

**IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA**

No. 2-694 / 12-1057  
Filed August 22, 2012

**IN THE INTEREST OF G.A.,  
Minor Child,**

**M.V., Mother,**  
Appellant.

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Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Tama County, Angie Wilson,  
District Associate Judge.

A mother appeals the order terminating her parental rights. **AFFIRMED.**

Jennifer Meyer of Jennifer Meyer Law, P.C., Marshalltown, for appellant  
mother.

Thomas J. Miller, Attorney General, Amy Licht, Assistant Attorney  
General, and Brent D. Heeren, County Attorney, for appellee State.

Ryan P. Tang of Law Office of Ryan P. Tang, P.C., Cedar Rapids,  
attorney and guardian ad litem for minor child.

Considered by Vaitheswaran, P.J., and Potterfield and Bower, JJ.

**VAITHESWARAN, P.J.**

A mother's parental rights to her thirteen-year-old son were terminated pursuant to Iowa Code sections 232.116(1)(e) (2011) (requiring proof of several elements including proof of the absence of significant and meaningful contact) and 232.116(1)(f) (requiring proof of several elements including proof that child cannot be returned to parent's custody). On appeal, the mother contends the Department of Human Services did not make reasonable efforts to reunify her with her son. See *In re C.B.*, 611 N.W.2d 489, 493 (Iowa 2000) ("The State must show reasonable efforts as a part of its ultimate proof the child cannot be safely returned to the care of a parent."). On our de novo review of the record, we disagree. See *id.* at 492 (setting forth standard of review).

The child was removed from his mother's care in 2010 based on concerns that the mother "failed to make appropriate housing arrangements" for the child and "left him without medication for asthma as prescribed." The child was placed in foster care, where he remained throughout the proceedings.

Following the child's removal, the department afforded the mother weekly supervised visits with him. The mother was initially inconsistent in attending the visits; her attendance later improved, although tardiness remained an issue.

In September or October of 2011, the department approved unsupervised visits between the mother and child but required the mother to arrange the visits and obtain gas assistance from the department, if necessary. The mother rarely availed herself of these additional opportunities for contact with her child. According to a care coordinator who worked with her, the mother only exercised her right to unsupervised visits "a couple of times," even though she was allowed

three hours mid-week and up to five hours on weekends. She also did not attend the child's school and extracurricular activities, despite having been approved to do so, and she only sporadically contacted the child by telephone. While the mother asserted that transportation was an issue, she acknowledged that the department gave her a gas voucher on the one occasion she timely contacted her caseworker.

The department also afforded the mother mental health services to address her seeming lack of volition in proceeding with reunification. The mother briefly took advantage of the services on a "walk-in" basis. She was diagnosed with situational depression and elected not to pursue treatment.

The department additionally provided foster and daycare services, facilitated family team meetings in which the mother participated, assisted the mother in looking for employment, and helped her "work towards getting her GED." After seventeen months of services, a department caseworker opined that the mother was still not at a point where she could have the child returned to her.

This seventeen-month period included a three-month extension granted by the juvenile court. The mother did not take advantage of this extra time. As the juvenile court stated:

The bottom line was that nothing changed from the time this case was initiated to the time the Court heard the termination matter other than [the child] became more frustrated and unhappy about his mother's lack of effort to have him returned to her care. The foster parents testified [the child] was "deeply hurt" when [the mother] would cancel visits. [The child] has gotten to the point that he just wants this resolved, even if it means termination.

At the termination hearing, the mother acknowledged that the previous two years of department involvement had been geared towards providing her with reunification services. She also acknowledged that she did not ask for additional services. In effect, she conceded that the department made reasonable efforts towards reunification.

Based on this record, we agree with the juvenile court that the department satisfied the reasonable efforts requirement. Accordingly, we affirm the termination of the mother's parental rights to her son.

**AFFIRMED.**