

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**  
**COURT OF APPEALS**

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In the Matter of LAUREN CATHERINE HIGNUTT,  
Minor

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MARY JANE RING and AARON RING,

Petitioners-Appellees,

v

BRIAN ALLAN LATHROP, a/k/a BRIAN ALLEN  
LATHROP,

Respondent-Appellant.

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UNPUBLISHED  
October 17, 1997

No. 200039  
Muskegon Probate Court  
LC No. 96-005901-AD

Before: Markey, P.J., and Neff and Smolenski, JJ.

MEMORANDUM.

Respondent appeals as of right from the probate court order terminating his alleged parental rights to the minor child under MCL 710.51(6); MSA 27.3178(555.51)(6). We affirm.

The probate court did not err in finding that the statutory grounds for termination of parental rights under MCL 710.51(6); MSA 27.3178(555.51)(6) were established by clear and convincing evidence. *In re DeBaja*, 191 Mich App 281, 291; 477 NW2d 148 (1991). Although respondent and his wife had contact with petitioners and with friends of petitioners during the two or more years prior to the filing of the step-parent adoption petition, he never requested visitation at any of those encounters. Further, respondent did not avail himself of legal help in establishing paternity, visitation or support of the minor child. Further, considering that the child has only known one father for most of her young life, the probate court did not abuse its discretion in terminating respondent's parental rights. *In re Hill*, 221 Mich App 683, 696; 564 NW2d 156 (1997).

Affirmed.

/s/ Jane E. Markey

/s/ Janet T. Neff

/s/ Michael R. Smolenski