

# What's Happening with Visitation?

An Activity Book for Children

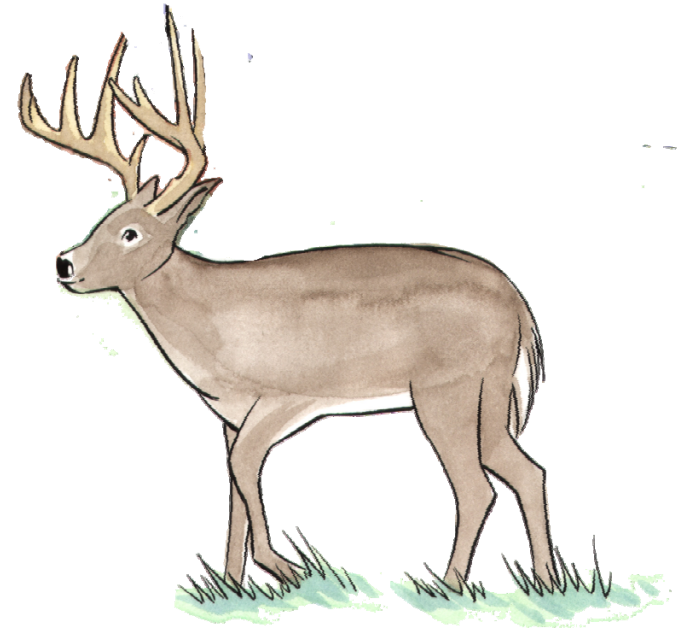


# Why did I have to leave my home?

The main job of parents is to take care of their children. This is so important that there are laws to make sure that parents do this. This means they have to protect you from getting hurt, make sure you have food and clothes, take you to the doctor, make sure you go to school, and make sure your home is safe. If the judge decides that your mom or dad has not given you these things, has not been watching you or taking good care of you, you may have to go live somewhere else away from your home until the judge decides that your mom or dad can take care of you.

If you have to leave your home, there will be a lot of people by your side to help you. One is the judge who is a person who works very hard to figure out what is best for you and how to keep you safe. Another is your Guardian ad Litem (GAL), an attorney who will meet with you and help the judge understand how to keep you safe. Your GAL is a good person to talk to about any problems you may be having. Your caseworker, another good person to talk to, will help you and your family get the things you need and will make sure you are safe.

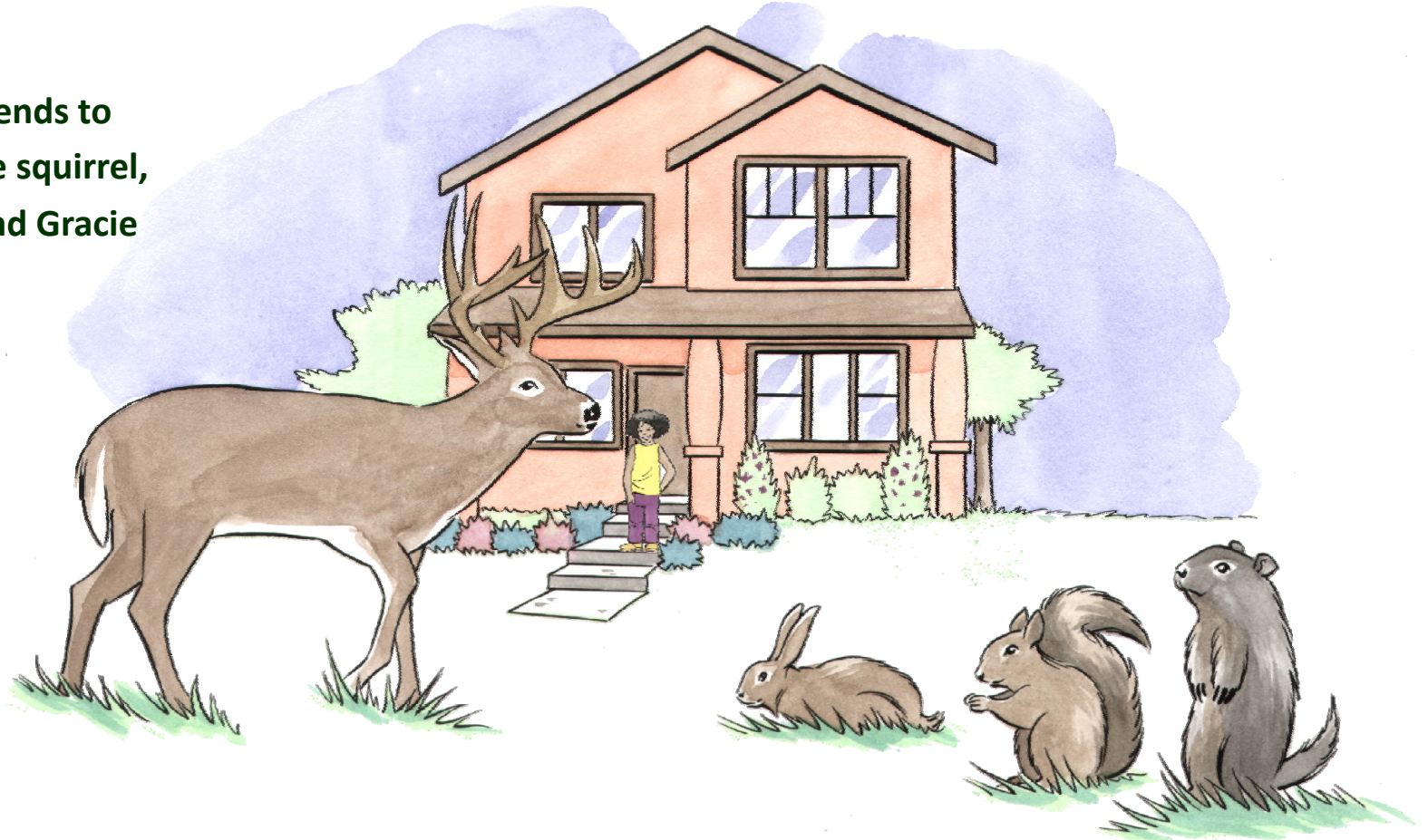
**Dexter the White-Tailed Deer says:  
“Let me walk you through the steps!”**



## Where will I live now?

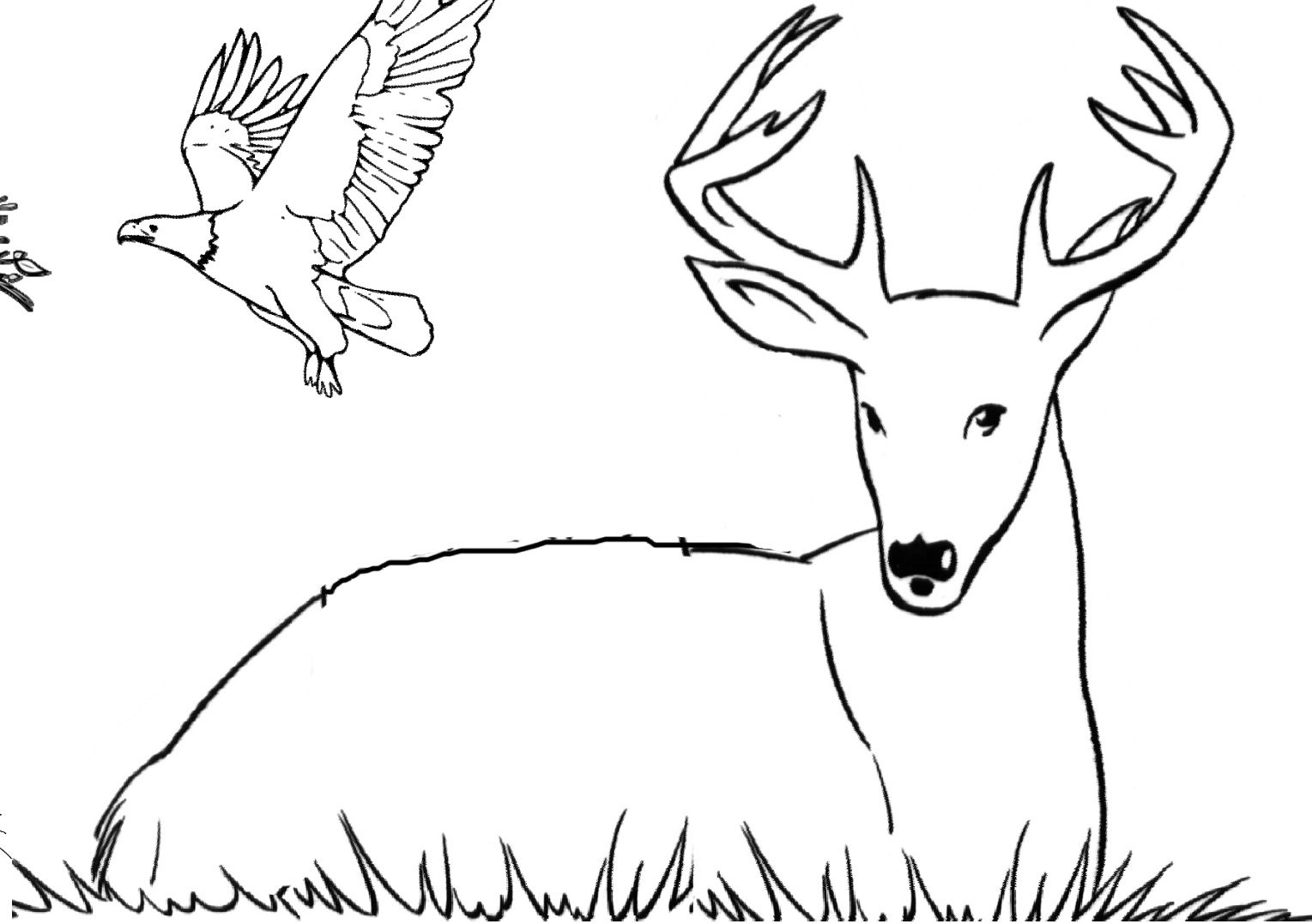
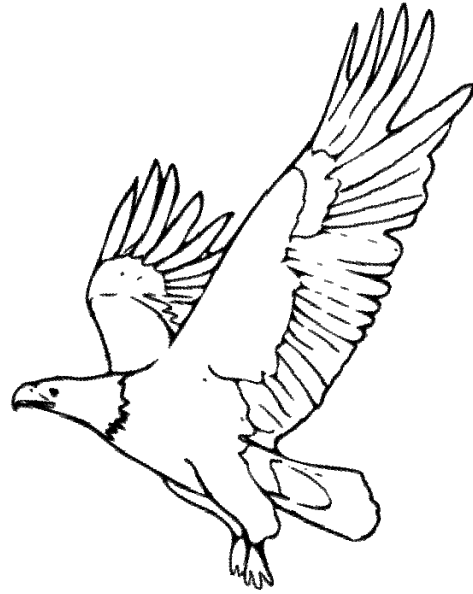
If a relative, such as your grandparent, aunt or uncle, or a family friend can take care of you, you might be able to live with them. If you know of a nice relative or other adult with whom you think you would like to stay, tell the people helping you. If there is no relative or family friend to take care of you, a nice, safe place will be found for you to stay. If you have any worries about where you are staying, call your caseworker or your GAL.

**Dexter asked his friends to help. Meet Sally the squirrel, Benny the bunny and Gracie the groundhog.**



# Dexter

Color Dexter and his animal friends!

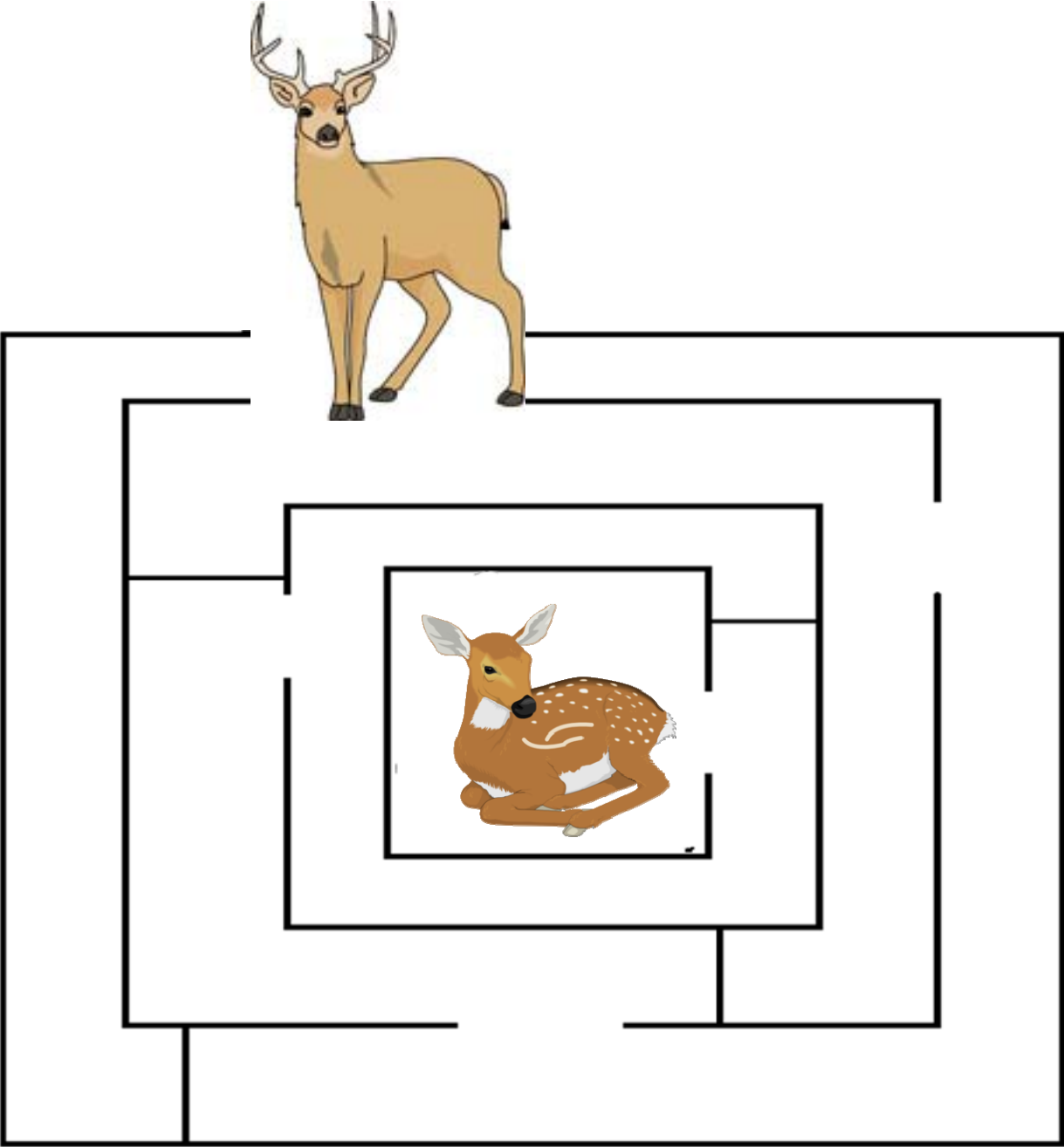


## Will I get to see my mom and dad?

Most of the time, you can see your mom or dad. Your Judge, Attorney or Caseworker will let you know when, where, and how often you get to see them. These visits may be with just your mom or dad, but sometimes other people may be there too. As your parents work hard to learn what they need to do for you to come home and be safe, you may get to see them more often. You may also get to see your mom or dad when you go to the doctors, have a school event or celebrate a special occasion that is happening in your life.



Dexter wants to visit his baby. Can you help Dexter get to his baby fawn?



# Will I get to see my brothers and sisters?

You should get to see and talk to your brothers and sisters, and most of the time you will be living in the same place with them. If you are not living with them, be sure to let someone know that seeing or talking with your brothers or sisters is important to you so they can tell the judge. If there is some reason why you cannot see your brothers and sisters, ask if you can talk to them another way, like on the phone or through email. The judge will think about your wishes and tell you when you get to visit and talk to your brothers or sisters.

**Sally and Sam say: "It's important to see each other."**

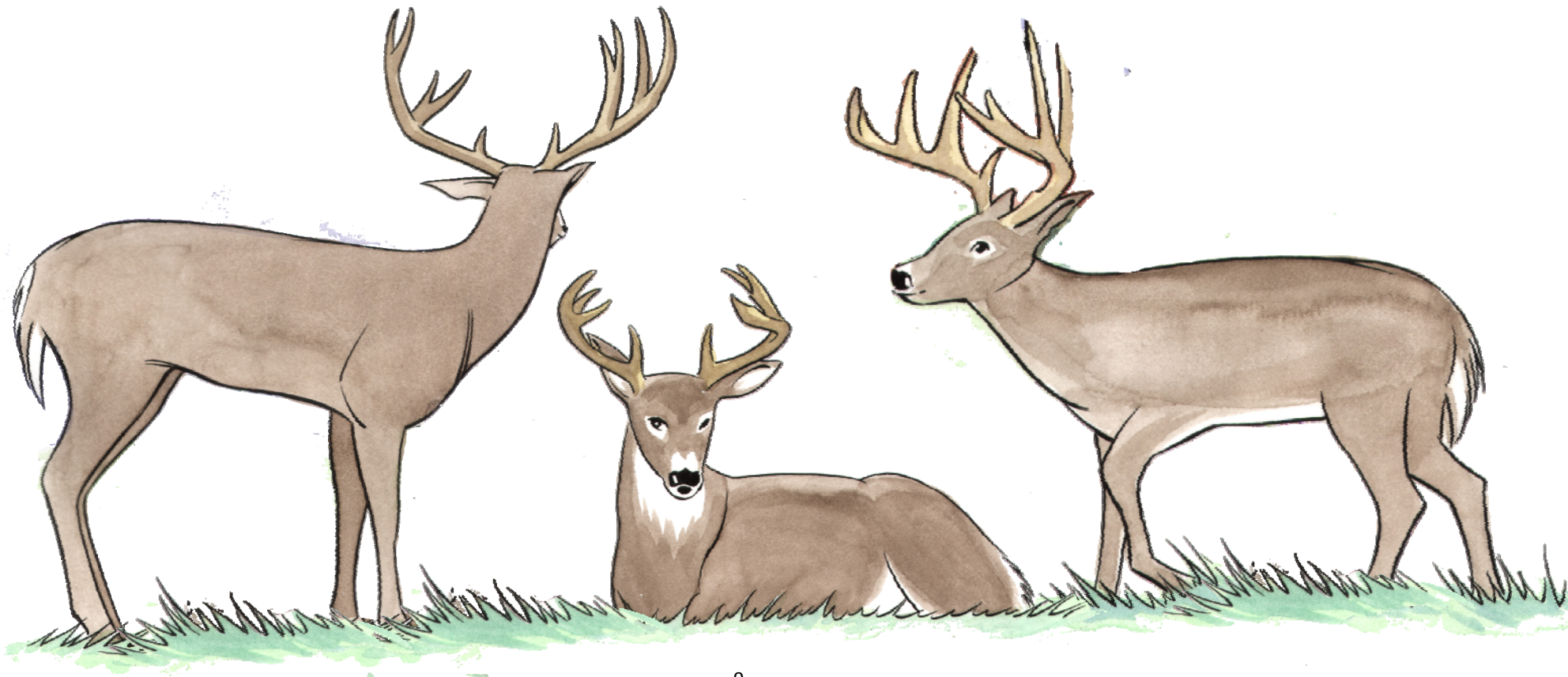


**Who is important to you and who do you like to spend time with?**



## Will I get to see any of my other family members?

It is important that you also get to see your other family members, like a grandma, grandpa, aunt, uncle or cousin. It is important that you tell the Judge, your Attorney or Caseworker who is important to you so that they can help you to see your family. There might be a reason why you cannot see someone in your family, but everyone will work hard to make sure that you stay in touch with the safe people in your life that you love and care about.



Sometimes kids have lots of feelings  
about all of the things happening in their lives

Can you match the picture with the feeling word?



Happy



Sad

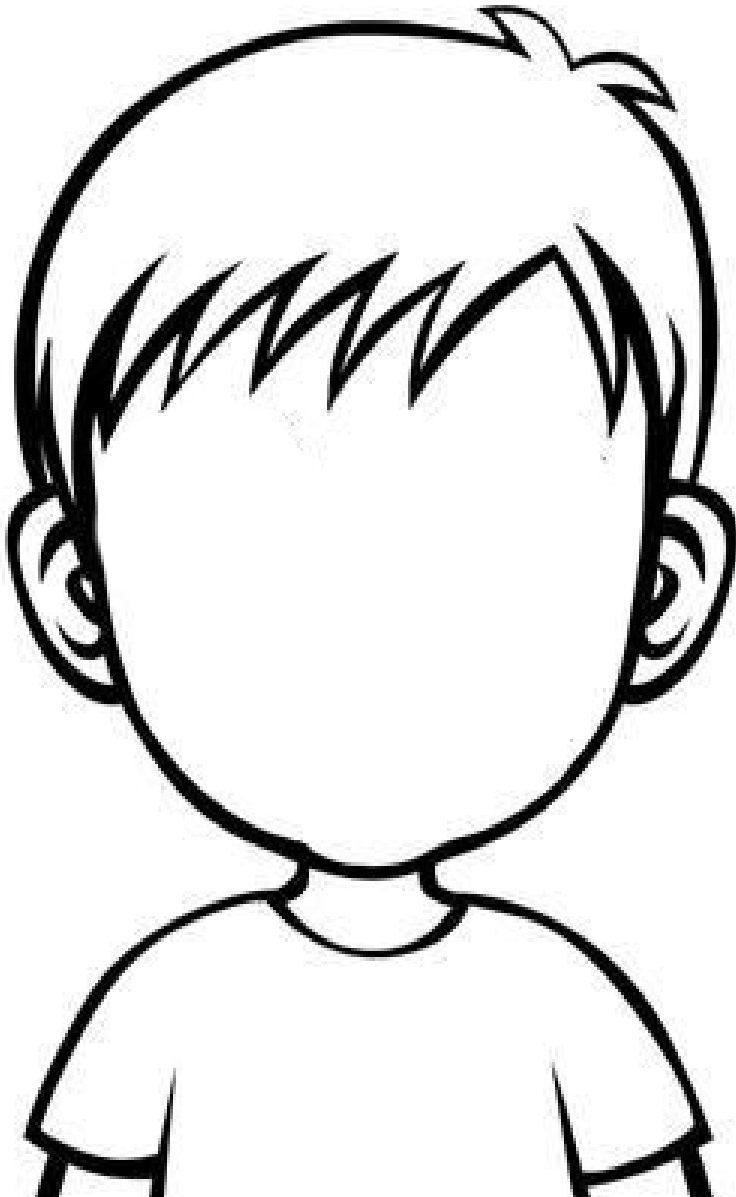


Mad



Scared

I feel like...

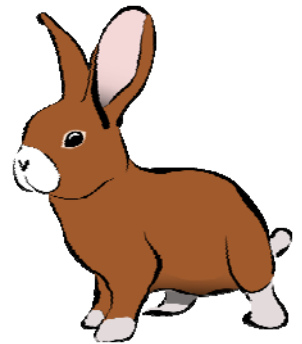


# Will anyone besides my family be in my visit?



In addition to your family, you might have another grown up in your visit to help make sure your visit is safe and enjoyable for you. The person who will supervise your visit can have different names, but is often called a case aid. Occasionally, your caseworker or another caseworker from the agency may also supervise your visit.

Another grown-up that might be in your visit is the person helping your parents learn new things in order to get you home safely. This person is often called a counselor or coach.



It is important that you talk to any of these grown-ups, if you ever feel uncomfortable or scared during your visit.



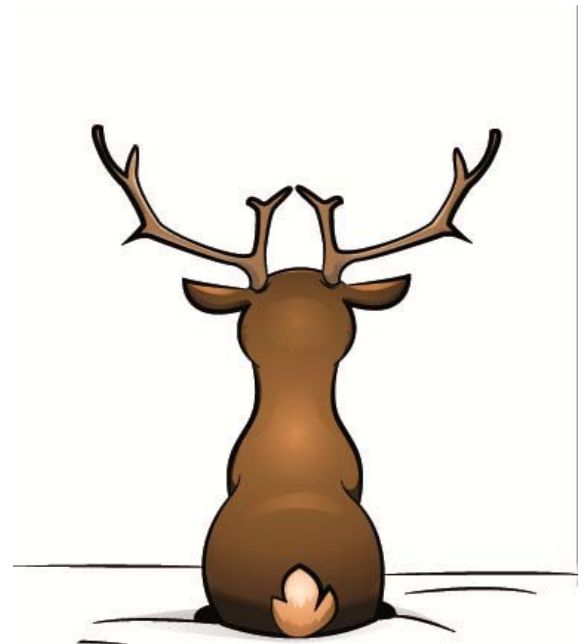
**Write down or draw a picture of what you would like your visits to look like:**

# How might I feel before, during or after my visits?

- You may be nervous
- You might want to bring something special with you to the visits like a doll, teddy bear or favorite toy to make you feel more comfortable
- You might be very happy to see your family or you might feel upset and angry
- The night before your visit you may think a lot about your family
- If you get hungry or thirsty, it is ok to tell your parent or grown up in the visit
- You should also tell a grown up if you have to go to the bathroom during your visit
- When the visit is over, you might feel sad
- You might also feel confused and need the grown-ups to help you understand

It is important that you talk with your caretakers so that they can help you feel better before and after your visit. It is also very important to tell a grown-up in the visit or your caretakers if a visit makes you feel scared.

However you feel before, during and after your visit is ok. Your feelings are important and lots of kids have the same kind of feelings.



# What happens if my parent can't come to the visit?

There are lots of reasons why parents miss a visit and none of them have to do with you. Sometimes parents do not have a ride to get there. Sometimes their car breaks. Sometimes they are not allowed to leave work. Sometimes they get stuck in traffic. If this happens, your caseworker will try to give you and your parent another visit as quickly as possible.

What is important for you to know is that your parent does not miss a visit because they do not want to see you. They are often very sad when they cannot get to the visit because they love you very much and were very excited to see you.



## Can my visits change?

Yes, your visits can change. As your parents work hard to learn what they need to do for you to come home and be safe, you might see your visits happen more often, longer or in different places. Sometimes visits will need to change in order to keep you safe. If this happens, it is important for you to remember that any problem with your visit is not your fault. The grown-ups working with you will work very hard to make sure that you see your parents as often as possible.





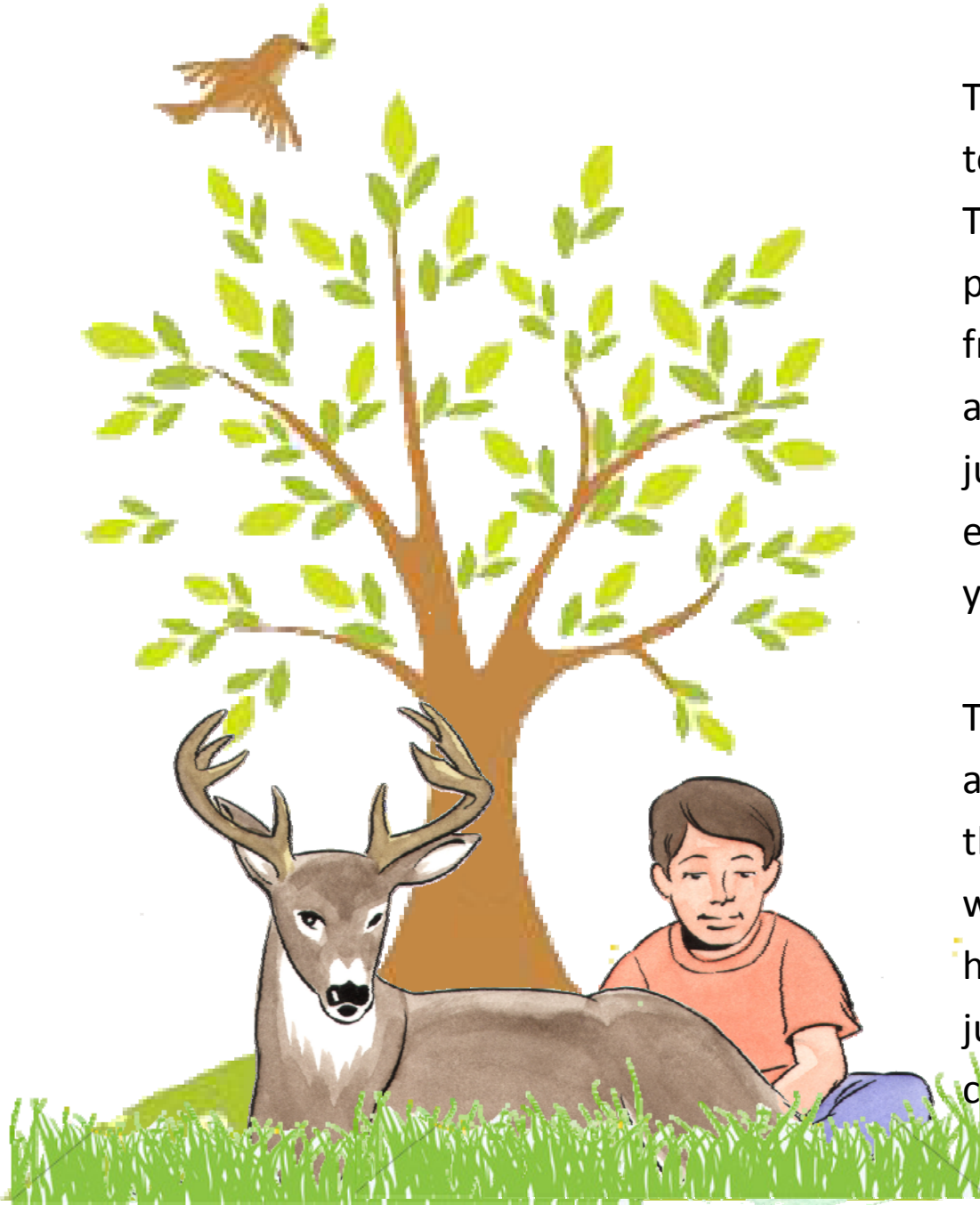
## Can I talk to the Judge about my visits?

Yes! The Judge will want to see and hear from you at your court hearings. It is very important to the Judge to hear about your visits. If you feel uncomfortable talking about your visits in front of everyone in the Courtroom, you may ask to speak to the Judge in a separate room.

Your attorney is another person who will want to know how you feel about your visits. If you are uncomfortable talking to the Judge, your attorney can also share your feelings with the Judge. You do not have to wait for a hearing to talk to your attorney. Ask your caretakers to help you call your attorney, if you want to talk about your visits.



# When will I know what is going to happen to me?



The judge has to give your mom or dad time to do some things before you can go home. The judge needs your mom or dad and the people who are helping you to attend court from time to time. It is called a hearing when all those people get together and talk to the judge. In the hearing, the judge listens to everyone to learn how things are going with you and with your mom or dad.

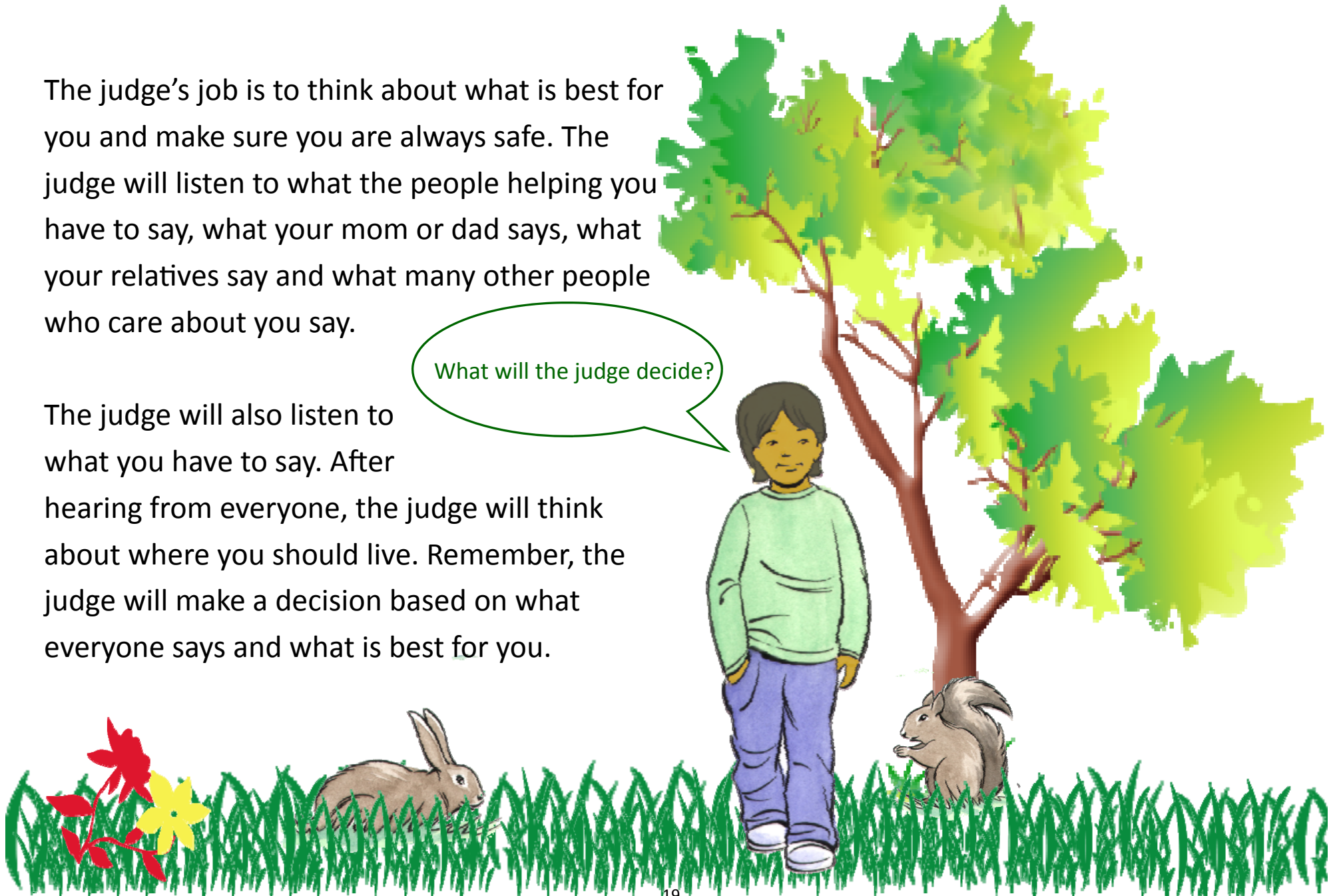
The judge has to decide what should happen and if or when you should go home. Usually the judge will tell everyone in the courtroom what will happen next at the end of the hearing. If you don't understand what the judge decides, there are lots of people who can help you understand.

# How does the judge decide if I should go home?

The judge's job is to think about what is best for you and make sure you are always safe. The judge will listen to what the people helping you have to say, what your mom or dad says, what your relatives say and what many other people who care about you say.

The judge will also listen to what you have to say. After hearing from everyone, the judge will think about where you should live. Remember, the judge will make a decision based on what everyone says and what is best for you.

What will the judge decide?



**While the grown-ups are working on all of this, your job is to try to be a kid, to play, learn, grow and be as happy as you can be.**



The Office of Children & Families in the Courts is pleased to have created this publication, which was made possible through federal funding from the Dependency Court Improvement Program.



Use these stickers to help you create how your visit looks. You may also draw or color pictures on your page to help create your visit. Have FUN!



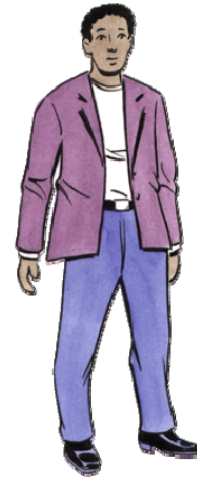
**Case Aid**



**Guardian ad Litem**



**Judge**



**Guardian ad Litem**



**Caseworker**

