

STATE OF MICHIGAN
COURT OF APPEALS

In the Matter of ALEXA MARY-GRACE
PRIESTLEY, Minor.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES,

Petitioner-Appellee,

v

JAMES WALTER PRIESTLEY,

Respondent-Appellant.

UNPUBLISHED

January 29, 2008

No. 279492

Oakland Circuit Court

Family Division

LC No. 07-729886-NA

Before: Beckering, P.J., and Sawyer and Fort Hood, JJ.

MEMORANDUM.

Respondent appeals as of right from the trial court's order terminating his parental rights to the minor child pursuant to MCL 712A.19b(3)(b)(i), (g), (j), and (n)(i). We affirm. This appeal is being decided without oral argument pursuant to MCR 7.214(E).

Respondent does not dispute that the trial court had jurisdiction over the child or that petitioner established a statutory ground for termination by clear and convincing legally admissible evidence. See MCR 3.977(E); *In re IEM*, 233 Mich App 438, 450; 592 NW2d 751 (1999). He contends only that the trial court erred in its assessment of the child's best interests. See MCL 712A.19b(5). We review the trial court's best interests decision for clear error. *In re Trejo Minors*, 462 Mich 341, 356-357; 612 NW2d 407 (2000).

The evidence was undisputed that the child had a close bond with her father and wanted to maintain a relationship with him. However, respondent was a registered sex offender who had victimized the child's siblings and their mother. Although he had recently begun sex offender therapy, he had not admitted that he had a problem in need of treatment and thus continued to present a high risk of harm to the child and there was no indication that he would benefit from therapy. Further, the child blamed herself for respondent's legal difficulties and, after her initial disclosure, repeatedly denied that respondent had done anything inappropriate, making it likely that she would refuse to disclose any abuse that might occur in the future. Under the

circumstances, the trial court did not clearly err in its determination that termination of respondent's parental rights was not clearly contrary to the child's best interests.

Affirmed.

/s/ Jane M. Beckering
/s/ David H. Sawyer
/s/ Karen M. Fort Hood