

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.

October 2025-December 2025 Closed and New Cases

Reporting Dates 10/1/2025-12/31/2025	4 th Quarter Closed Cases	4 th Quarter Closed Cases	4 th Quarter Closed Cases	4 th Quarter Closed Cases	4 th Quarter Closed Cases	4 th Quarter Closed Cases
County	Cleveland	Mecklenburg	Buncombe	New Hanover	Wake	Lincoln
Total Number- 18	3	0	9	1	3	2
Outcome *CC- Custody to Client *CG/C- Custody/Guard, Client Consented *CR- Client Relinquished *AW- Attorney Withdrew *TPR- Termination of Parental Rights *VC- Venue Change	3 (CC)	N/A	6 (CC) 1 (CG/C) 1 (CR) 1 (AW)	1 (CC)	2 (CC) 1 (AW)	1 (VC) 1 (TPR)

Reporting Dates 10/1/2025-12/31/2025	4 th Quarter New Cases	4 th Quarter New Cases	4 th Quarter New Cases	4 th Quarter New Cases	4 th Quarter New Cases	4 th Quarter New Cases
County	Cleveland	Mecklenburg	Buncombe	New Hanover	Wake	Lincoln
Total Number- 36	2	0	22	5	2	5
Allegation Type *A/N- Abuse & Neglect *N- Neglect *N/D- Neglect & Dependency *D- Dependency	1 (N) 1 (N/D)	N/A	20 (N) 1 (N/D) 1 (D)	2 (N/D) 1 (D) 1 (AN) 1 (N)	1 (N) 1 (N/D)	4 (N) 1 (N/D)
Participating Attorneys	2 out of 6	0 out of 4	5 out of 6	2 out of 7	1 out of 5	2 out of 4

News and Updates

County Work and Community Connections:

- October 2025
 - Learning Community with the Success Coach Program with Children's Home Society was held on October 6
 - IPR Program Manager attended the two day Train the Trainer workshop hosted by the UNC School of Government on October 22-23
 - IPR Program Manager attended the ABA's Multidisciplinary Parent Representation Subcommittee Meeting on October 29
 - Parent Defender and IPR Program Manager completed audit of attorneys participating in the program
- November 2025
 - IPR Program Manager and Contract Social Workers attended the Post Adoption Contracts CLE on November 12
 - IPR Program met with Jonathan Rockoff with UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work to discuss writing an article on the IPR Program for the next issue of Fostering Perspectives, on November 17
 - Parent Defender and IPR Program Manager attended the Interagency Collaborative Meeting on November 20
 - IPR Program Manager Completed Wake County IPRP Visit on November 26
- December 2025
 - IPR Program Manager began attending weekly defenderData meeting to discuss system improvement.

Message from the IPR Program Manager

Dear IPRP Advisory Board Members,

I am please to share that my proposal to present a workshop at the Forensic Social Work Alliance (FSWA) Conference, taking place May 27-29, 2026, in New Orleans, LA, has been accepted. Our Mecklenburg County IPRP social worker, Sara Ward will be co-presenting with me for a 60-minute session entitled "From Separation to Stability: How Interdisciplinary Parent Representation Legal Teams Strengthen Family Outcomes in North Carolina Dependency Court". This opportunity is directly aligned with my role as the IPR Program Manager and supports CIP's broader goals of improving court practice, strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, and advancing high-quality parent representation.

The FSWA Conference is a national convening of forensic and legal defense social workers, attorneys, and court stakeholders. Attending and presenting will allow us to highlight the innovative work being done in North Carolina through the IPRP on a national stage. This visibility not only strengthens North Carolina's reputation as a leader in interdisciplinary representation, but also creates opportunities to connect with potential funders, partners, and jurisdictions interested in replicating or supporting our model. I am excited to bring back knowledge, best practices, and emerging trends that can be shared with our entire IPRP Team.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the important work this program does to positively impact North Carolina families.

IPRP Attorney Highlight

Reid Gonella, Buncombe County

"My client BD, whom I had forever, regained custody of her child and I am no longer on the case. This case started out with me picking her up for visits from her abuser's home. There were so many highs to this case like BD being able to finally leave her abuser safely, obtain sobriety, a license, a car, and maintain employment on her own. The most important part of this process for BD was that although she and the respondent father were ordered shared custody, she listened to the advice given to her about how to comply with a court order and keep herself safe at the same time. Reid and I both advised her on how to follow the court orders, documents things, and not engage in the power dynamics the respondent father created. It was evident that she trusted what Reid was telling her.

I saw BD in court this week as well and not surprisingly, she is still doing great. This was a case where I felt that the system was subtly apart of creating the power and control dynamic that we advised BD to leave for her own safety. Reid obtained this case years after the initial petition and was able to lead BD to success and reunification. It was gratifying for me to witness how Reid took the time to hear her client, validate her, direct her appropriately, and fight fiercely for her.

Thank you, Reid, for all that you do"

Kathryn Strachota

Buncombe County IPRP Social Worker

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