

Interdisciplinary Parent Representation Program

The mission of the Office of the Parent Defender's Interdisciplinary Parent Representation (IPR) Program is to defend the rights of parents navigating the abuse, neglect, and dependency system in North Carolina by providing high quality, holistic representation through zealous legal advocacy in and out of court coupled with strengths-based, compassionate, and comprehensive social work services.

April 2025-June 2025 Report

As of 7/11/2025	IPRP started 10/1/2022	IPRP started 11/1/2022	IPRP started 12/1/2022	IPRP started 2/1/2023	IPRP started 10/1/2023	IPRP started 2/5/2024
County	Cleveland	Mecklenburg	Buncombe	New Hanover	Wake	Lincoln
Assignments-Total	93	58	246	98	57	22
Open (ACTIVE)	41	29	82	59	28	21
Closed	52	29	164	39	18	1

News and Updates

County Work and Community Connections:

- IPR Program Manager attended a courtroom observation in Mecklenburg Co (April 2025)
- IPR Program Manager attended the 2025 State of the Child Conference along with two Wake County IPRP social workers (April 2025)
- IPR Program Manager, social workers, and Attorneys attended the 2025 National Multidisciplinary Parent Representation Conference in St. Paul, MN (May 2025)
- IPR Program Manager, Parent Defender, and CIP Program Manager began NC Evaluation Planning meeting with Dr. Alicia Summers (May 2025)
- Learning Community held in April to debrief the conference (May 2025)
- IPR Program Manager and IPRP social worker presented at the South Carolina Parent Representation CLE Workshop (June 2025)
- IPRP Program Manager was invited to guest lecture at Duke University School of Law (June 2025)
- Upcoming: IPR Program Manager, Parent Defender, and Buncombe County IPRP Social Worker will be presenting in August at the NACC 48th National Child Welfare Conference. Accepted presentation title: Navigating the Aftermath: Supporting Child Welfare Legal Defense Professionals and Families During Natural Disasters

Success Story

"MS's case closed with custody returned to her. I have to say this case has been a rollercoaster and I don't think I would have seen this to the finish line if it were not for the encouragement and teamwork from Attorney Jason Gast. The child has some significant mental health needs and MS has many of her own challenges. MS is extremely intelligent and struggled to meet her child's needs because she lacked support and resources. There were multiple points in this case when I asked Jason to put it on the inactive list, and he encouraged me to stay on as a support in the background for MS when needed. MS and I had many conversations about how she could make mental health decisions for her son, and she really didn't need DSS to do it. I honestly believe Jason made the right decision because it seems like the more others failed to meet the needs of her child, the more MS started to believe she was capable, which she is. This mom just needed a lot of cheerleading and some time to stabilize herself. I'm thrilled with the outcome."

Kathryn Strachota, MAed

Buncombe County IPRP Social Worker

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