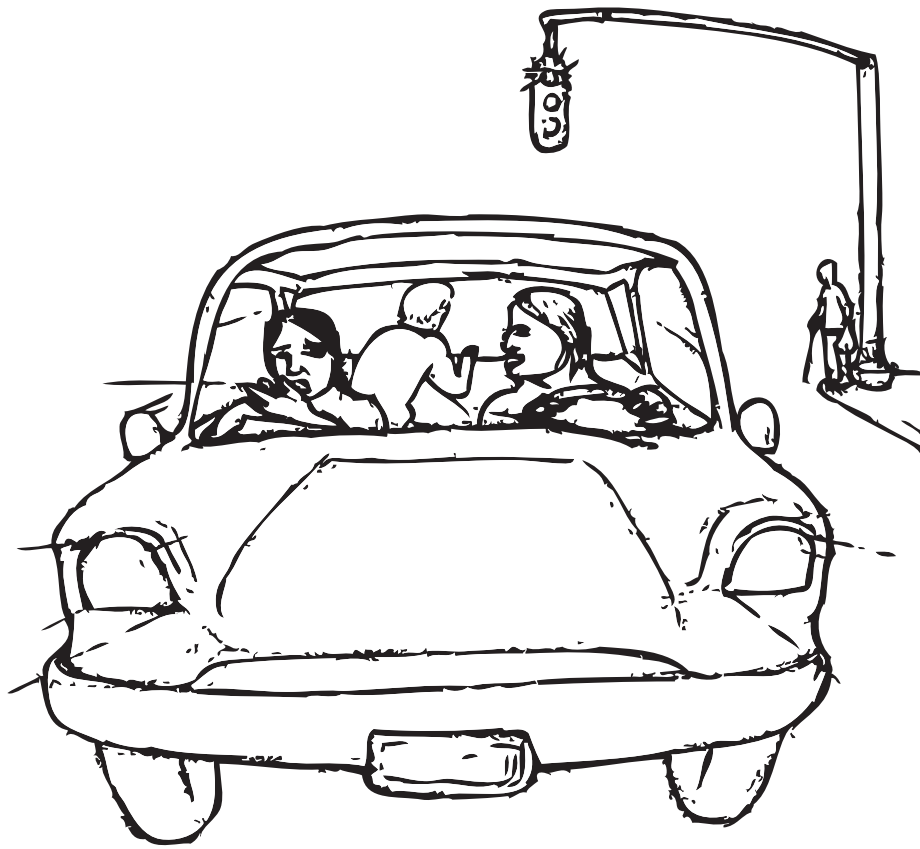
Even if you get to go home, later you may have to talk to a probation officer about

what happened. The prosecutor may decide that you have to defend your case in juvenile court.

If you ever get arrested, the first thing to remember is to get some **HELP!** You need to talk to a lawyer about what happened. You have the right to call a lawyer right away if you are locked up. You don't have to answer any questions until you have talked with your lawyer. If you can't afford a lawyer, a public defender who is a lawyer will be appointed for you. The public defender defends you and is paid for by the county. Your lawyer will help you talk to the police and everyone else who wants to ask you questions.

There are different kinds of **crimes**. Some crimes are much more serious than other crimes. Felony crimes are more serious than misdemeanor crimes.



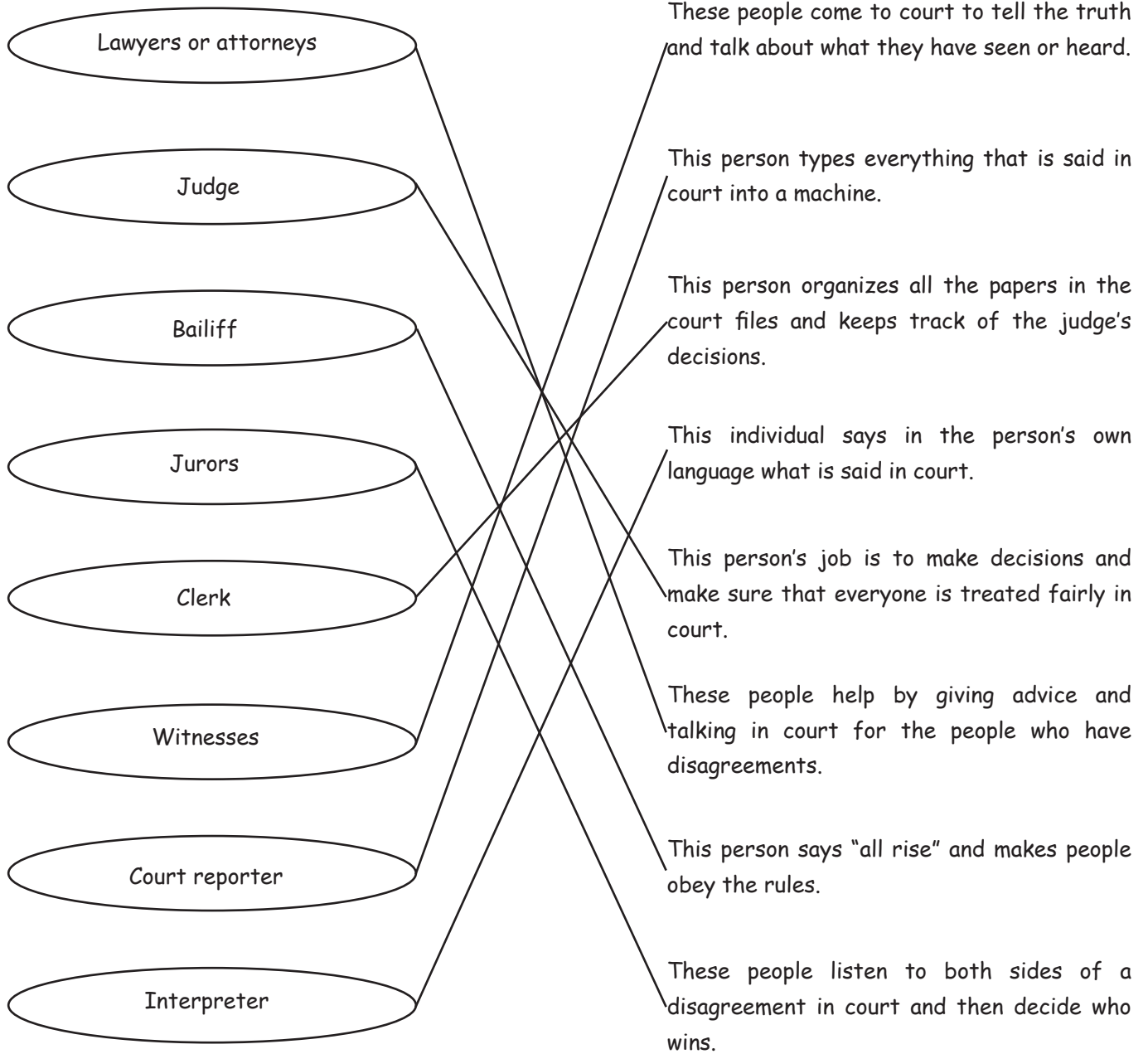


Some crimes can be either a **misdemeanor** or a **felony**, depending how bad the behavior was. A fist fight is one example. If you get into a fist fight you could be charged with a misdemeanor. If you hurt someone badly in a fist fight, you could be charged with a felony.

If you have to go to court to defend your case, don't be afraid to talk to your lawyer. The lawyer is there to help you. There may be a trial where the judge hears both sides of the story and then decides if you are guilty. If the judge finds you guilty, and the crime is not very serious, you may be put on probation. If the judge finds that you are guilty and the crime is serious, you may be put in juvenile detention and locked up. On probation you do what the judge and probation officer say, but you are not locked up. If you are locked up, your family usually can visit you. You and your family may even go to counseling together to learn how to get along with each other. No matter what, even if you do get into trouble, remember it's never too late to change yourself for the better. Don't ever give up on yourself!

# Answer Key

## Who are the people in Court? (page 9)

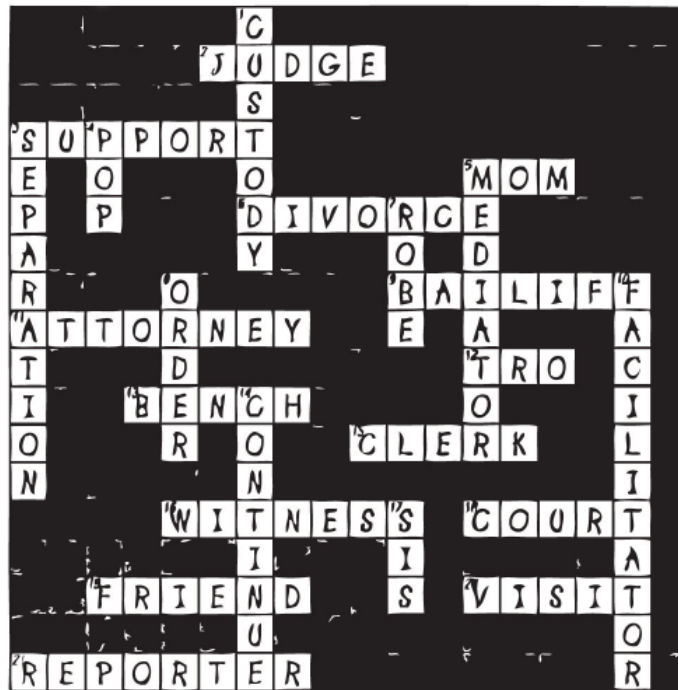


## What's wrong with this picture? (pages 10-11)

Looking at the picture from left to right, top to bottom; fiery torch on the wall, lawyer wearing shorts in court, judge holding balloon, no papers or files on the judge's desk, no flag pole, witness chewing gum and blowing a bubble, court reporter playing video game, chess set on desk, clerk

asleep, no papers or files on clerk's desk, lawyer with feet on table, lawyer not wearing shoes, food on lawyer's table, picket fence in courtroom, people in audience are eating, reading a newspaper, talking during the proceeding, knitting, and not wearing shoes!

## Family Court Crossword Puzzle (page 23)



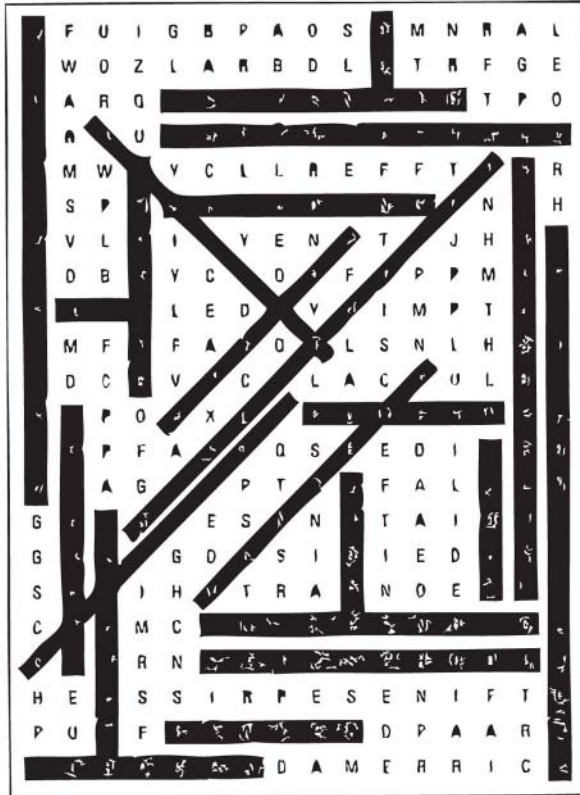
## Emancipation rights and Responsibilities (page 31)

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Right          | 5. Right          |
| 2. Right          | 6. Right          |
| 3. Responsibility | 7. Right          |
| 4. Right          | 8. Responsibility |

## Emancipation is not the same as being 18 (page 31)

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| 1. Yes | 4. No |
| 2. Yes | 5. No |
| 3. No  | 6. No |

# Find-a-Word (page 33)



- ALCOHOL
- ASSAULT
- BUI (bicycling under influence)
- COUNSELING
- COURT
- CURFEW
- DISOBEY PARENTS
- DUI (driving under influence)
- GRAFFITI
- JUDGE
- JUVENILE HALL
- LAWYER
- POLICE
- PROBATION OFFICER
- PROBLEMS
- RESTITUTION
- SKIP SCHOOL
- SMOKING
- SPEEDING
- STATUS OFFENSE
- TEACHER
- TRUANCY
- URINE TEST



# Glossary of Terms

**Abuse:** To injure someone, either with physical force or by verbally attacking.

**Adoption:** To take a child into one's family legally and raise a child as one's own.

**Attorney:** A lawyer; one who is licensed to act as a representative for another in a case.

**Birth-parents:** Parents who gave birth to a child; direct relatives.

**Bailiff:** A bailiff's main job is to maintain order in the courtroom and to help court proceedings go smoothly.

**Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA):** A person appointed by the judge to help with a dependency case. CASA's are people who volunteer to help by talking to people, especially children, to get more information to help the judge make the best decision.

**Case:** A proceeding, action, cause, lawsuit or controversy started in the court system by filing a complaint, petition, indictment or information.

**Child support:** Financial support paid by one parent to another for the care of their child following a divorce.

**Court Clerk:** An officer of a court whose main duty is to maintain court records, preserve evidence presented during a trial, and take notes.

**Court Reporter:** A person who records and transcribes the verbatim testimony and all other oral statements made during court sessions.

**Crime:** An act committed in violation of law forbidding it and for which punishment is imposed.

**Dissolution:** Legal ending of a marriage. Also called a "divorce."

**Divorce:** Legal ending of a marriage.

**Felony:** A crime considered more serious than a misdemeanor and punishable by a stronger

sentence.

**Foster care family:** Certified, stand-in "parent(s)" who care for minor children or young people who have been removed from their birth parents or other custodial adults by state authority.

**Guardian Ad Litem (GAL):** A person appointed by the court to manage the interests of a child in a court case.

**Judge:** An elected or appointed public official with authority to hear and decide cases in a court of law.

**Juvenile dependency:** When a court looks after children who have been removed from their parents because of abuse or neglect. Parents are usually given some time to work on programs and classes to help them provide a safer home for their children. During this time, children are considered "dependents" of the court and it is the dependency court judge's responsibility to make sure each child's needs are being met.

**Lawyer:** An attorney; One who is licensed to act as a representative for another in a case.

**Legal separation:** A court order which allows a married couple to live apart, without a divorce, but with the rights and obligations of a divorced couple.

**Mediator:** A person who works with two opposing sides to reach a mutually acceptable decision, or outcome.

**Misdemeanor:** An offense in violation of law less serious than a felony, such as theft, disorderly conduct, trespassing or vandalism.

**Oath:** A written or oral pledge by a person to keep a promise or speak the truth.

**Order:** A decision made by a judge.

**Parenting plan:** A plan that states which parent will be responsible for the children and decision-making, and how disputes will be decided between parents.

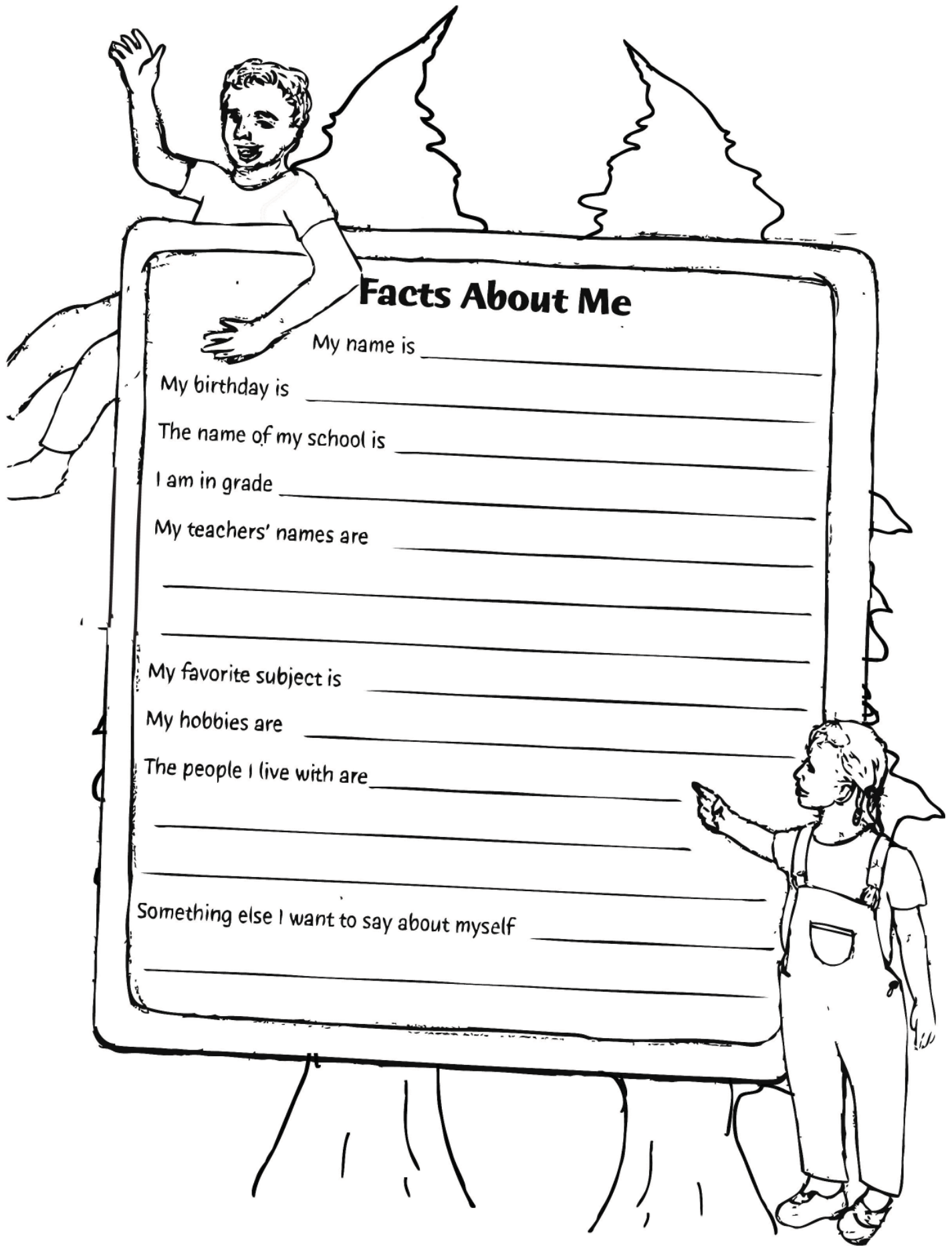
**Social worker:** A person trained to talk with people and their families about emotional or physical needs, and to find them support services.

**Status Offense:** An action that is prohibited only to a certain class of people, and most often

applied to offenses only committed by minors. Status offenses may include underage consumption of alcohol, tobacco smoking, truancy, and running away from home.

**Reunification:** When a child is allowed to live with his or her parent (s), following a separation by the court.

**Witnesses:** A person who testifies under oath before a court, regarding what he or she has seen, heard or otherwise observed.



## Facts About Me

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My birthday is \_\_\_\_\_

The name of my school is \_\_\_\_\_

I am in grade \_\_\_\_\_

My teachers' names are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite subject is \_\_\_\_\_

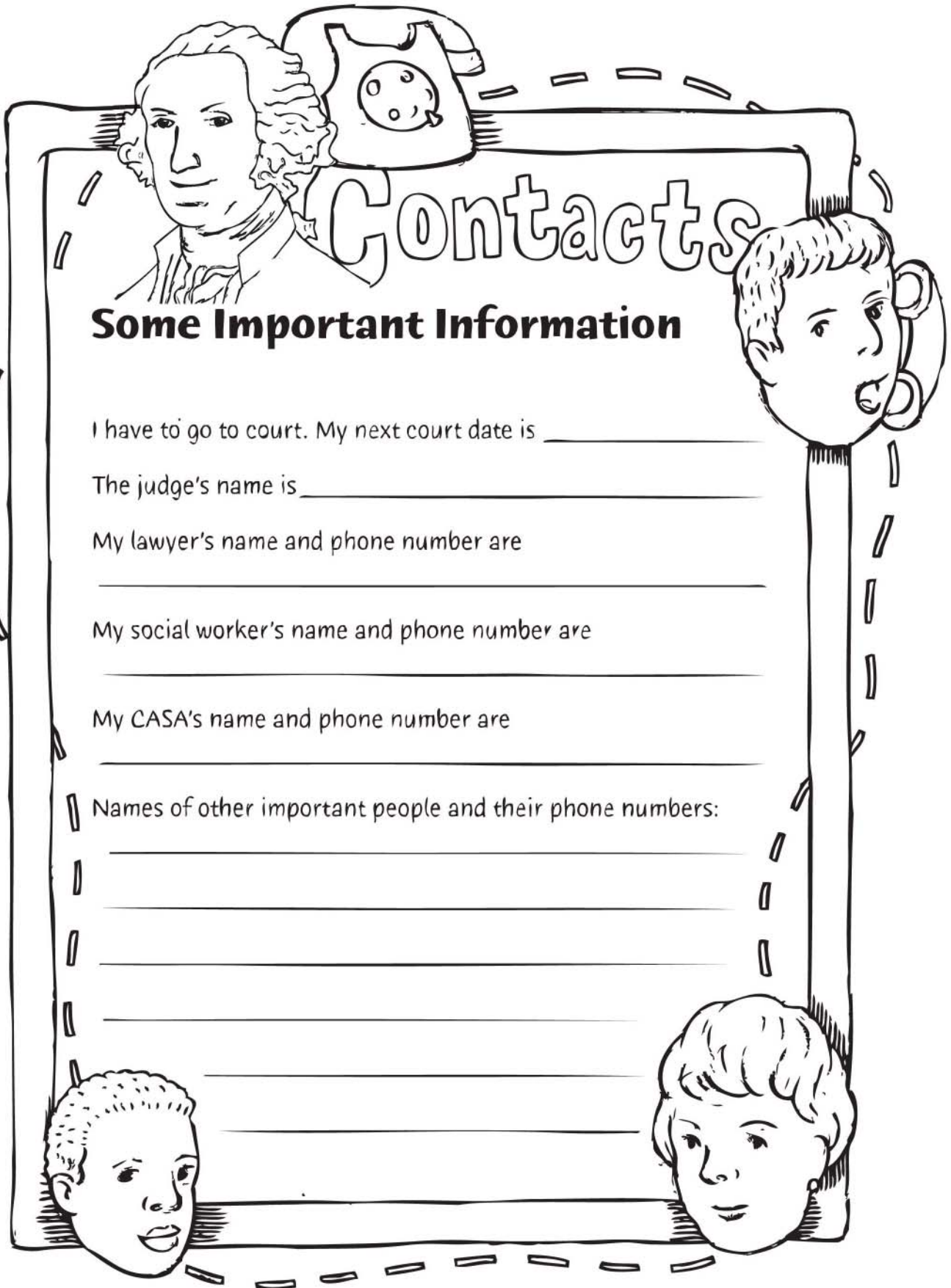
My hobbies are \_\_\_\_\_

The people I live with are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Something else I want to say about myself \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Contacts

## Some Important Information

I have to go to court. My next court date is \_\_\_\_\_

The judge's name is \_\_\_\_\_

My lawyer's name and phone number are  
\_\_\_\_\_

My social worker's name and phone number are  
\_\_\_\_\_

My CASA's name and phone number are  
\_\_\_\_\_

Names of other important people and their phone numbers:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# About This Book

*What's Happening in Court?* is intended for children who are in court for any reason — whether they are witnesses, visitors to the courthouse, or involved in a case. It aims to introduce children to the court processes in which they are or could be involved, the people who work in the judicial system, and the vocabulary that teaching tool that may foster conversations between children and adults about the court system and a game book that gives children who are in court something to do while they wait. This book is not intended to give or substitute for legal advice.

Children of all ages can enjoy this book. Depending on their age, ability, and interest, they may look at and color the pictures and read the text, play games, or do the activities.