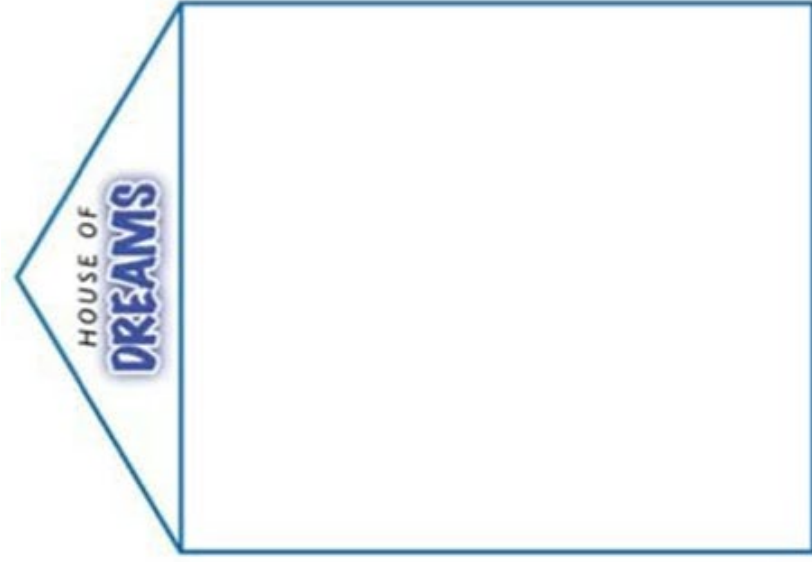
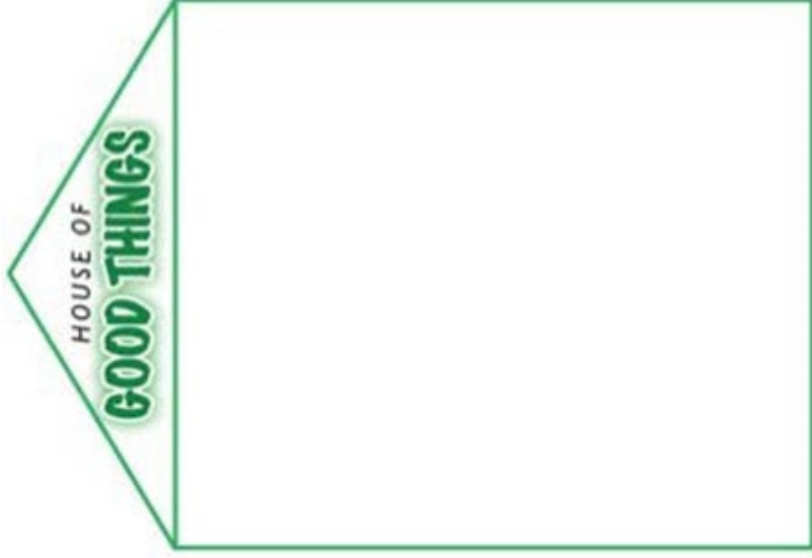
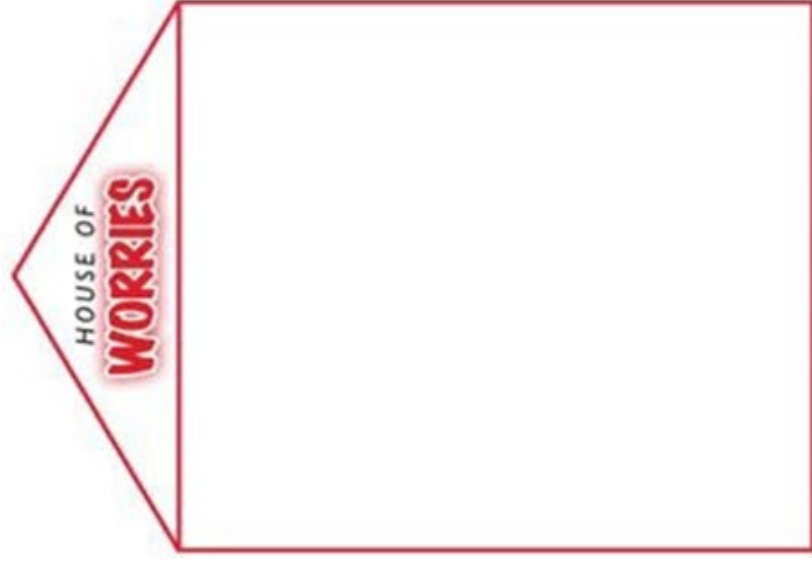


The Three Houses



Using the Three Houses

1. **Prepare.** It helps to begin with as much information as possible about the child's background. You will also need the following materials: paper (one sheet for each house as well as some spares), colored pencils, and markers. When deciding where to meet with the child, choose the venue where the child is likely to feel most comfortable.
2. **Get permission to interview the child.** Sometimes, child protection workers must interview children without advising the caregivers or seeking their permission. Whenever possible, caregivers should be notified in advance. You can show them the Three Houses tool to help them understand what the worker will do.
3. **Decide whether caregivers should be present.** Sometimes, child protection workers must insist on speaking with children in the absence of a caregiver. Whenever possible, let the caregivers and the child choose. If this is not possible, make all efforts to explain to the caregivers why it is necessary to speak with the child alone.

Important: If the caretaker is an alleged offender, in Arkansas, you **must** interview the child outside the alleged offender's presence.

4. **Explain and work through Three Houses.** Use one sheet of paper per house. Use words and drawings as appropriate, and anything else you can think of to engage the child in the process. The child can rename houses, use toys, make Lego houses, use picture cutouts, etc. Let the child decide where to start. It is often best to start with the House of Good Things, especially if the child is anxious or uncertain.
5. **Explain to the child what will happen next and involve the child in it.** Once the Three Houses process is complete, it is important to explain what will happen next to the child and to obtain permission to share the child's Three Houses with caregivers, extended family, or professionals. Children are usually happy to share their Three Houses, but some children's assessments may raise concerns and safety issues that must be addressed before sharing with others.
6. **Present the child's Three Houses to caregivers.** Workers usually begin with the House of Good Things. Before you show the child the Three Houses, it can be useful to ask the caregivers what they think the child put in each house.