



Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #44 – Defense Lawyers

Maggie Says... *As a dog, it is extra important for me to be friendly and follow the rules. But we all make mistakes sometimes. Sometimes other people even make mistakes and say that we did something even though we didn't. When this happens, it feels unfair and we want to have a chance to defend ourselves.*

Today's lesson is about Defense Lawyers: *When people are accused of breaking the law, it is called committing a crime. Everyone is allowed to have a lawyer represent them when they are accused of something. A Defense Lawyer's job is to protect and defend people who have been accused of a crime.*

Sticky Situation: Imagine that all of the sports equipment, balls, and recess toys are taken from your school so that you can't play at recess. One of your fellow students is accused of taking them. How do we know that they did it? What if they didn't do it? Is it fair to let them defend themselves?

What a Defense Lawyer does: When someone has been accused of a crime, the person can get a Defense Lawyer to try to show that they have not committed the crime. The Defense Lawyer will try to gather information, called evidence, that shows that the person didn't commit the crime. In the United States, everyone has the right to a Defense Lawyer, because we believe it is unfair to not give people a chance to defend themselves.

Activity: Imagine someone accused you of taking all of the recess equipment. Wouldn't you want a chance to defend yourself and to prove that you didn't? Would it be helpful if you had someone who was really good at doing this to help you gather information that shows you didn't do it? This exercise will help you understand why we give everyone in the United States a Defense Lawyer.

Civic Resources: To learn more about the Defense Lawyers and other roles in court, check out: <https://www.playkidscourt.com/>