STATE OF MICHIGAN

COURT OF APPEALS

UNPUBLISHED
July 7, 2011

In the Matter of MONTGOMERY/ COLLIER/THOMPSON, Minors.

No. 300332
Wayne Circuit Court
Family Division
LC No. 05-448277

Before: BORRELLO, P.J., and JANSEN and SAAD, JJ.

PER CURIAM.

Respondent appeals as of right from the trial court order terminating her parental rights to the four older children under MCL 712A.19b(3)(c)(*i*), (g), and (j), and to the youngest child under MCL 712A.19b(3)(g), (i), and (j). For the reasons set forth in this opinion, we affirm.

Respondent contends that the trial court erred in terminating her parental rights where she substantially complied with the case service plan for the majority of the time this case was pending.[1] Termination of parental rights is appropriate where petitioner proves one or more grounds for termination by clear and convincing evidence. *In re Trejo*, 462 Mich 341, 355; 612 NW2d 407 (2000); *In re B and J*, 279 Mich App 12, 17; 756 NW2d 234 (2008). This Court reviews the lower court's findings under a clearly erroneous standard. MCR 3.977(K); *In re Mason*, 486 Mich 142, 152; 782 NW2d 747 (2010); *In re Sours*, 459 Mich 624, 633; 593 NW2d 520 (1999).

In the present case, the trial court findings were not clearly erroneous. While respondent did complete parenting classes, attended counseling and most hearings, kept in contact with her caseworkers, and visited the children regularly, her progress was insufficient to return the children to her care. This case has been pending since 2005 when respondent gave birth to her oldest child at the age of 16. She was involved in domestic violence in 2008 and 2010. She and her youngest child tested positive for marijuana at the child's birth in 2010. During this time, the court had jurisdiction over the minor children in this matter, respondent lacked suitable housing and income, and her therapist saw minimal progress. Her relationship with the oldest child was strained despite extensive one-on-one help from a parenting expert. Respondent was provided many services over a long period of time. More time and services would have been very

[1] The proceeding with respondent began in October, 2005.

unlikely to produce lasting positive changes. A parent must benefit from services in order to provide a safe, nurturing home. *In re Gazella*, 264 Mich App 668, 676-677; 692 NW2d 708 (2005).

Respondent makes several arguments, none of which entitles her to relief. Respondent first argues that the trial did not "find" the statutory grounds. However, respondent's argument is contrary to the very findings made by the trial court. In this case, the trial court specifically stated that the statutory grounds were proven by clear and convincing evidence. MCR 3.977(I) requires "[b]rief, definite, and pertinent findings and conclusions on contested matters." The court's findings were minimally sufficient, especially when coupled with the court's and referees' findings over the six-year history of this case.

Respondent also claims that the court should have adjourned the hearing to allow her therapist to testify in person. However, the therapist's testimony would not have changed the outcome, and further, respondent's trial counsel consented to having a summary of the testimony stand in place of live testimony. Accordingly, we find no error.

The issue of different caseworkers is also not meritorious. Only two workers serviced respondent's case for most of the time the trial court had jurisdiction over this matter and there was no showing that respondent suffered prejudice by having different workers. To the contrary, the record reveals that the workers assigned to respondent were often her only advocates.

Finally, respondent assigns as error the trial court's refusal to adjourn the July 30, 2010 termination hearing concerning the older four children when respondent failed to appear. Respondent merely states this issue and does not brief it or cite authority. A party may not leave it up to this Court to search for authority to sustain her position. *In re CR*, 250 Mich App 185, 199; 646 NW2d 506 (2002). She was notified of the July 30 hearing, and the reasonable inference is that she chose not to attend. The court would have reopened the proofs had she offered a good excuse at the next hearing. She did not do this, and in fact she left the next hearing before petitioner finished its case. Consequently, we find no reversible error.

We also find no clear error in the court's determination that termination of respondent's parental rights was in the children's best interests. MCR 3.977(H)(3), (K); MCL 712A.19b(5); *Trejo*, 462 Mich at 356-357; *In re Foster*, 285 Mich App 630, 633; 776 NW2d 415 (2009). As previously stated, this matter had been going on for six years and during that time, respondent failed to develop a relationship with any of the minor children.

Affirmed.

/s/ Stephen L. Borrello
/s/ Kathleen Jansen
/s/ Henry William Saad