

The Latest Guide in a Series: The First Seven Days

The UNC School of Government's Public Defense Education group is excited to announce the newest entry in a series of practice guides, *The First Seven Days*, by Timothy Heinle, Civil Defender Educator. The guides offer practical tips and strategies for respondent's attorneys in various civil proceedings to use during the first several days of representation. The ideas suggested in the guides are designed to help busy attorneys hit the ground running in ways that reduce stress for the attorney and improve representation for the client.

The newest entry in the series is *The First Seven Days as a Parent Defender*. Strategies are explored that will improve client representation and help attorneys better manage their workloads and stress; these strategies include the use of various templates—examples of which are included in the guide. This guide offers practical tips and highlights concrete steps that parent attorneys can incorporate into their practices early in the life of a case, including setting up a file, reaching out to the client, conducting discovery, and preparing for court. Parent defenders in juvenile abuse, neglect, or dependency proceedings can obtain the guide in three ways:

- A hardcopy of the guide will be available—at no cost to attorneys—to any interested attorney who represents parents in juvenile abuse, neglect, and dependency proceedings. This is possible with great thanks to both the NC Office of Indigent Defense Services, Office of the Parent Defender, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, through the Children's Bureau's Court Improvement Program. The hard copy version of the guide is designed to be convenient and easy to have at hand for a client interview, court hearing, or personal reading. In the coming weeks, and by the end of 2021, juvenile clerks' offices across the state will receive copies of the guide to distribute to parent defenders in each county. Attorneys, regardless of whether they are or are not on the parent attorney appointment list, can request a copy from their juvenile clerks once the clerks have received the guides. If you run into issues obtaining a copy, please reach out to Timothy Heinle at Heinle@sog.unc.edu. A sincere thank you to the clerks for their help in distributing the guides.
- A digital copy of the guide is also available under the Practice Guides tab on the [Indigent Defense Manuals Series](#) website. There you will be able to download editable Word

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versions of templates in the guide, including case-file inserts, records requests and authorizations, and client letters and meeting checklists.

- Anyone who would like to purchase a copy of the guide can do so for \$6.00 through the School of Government's online bookstore. Click [here](#) to purchase the guide.

If you have any questions or feedback, please feel to contact Timothy Heinle at Heinle@sog.unc.edu.