

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

No. 9-843 / 09-0007
Filed December 30, 2009

MICHAEL J. CIUNGA,
Plaintiff-Appellee,

vs.

JULAN WHITE,
Defendant-Appellant.

Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Jefferson County, Annette J. Sciezinski, Judge.

A mother appeals the district court's order granting legal custody and physical care of the parties' children to the children's father. **AFFIRMED.**

Julan White, Fairfield, appellant pro se.

Michael Ciunga, Fairfield, appellee pro se.

Considered by Vogel, P.J., and Doyle and Mansfield, JJ.

VOGEL, P.J.

Julan White appeals from the district court's order granting Michael Ciunga legal custody and physical care of their two children. On appeal, she challenges these provisions. We review child custody orders de novo. Iowa R. App. P. 6.907 (2009). Our primary concern is the children's best interests. Iowa R. App. P. 6.904(3)(o).

The district court set forth the relevant facts in its detailed ruling, including both the positive and negative qualities of each parent. The district court then looked to the children's immediate and long-term needs and determined that Michael was the parent who would offer the children greater stability. As the district court found, Julan was "unsuitable as a legal custodian" and "had demonstrated a resounding lack of parental maturity and fitness," whereas Michael had "stepped up to offer services necessary to maintain emotionally stable, physically safe, and morally appropriate care for his children."

We defer to the credibility assessments made by the district court and conclude the district court's factual findings were fully supported by the record. See *In re Marriage of Vrban*, 359 N.W.2d 420, 423 (Iowa 1984) (discussing that the trial court, unlike the appellate court, had the opportunity to listen to and observe the parties and witnesses). The district court's ruling reflects it considered and weighed the appropriate factors in determining the award of legal custody and physical care. Iowa Code § 598.41(3) (2007); *In re Marriage of Winter*, 223 N.W.2d 165, 166-67 (Iowa 1974). Therefore, we affirm the district court pursuant to Iowa Court Rule 21.29(1)(a), (d), and (e).

AFFIRMED.