



FAMILY DEFENSE COUNCIL

Family Defense Council Newsletter Empowering Families with High Quality Legal Representation

Advancing technology and resources to support zealous, client-centered, multi-disciplinary advocacy for all children and families.

Issue 4 – March 2026

FDC At A Glance

We'd love your feedback as the newsletter continues to evolve. 📧 Tell us what you'd like to see in future issues — content, formats, spotlights, opportunities and more.



⚖️ The Family Defense Council welcomes Wendy Sotolongo, former Executive Director of the North Carolina Office of Parent Defender, as our first Executive Director. Wendy will help formalize the council's structure and shape its activities in the months ahead.

🔗 [Get connected](#) for updates.

📢 Resources — New + Newly Discovered

Pregnancy Drug Use Allegations & Law Enforcement Referrals Data

The Marshall Project | February 2026

🔗 [Explore the data and reporting](#)

Executive Director Position — New Mexico Office of Family Representation & Advocacy

OFRA | Application deadline May 1

🔗 [Learn more and apply](#)

Recap: Social Determinants of Health for Children and Families in the Legal System Spotlight 💡

- Hon. Jay D. Blitzman (ret.), Alisa Lincoln, MPH PhD, Marjani Green, JD LLM, and Julia Sullivan — Northeastern University Salus Populi Initiative
- Monthly [Preventive Legal Advocacy / Pre-Petition Cohort](#) meeting
- Explored how social determinants of health (SDOH) can strengthen the case for upstream legal advocacy and reducing unnecessary court involvement.

📰 Family Defense In the News

⚖️ [New York Parents Sue Over Child Abuse Registry Delays.](#)

Federal lawsuit alleges the state routinely exceeds the legally required timeline for appeals, leaving parents listed in the registry and barred from employment and caregiving opportunities.

👤 [Arizona Bill Would Roll Back Youth Right to Counsel.](#)

Proposed legislation would eliminate client-directed attorneys for children in foster care and return the state to a guardian-ad-litem model.

Listen In

📻 Predictive Neglect and Disability Discrimination

Guest: Dr. Robyn Powell

[upEnd Podcast](#)

Examines how “predictive neglect” frameworks can stigmatize parents with disabilities and expand surveillance in the child welfare system.



📅 Dates & Deadlines

2026 Conferences Snapshot

Mar 15–18: NCJFCJ National Conference on Juvenile Justice (Minneapolis, MN)

Mar 19–20: NAPD Rise. Resist. Represent. (virtual)

Apr 20–22: CWLA National Conference (Arlington, VA)

Apr 20–23: NAPD Changemakers Forum (Atlanta, GA)

May 6–8: Untethered 2026 (Washington, DC)

May 13–16: ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference (Charlotte, NC)

May 20: Partners for Justice (Baltimore, MD)

Jun 14–17: APHSA National Human Services Summit (Arlington, VA)

Jul 19–22: NCJFCJ Annual Conference (Nashville, TN)

Aug 11–14: NACC National (Portland, OR)

Oct 14–16: NACC Virtual (Virtual)

Do you have news, a podcast or event to share?

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