

Youth Participation in Court Protocol Pilot Project

Fact Pattern and Scripts to Demonstrate:

- Proper Preparation of a Youth for a Permanency Hearing
- The Permanency Hearing with Youth Present
- Proper Debriefing of a Youth Following the Permanency Hearing

*Developed by:
Youth Participation in Court Protocol Subcommittee of the Children In Court Improvement
Committee (CICIC)*

Pike Family Background Information

Lauryn Pike	Mother of three	Bob DeVito	CP&P Caseworker
Whitney Nicholson	Age 1	Ray Spacey	Deputy Attorney General
Jack Houston	Age 8	Tracy Liotta	Atty. for Whitney (1) & Jack (8)
Frank Pike	Age 13	Dionne Sinatra	Attorney for Frank (13)
Zeb Nicholson	Father of Whitney, deceased	Edwin Thomas	Attorney for Ms. Pike, mother
Bruce Houston	Father of Jack	John Springsteen	Attorney for Jack Houston
Kevin Marrow	Father of Frank	Danny Kobayashi	Attorney for Kevin Marrow
Antonia Pike	Aunt, mother's sister	Kelly Hathaway	CASA Volunteer
Hon. Dave Aldrin	Judge		

Although the Pike family has been the subject of a number of child neglect reports, the current case arose from an incident twelve months ago when the infant and 7 year old were left overnight unattended.

Ms. Pike decided to go to a party in the neighborhood while Whitney was sleeping and assumed that Frank would return from his friend's house soon to watch the baby. While at the party, she took a number of pills and police found her in a vacant lot at dawn singing loudly. She assaulted the officer and was eventually given probation for the assault.

While unsupervised, Jack (then 7) accidentally started an oil fire in the kitchen. He tried to put the fire out with water, but the oil splashed and caught the curtains as well. Jack could not reach his mother so he called Frank. Frank told Jack to get himself and Whitney out of the apartment and he called a neighbor and 911. The neighbor was able to extinguish the fire. The children were not physically harmed aside from minor oil splatter burns. Upon removal, the children were placed with their Aunt Antonia. There is ongoing conflict between Antonia and Ms. Pike, who blames her sister for the children being placed.

Ms. Pike and Mr. Houston separated six years ago. Mr. Houston admitted that he had abused drugs and alcohol during that time. Mr. Houston had limited visitation with Jack prior to removal. This was initially due to the falling out between he and Ms. Pike and a period of incarceration. He reported at removal that he had been clean for the last 3 years, but had little contact with Jack.

Zeb Nicholson died last year from exposure while hunting in West Virginia. Kevin Marrow is in federal custody in Los Angeles awaiting trial on drug charges. His attorney, Mr. Kobayashi, has participated by phone in hearings, but has been unable to get Mr. Marrow on the phone for hearings.

At removal, Jack's school reported that he was on grade level and no developmental concerns had been noted. Whitney was said to have delayed motor development. Prior to foster care, Frank's grades suffered from failing to turn in homework both due to unexcused absences and repeated suspensions for fighting, smoking, and other infractions. Since coming into care, he has had fewer unexcused absences, but has continued to have in and out of school suspensions. He and his aunt have had ongoing difficulties, due largely to his failure to abide by a curfew or let her know his whereabouts. Frank initially was very upset with his mother, who also blamed him for the fire. They have largely reconciled.

Ms. Pike has been inconsistent in her substance abuse treatment, although more recently there have been positive reports from the service providers. Ms. Pike has however, missed many visits with the children and tested positively almost every month for methamphetamines, alcohol, or opiates. Ms. Pike has had difficulty paying her rent and utilities since the removal as much of her prior financial support came from welfare, which was tied to her having the children residing with her.

Mr. Houston has visited regularly with Jack and attended school and medical appointments. He completed a substance abuse assessment which did not result in a recommendation for treatment. He has been drug tested monthly and all have been negative. His employer also randomly drug tests and he has provided copies of negative tests from the past several years. He would like custody of Jack.

The case is set for a permanency hearing.

Properly Preparing a Youth for an Appearance in Court

Help make the youth feel more comfortable and ready for the conversation by engaging with questions and praise.

LG: Hi Jack! It's good to see you again. How have you been?

Jack: Fine.

LG: How's school been going?

Jack: Pretty good, I guess.

LG: Aunt Antonia told me that you were named Student of the Month last month in history. Congratulations. That's very impressive!

Jack: Thanks.

LG: I came by today to talk with you about court. Do you remember the last time I saw you I gave you a letter and told you that there was a court hearing coming up?

Jack: Yeah. Do I have to go?

Explain the purpose of the permanency hearing, allowing the youth to ask questions.

LG: Let's talk about that, Jack. The court hearing next week is about where you are living now and where you want to live in the future. It's called a permanency hearing.

Jack: Will my mom be there?

LG: I believe so.

LG: You have a *right* to be at this hearing, Jack. That means you can come to court if you want to. A hearing is a chance for you to talk with the judge and to share your feelings and thoughts, a time for the judge to hear from people that are important to you. What you think and feel is important. But it's up to you whether to come to court or not.

Jack: Would I miss school? I'll get in trouble for missing school.

LG: Yes, you would probably miss some school. You won't get in trouble, it's like going to the doctor. Would you mind missing school?

Jack: I don't know. I might have a spelling test.

LG: Well, maybe you and I can find out when it is and see if we can work it out so you don't miss something important. Would that be ok with you?

Jack: Sure. You could call my teacher, Mrs. Decker.

LG: We will take care of that. So, let's talk a little more about who will be at this hearing, and what might happen. You asked if your mom would be there, and I believe she will. I also believe your dad will be there.

Jack: He will?

LG: Yes. And, your brother, Frank may be there too. Is there anyone special that you would like to come to court with you?

Jack: Kelly, my CASA, and my aunt?

LG: OK. Kelly will be there and your aunt said she will drive you if you want to go. Is that cool?

Explain who will be at the hearing and use pictures of the courtroom.

Jack: Yes.

LG: Your mom and dad's lawyers will be there too. You remember how I explained that as a lawyer, it is my job to stick up for you? Your mom and dad have lawyers who help them too. They will be in court with your mom and dad. Your caseworker, Bob, he will be there too, and he has a lawyer also.

Jack: Why does he have a lawyer?

LG: Because each person has a lawyer to help them in the court process; someone who can answer their questions, someone who went to school to learn about the courts and laws and help them speak to the judge. Do you understand?

Jack: Yeah, sort of.

LG: I have a picture of the courtroom. Would you like to see?

The 'sort of' is a good clue he is still unsure. Consider asking him to explain things on his own.

Jack: Yeah!

LG: Here is where I will sit and you will sit next to me. Your mom and dad and their lawyers will sit over here. Can you guess where the judge will sit?

Jack: (Pointing to the judge's bench) That's where they sit on TV.

LG: That's right. Good job!

Use praise to encourage the youth.

LG: Let's talk about what happens in court. Ok?

Jack: (nods his head)

LG: The judge will talk with you and ask you some questions to find out how you are doing and to get to know you a little better.

Jack: Like what?

Provide the youth with some questions that might be asked by the Judge.

LG: He might ask you what grade you are in; who your teacher is; how you are doing at your aunt's house; how your visits with mom and dad are doing, and where you would like to live.

LG: I will be there to help you talk with the judge. You're a really smart kid, so I think you will do just fine. And, if there is a question you aren't sure about or don't know the answer, you just say, I don't know. That's a perfectly fine answer. It is important that you always tell the truth. Ok?

Jack: (Nods yes.)

LG: The judge will listen to everyone in the courtroom about what they think should happen, what is the best plan for you and your family and where you should live in the future. After he listens to everyone, he will make a decision about what the plan for you should be and where you will live in the future. Just because you or someone else asks for something doesn't mean that the judge will do what they say.

LG: Let me give you an example of what I mean. Have you ever asked for something that you really wanted from your aunt? Or maybe you asked to do something, like stay up really late and watch your favorite TV show on a school night and your aunt said no you couldn't do that?

Give the youth examples of what to expect in court.

Jack: Yeah.

LG: Your aunt probably said no because she knew that you really needed your rest for school. So, sometimes we ask for things from the people we love or from the people who care about us and they say no because it isn't best for us.

LG: The judge has an important job. He has to make the best decisions for you and your family. The judge will decide what is best after listening to everyone, including you. That's why it is helpful for you to be in court to talk to the judge and tell him what you think and how you feel.

LG: Do you have any questions?

Jack: (Shrugs his shoulders) Will I go to live with my dad after court?

LG: I know that's what you'd like.

Jack: (Nods his head affirmatively) But will I still get to see my mom?

LG: Yes. The plan may be for you to live with your dad, and then, your dad would make a plan for you to see your mom. How would you feel about that?

Jack: Good.

*Let the youth
ask questions
and answer
one at a time.*

LG: Jack, do you have any questions for me?

Jack: Nope.

Jack: Well, wait, I do have questions. What does the judge look like?

LG: The Judge's name is Judge Dave Aldrin. He is a very nice man, and has met with lots of kids in court. He is tall and has dark hair.

Jack: Does he have kids?

LG: I'm not sure.

Jack: If I am talking to the judge, and need to go to the bathroom, do I raise my hand to be excused?

LG: That would probably be fine, but you can also whisper to me. So, would you like to come to court?

Jack: I guess so.

LG: I look forward to seeing you there.

*Be mindful that the youth may be frustrated,
overwhelmed, or nervous about going to court.*

*With some youth and
certain courts, you
might also want to
talk about courtroom
etiquette. (attire, etc.)*

*It is useful to have a plan for how a youth will
let their law guardian know during the hearing
if something is confusing. Depending on the issue
causing confusion, it may be more appropriate
for debrief or as simple as defining terms in your
questions or comments during the hearing.*

Words and phrases
liberally used in the
courtroom may
not be understood
correctly by youth.
Examples are
underlined below.

Permanency Hearing With Youth Present

Judge: Good morning everyone. Today we are here on DCPP vs. Pike, Docket No. FN-08-123-13. May I have your appearances please?

DAG: Good morning, your honor. Deputy Attorney General Ray Spacey for the Division.

LG for Whitney and Jack: Tracy Liotta for Whitney Nicholson and Jack Houston.

LG for Frank: Dionne Sinatra for Frank Pike.

OPR for Mom: Edwin Thomas for Lauryn Pike.

OPR for Jack's Dad: John Springsteen for Bruce Houston.

Remember, legal jargon isn't familiar to everyone! The terms, agency names, nicknames and acronyms we use every day might be confusing to others. Include explanations for terms like 'permanency hearing,' 'appearances' and 'court report' when the youth is prepared for court.

Judge: Thank you. Today we are here for a permanency hearing. We have the parties here in the courtroom and the aunt is outside in the hall. The children were initially removed from the mother's home on March 10, 2013 and have been living with their aunt since that time. I have reviewed the court report and the report from CASA. I see from the court report that more recently, Ms. Pike has been

Our clients might be confused about drug tests being 'positive' or 'negative.' Typically, if you get a positive result on a test it is a good thing. Keep in mind, language commonly used in court can be misunderstood by others.

attending substance abuse treatment and has good reports from the service providers. However, she has missed visits with her children and some drug tests have shown she has used drugs and alcohol. Let's go through the permanency plans for Jack, Whitney, and Frank individually. The children are present and all parties were made aware that all three children were going to appear in court today. Receiving no timely objections from counsel, we may proceed. Mr. Spacey?

DAG: Your honor, the **permanency plan** for Jack is that he be placed with his father with whom he has developed a close relationship. The plan for Whitney and Frank is that they remain in placement with their Aunt Antonia. She and Frank have had some issues in the past, but she is hoping that things get better.

LG for Jack: Your honor, Jack would like to go to live with his father. *He has had good visits with his dad. He has not been using drugs or alcohol for three years, has a job and an apartment and is able to take care of Jack.* Jack and his father have gotten to know each other better since he has been in foster care. They do homework together, play sports, and just have fun together.

Judge: Thank you.

LG for Frank and Whitney: Your honor, Frank would like to return home to his mother. He and I spoke last week and he is ready to

talk to you. Whitney is here with me today as well. You can see that she is reasonably healthy and a happy baby, however, she does have **delayed motor development**. She was recently evaluated by the **early intervention agency** and has begun to receive **early intervention services**. The **individual family service plan** was attached to the court report. She is doing well in her aunt's care. I support the plan of her remaining with her aunt.

Based on the circumstances of the case and the youth present in court, it might make sense to use more simple terms when addressing the court.

Judge: I can see that Whitney smiles back when the caseworker smiles at her. Thank you. At the next review, I would like to see how Whitney is progressing. How does the aunt feel about the family service plan?

LG for Frank and Whitney: The aunt feels that everything is working out fine so far.

Judge: Mr. Thomas?

OPR for Mom: Your honor, we do not agree with this plan. All three children should return to live with their mother. Mom is anxious to have her children back home with her. She has been attending **treatment** for her drug and alcohol abuse and has been in regular communication with her caseworker. We can discuss some sort of arrangement with Dad's attorney for Jack to see his father. The three children will do best if they are together.

OPR for Jack's dad: Your honor, my client would like for his son to come live with him. As Ms. Liotta stated, Mr. Houston has been doing great and has bonded with his son. *He is **clean** and is **financially able** to take care of Jack.*

Both the Law Guardian and OPR attorney have indicated that Mr. Houston is doing well and is able to care for Jack. Note the different approaches.

"Has a job and an apartment and is able to take care of Jack" vs "financially stable"

"Not using drugs and alcohol" vs "clean"

Judge: Thank you. Now, I would like to talk to the children. Jack, do you know why you are here today?

Jack: My law guardian told me that you want to ask me questions.

A young person might agree even though they don't understand. Asking them to put it in their own words often helps. 'Can you tell me why...?'

Judge: Yes, that's right. I want to check in with you, to see how you are doing, and get some of your thoughts. You seem to be doing well in school. I hear you were student of the month for history. That's great! Tell me more about it.

Jack: My teacher, Mrs. Jones, said I did a really great job this month.

Judge: That's quite an accomplishment. I'm very happy to hear that you are doing so well in school. Is history your favorite subject?

Jack: Yes.

Judge: What are your other favorite things about school?

Start by the praising the youth before moving into an easy topic and asking simple questions.

Jack: Recess.

Judge: What do you like about recess?

Jack: I like talking to my friends, playing games.

Judge: Recess can be a lot of fun.

Judge: Now, Jack, I'm glad that you are here today, because it is very important for me to hear what you think about some questions I have to decide. I have to consider a lot of different information, and it will help me to hear how things are going with you and what you would like to happen. So, I'm going to ask you some questions about that, okay?

Jack: Ok.

Judge: First, have you thought about where you want to live?

Jack: Yes.

Judge: Where do you want to live?

Jack: I don't know.

Judge: Jack, when you say, "I don't know," do you mean that you don't know? Or maybe that it is hard to talk about?

Jack: Hard to talk about.

Judge: That makes perfect sense. Many kids who come in here find it hard to talk about these things. There are things we can do to make it easier. I know you are a good writer so you might want to write answers to my questions. You might be okay talking to me in the courtroom, but maybe want me to ask your mom and dad to step outside for a few minutes, and we can do that as well. Or another possibility is that we could go and talk in my office -- which is just behind that door there. It is a quiet space, and it would just be you, me, and the lawyers. Do you think one of those options might make it easier for you?

Jack: I'm okay.

Judge: Why don't I ask a few questions, and you think about whether we can do anything to make it easier. Let me know if you want me to stop asking questions.

Jack: Okay.

Judge: It would be really helpful for me to know your thoughts or your preference about where you would like to live. Do you want to keep living with your aunt or somewhere else?

Start with non-leading questions to gauge the youth's responsiveness. If needed, ask questions with choices.

Jack: Somewhere else.

Judge: I can see that the plan is for you to live with your dad. Do you want to live with your dad or somewhere else?

Jack: My dad.

Judge: Ok. So tell me some fun things that you like to do with your dad.

Jack: I like when my dad picks me up and we have lunch. We play catch, too, and watch the Yankees.

Judge: Is there anything that you don't like about living with your dad?

Jack: No.

Judge: Do you feel safe at your dad's?

Jack: Yes.

Follow up with questions that you know are wrong to test the reliability of the youth's response.

Judge: Let me just make sure. One more time. Do you want to live with your mom?

Jack: No.

Judge: Can you tell me some fun things that you do with your mom?

Jack: I can't think of anything right now. It's been a while. She used to make me spaghetti.

Judge: I like spaghetti too.

Judge: Now, I hear that you and Frank are very close.

Jack: I guess.

Judge: How would you feel about living in a different place than Frank?

Jack: I would get to see him still, wouldn't I?

Judge: How often would you want to see Frank?

Jack: Every day?

Judge: And Whitney?

Remember a youth's sense of time can be very different than that of adults. Some may remember specific events, but not be able to articulate that it was a particular unit of days or months earlier. Framing it by other reference points may help.

(holidays, school in or out, etc.)

Jack: I would want to see her every day too.

Judge: Now, Jack, you said that you do not want to live with your aunt. Would that change if Frank and Whitney were living with her and you might not to see them every day?

Jack: I don't know.

Judge: Frank and Whitney are not going to live with your dad, because he is not their dad. Do you understand that?

Jack: Yes.

Judge: Do you still want to live with your dad?

Jack: I don't know.

Judge: When you say, "I don't know," does that mean you don't know, or that it is kind of hard to talk about?

Jack: It means I don't know.

Judge: So to be clear, do you want to live with your aunt?

Jack: No.

Judge: Why not?

Jack: Because I want to live with my dad.

Judge: Do you need more time to talk about all this with your lawyer?

Jack: I don't think so. I just want to get to see them every day and live with my dad.

Judge: Jack, you've done a great job talking to me and helping me understand how you feel. Thanks for coming today. Is there anything else you want to say?

Jack: No.

Let the youth have the last word.

JUDGE TURNING TO FRANK:

Judge: Frank, I want to thank you for coming today. It is important that you are here and I am glad you came to court today. Do you have any questions about what is happening?

Pay attention to the tone of your voice, your facial expressions, and your affect as you speak to youth.

Frank: No. I don't want to live with my aunt anymore.

Judge: Tell me a little bit about what's been going on at your aunt's house.

Frank: Well, my aunt is mean and she never lets me do anything. I don't want to live with her anymore. She is so annoying and treats me like a baby. She yells at me.

Judge: I understand that it can be hard living with your aunt.

The judge now has the opportunity to address what the youth has said about his current placement. It would be appropriate for the judges to ask questions such as, "How is your aunt mean?" "What kinds of things does she not let you do?" and "Is there anyone who might be able to help you with this?" The youth needs to feel

Judge: Tell me about school. Have you been handing in your homework?

Frank: I don't care. I hate school and my teachers don't like me.

Judge: What's been going on in school?

Frank: I just hate it. I am always getting in trouble for no reason. The teachers are just out to get me. I want to go back to my mom's house. They just made us leave because Jack made one mistake, he knew what to do. No one was hurt.

Ask the youth for details if they express an issue with caretakers, teachers, coaches, etc. Ask the youth what they think might improve the situation.

Judge: How are the teachers out to get you?

Frank: I don't know, they just are.

Judge: Let's see if we can work something out with your teachers. Tell me about some things that you like to do. Do you like sports? Music?

Frank: I like to play video games and I have my Play Station set up in my old room. I like to play football with my friends too.

Judge: Yes, I heard that you are a very fast runner. That's a great talent.

It's important to praise the youth throughout your interaction, but especially at the beginning to help make the youth feel comfortable and supported.

Judge: You said earlier that you want to live with your mom. Tell me about this.

Frank: I miss my mom. She lets me do what I want. She doesn't yell at me all the time like Aunt Antonia. She's not mean to me. I don't think it's fair that I got taken away from her. I can take care of myself anyway. If I can't live with my mom then I just want to live alone.

Judge: It is important that young people get support and live in safe places. What kinds of things does your mom let you do that your aunt does not let you do?

Frank: She lets me stay up late and I don't have to clean my room and I can hang out with whoever I want. I don't have to tell her where I am all the time and I just like her better.

Judge: Do you think your aunt might be trying to keep you safe? Or do you think there is some other reason why she is doing this?

Frank: I dunno. I guess so. Maybe.

Judge: I know it can be hard, but it is important for you to have a supportive adult to live with. You think you can try and work with your aunt a little?

Frank: Fine, whatever.

Judge: So, is there anything else you want to talk about? If you don't feel comfortable talking about it here, we can also go into my office so that just you and I can chat.

Frank: No.

Judge: Thank you for speaking with me today. You did a great job of letting me know how you feel and that is very important to my decision.

I have to consider a lot of things and make a decision about where I think you will be safe and where there will be somebody to help take care of you. Your statements here in court were very important to me.

Remind the youth that if they don't feel comfortable speaking in front of everyone in the courtroom, they can speak to the judge in chambers.

Proper Debrief of Youth Following a Permanency Hearing

The short follow up discussion with the youth immediately following the court hearing shouldn't be the only opportunity to talk. The youth should be afforded the chance to debrief with any supportive adult including the caseworker, CASA volunteer, teacher, therapist, etc.

Frank: I want my mom to come in, too.

Dionne: Let's talk first and then we'll include your mom.

Dionne: Frank, you did a great job of telling the judge about yourself and what you want. You answered his questions and were very clear.

Frank: Okay.

Dionne: I want to go over the judge's decision to make sure you understand. The judge decided that, at this time, your mom isn't ready for you and Whitney to come home, and so both of you will stay with your aunt. Jack is going to gradually move from your aunt's house to his dad's house over the next few months. You'll continue to see Jack at visits even when he's living with his dad. And you'll continue to see your mom at visits with her and visits with her and your brother and sister.

Frank: I don't want to live with my aunt!! I told you all that and no one is doing anything! I don't want her to tell me what to do. I hate my school. I want to go home. I can help my mom get better and I can take care of myself.

Using simple language, clearly explain the judge's decision, making sure the youth completely understands.

Do not be discouraged if the youth acts out in court or after court, the experience is still valuable.

Dionne: I understand what you're saying, but, Frank, 13 year olds just are not allowed to live on their own. Remember, when you talked to me before court I explained that the judge has to balance what you want with what will keep you safe and healthy, and he did not think it was safe to go home yet.

Frank: Why can't I go home? I can go to my old school and I'll go this time, I promise. I can make sure my mom stays clean.

Dionne: He wants your mom to make more progress so that she can take care of you. Your mom needs to learn to take care of herself and of you, and it's not a child's job to take care of his mom.

Frank: [starts to cry] I hate my aunt. I hate my school and all of those kids are mean, and the teachers are mean. You need to find me someplace else to live.

Dionne: I know it's tough. We need some more time to talk. I will call you tomorrow and we can talk about this more. We are still figuring out if your uncle that you told me about in Texas is a good place for you to live. I will talk to your caseworker about getting an update.

Frank: Okay. What about my friend in my old neighborhood, his mom would let me live there.

Dionne: Is this your friend Chris? We have talked about this. Chris's mom has her hands full.

Frank: Yep. But he's changed. He hasn't been doing anything bad for a long time. I talk to him all the time. He's going to an alt school and is on probation.

Dionne: How long has it been since he's changed?

Ask the youth direct questions.

Frank: I dunno, a long time. Like a month.

Dionne: I don't think the judge will think this is enough time but I will ask your caseworker about it.

Dionne: Okay, I'll find out more about your uncle and friend and we will plan to meet in two weeks.

During the next two weeks, though, there are some things I'd like you to do, too.

Make sure the youth understands what is expected of him/her.

Frank: What?

Dionne: I want you to go to school, and I want you to make your best choices at your aunt's house. I can't ask the judge to make changes if you don't meet him halfway and make some changes, too. Do you understand what I mean?

Frank: Yeah, I do. Does that mean that I can move in two weeks?

Dionne: No. The judge makes the decision about whether you can move. But, we will talk in two weeks and I will have an update from the caseworker on your uncle. I also want to set up some counseling for you through your caseworker because I know this is really hard on you, and I want you to have someone else you can talk to. Is that okay?

Frank: Yeah, I would go, that'd be okay.

Be mindful that the youth might be frustrated or overwhelmed.

Dionne: And, is there someone at school who you can talk to?

Frank: You mean, a kid? They're all jerks.

Dionne: How about a teacher or another adult or your CASA volunteer, Kelly?

Frank: Yeah, I talk to Kelly. The only teacher who is nice to me is Coach Altman. He teaches history.

Dionne: What does he coach?

Frank: 7th grade track and 8th grade football. He asked me if I wanted to do track, and I said I'd think about it.

Dionne: Do you think that might be a good idea for now?

Frank: Maybe. But I bet my aunt will say no.

Dionne: I can talk with her. Do you want me to do that?

Frank: Yeah, okay.

Dionne: Okay, then we have a plan. I'll talk with your aunt, your CASA volunteer and your caseworker about track right now. Then I'll find out about your uncle and set up counseling, and we'll meet again in two weeks. And you will go to school and try to do your best work there and at your aunt's house. I will call you tomorrow and we can talk more.

Frank: Okay, thanks.

Dionne: Do you have any questions?

Frank: No, I understand. Thanks.

Dionne: I know it is not always easy to talk about these things, and the judge can't always make things happen just the way you want or when you want, but it is really important that you were able to come and let people know how you feel. Let's go get your caseworker. You can talk to him more on your ride home. I will ask him to follow up about your uncle and your friend, Chris.

Ask the youth what he/she wants to accomplish before the next hearing.

Ask the youth whether he/she has any questions and thank the youth for coming to court.

The ride home gives the caseworker the opportunity to talk with the youth about his or her experience and feelings.