

# ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS HANDOUT

## SESSION 3

### GREENE CASE



## OPEN-ENDED QUESTION VS. CLOSED-ENDED QUESTION

### Open-ended questions

Invite others to engage in a dialogue with you. In your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer, using open-ended questions allows children and adults to give more thoughtful answers since these questions cannot be answered with a simple yes, no or one-word answer. Sometimes open-ended questions are phrased as a statement that requires a response (for example, “Tell me about...” or “Describe for me...”).

### Examples of open-ended questions:

**For child:** “Please describe what your morning is like from the time you wake up until you go to school.”

**For adult:** “How did your family come to be involved with the court system?”

### Closed-ended questions

Useful when you are trying to obtain factual information. They can be answered with a simple yes or no, or with a single word or short phrase.

### Examples of closed-ended questions:

**For child:** “Is your aunt still living nearby?”

**For adult:** “How many times has Johnny been to the emergency room this month?”

## Clarifying questions

Used to gather additional details or clear up any confusion.

### Examples of clarifying questions:

“I didn’t understand the phrase you just used. Could you explain it?”

“You mentioned someone named James. What is his relationship to the child?”

**Do not ask leading questions!** A leading question is one that suggests a desired answer. **Leading questions are never appropriate in any CASA/GAL volunteer interview.**

### Example of a leading question:

“Your favorite weekends are spent with your dad, right?”

## More Examples:

### Closed-Ended Question:

- (For a child): Do you want to live with your mother or your father?

### Open-Ended: Question:

- Who would you like to live with?
- Who do you think you’d be happiest living with?

### Closed-Ended Question:

- (For a parent): You seem unhappy lately. Are you?

### Open-Ended Question:

- How have you been feeling lately?

- How are you doing emotionally?

**Closed-Ended Question:**

- (For a child): Does your mom leave you alone at night a lot?

**Open-Ended Question:**

- Tell me what it's like at home at night.
- Who is around when you're at home at night?

**Closed-Ended Question:**

- (For a parent): Do you understand the difference between a CASA/GAL volunteer
- and a caseworker?

**Open-Ended Question:**

- Tell me your understanding of my role as a CASA/GAL volunteer.
- How do you think my role is different from that of the caseworker