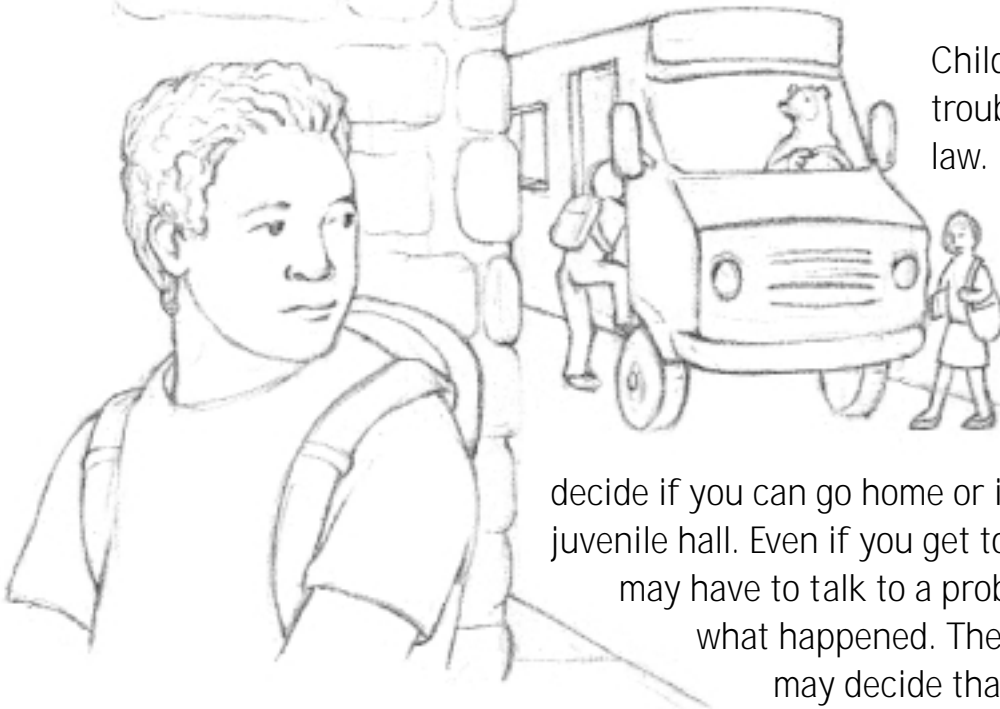


# Did I Do Something Wrong?



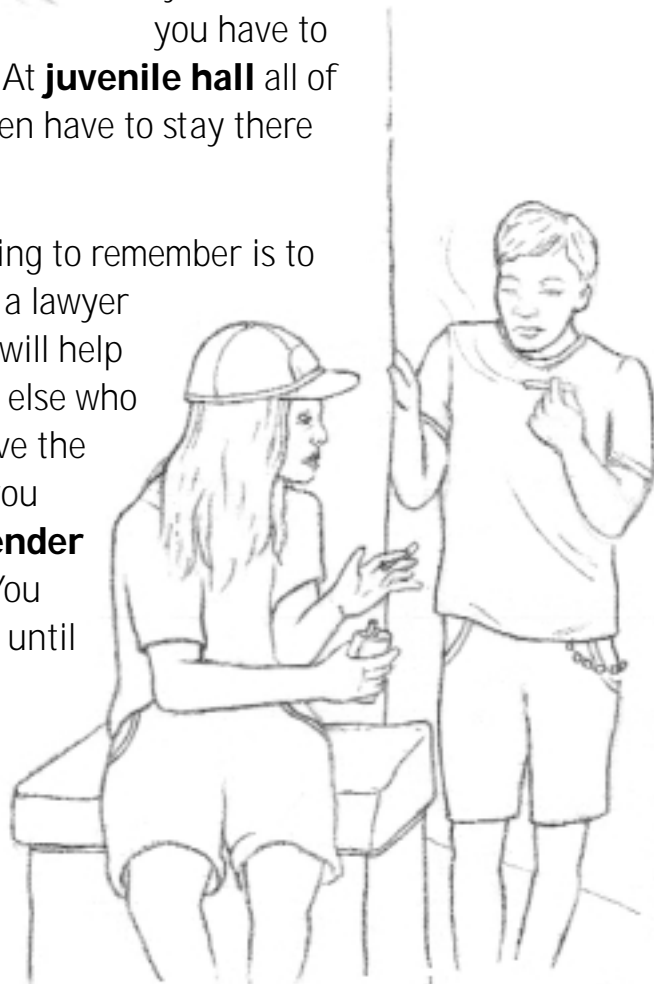
Children can get into big trouble if they disobey the law. If a **police officer** believes that you have broken the law, the officer could arrest you. The officer will ask you questions and

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 juvenile court. At **juvenile hall** all of the doors are locked. Usually children have to stay there until a judge says they can leave.

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. Your lawyer will help you talk to the police and everyone else who wants to ask you questions. 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 are. **Felony** crimes are more serious than **misdemeanor** crimes. If you are guilty of a felony, you can be locked up for a much longer time. The maximum time you could be locked up for a misdemeanor crime is 1 year. The maximum time you could be locked up for a felony crime is many years, possibly even until you are an adult.

Some crimes can be either a misdemeanor or felony, depending how bad the behavior was. 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 get put on probation. Then you would have to be on probation and do what 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 can usually visit

you if you cannot live at home for a while. You and your family may even go to counseling together to understand how to improve your behavior.

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!

