IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

No. 1-392 / 00-1984
Filed August 29, 2001

FILED
AUG 29 2001
CLERK SUPREME COURT

IN THE INTEREST OF A.B., Minor Child,

S.B., Mother,
Appellant.

Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Des Moines County, Mark Kruse, District Associate Judge.

The mother of minor child A.B. appeals a juvenile court order adjudicating A.B. a child in need of assistance and the court's subsequent dispositional order confirming the child's status. **AFFIRMED.**

Andrew S. Hoth of Hoth Law Offices, Burlington, for appellant.

Thomas J. Miller, Attorney General, Kathrine S. Miller-Todd, Assistant Attorney General, and Toby Gordon, Assistant County Attorney, for appellee State.

Rob Engler, Burlington, guardian ad litem for minor child.

Considered by Habhab, C. Peterson, and Harris, Senior Judges.*

*Senior Judges assigned by order pursuant to Iowa Code section 602.9206 (2001).

PER CURIAM

A mother has appealed a trial court finding that her daughter is a child in need of assistance. On review, we emphatically agree with the finding and therefore affirm.

Few judicial responsibilities are more important than deciding when state government should intrude into the rearing of a child. Two potential disasters face one another from opposite ends of the issue. At one extreme lurks the possibility of great harm to the child. The other is the possibility of unwarranted governmental intrusion into the most precious of family relationships. Because the stakes are so high, an Iowa statute allows the government to intercede only by court order on a finding that the child is in need of assistance. Iowa Code § 232.2 (6)(c)(2) (1999). Our review of such an order is de novo. *In re L.K.S.*, 451 N.W.2d 819, 821 (Iowa 1990). The best interests of the child are of paramount concern. *In re N.M.W.*, 461 N.W.2d 478, 480 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990).

The mother here challenges the factual basis for the holding, arguing her daughter does not qualify as needing the assistance. Under the State's evidence, the child is out of control and bent on almost certain disaster. The record is clear that the child was allowed to be out all night, free to run the streets at will, had several confirmed sexual partners, and may have been exposed to sexually transmitted diseases. The mother's only rejoinder to this ominous showing is that she had given her daughter a set of rules. Any rules that she may have given were obviously ignored, and the child was in dire need of assistance. The challenged finding was correct.

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We have also considered and now reject the mother's separate challenge of admission to State's exhibits.

AFFIRMED.