FILED
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CLERK SUPREME COURT

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

IN THE INTEREST OF
K.K.C. A Child,

P.C., Mother

Appellant.

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9-45
88-1289

Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Polk County (Juvenile 7327-15), Harry Perkins, Judge.

The mother of a child appeals the juvenile court order terminating her parental rights. **AFFIRMED.**

John J. Gajdel, of Watson & Gajdel, Des Moines, for the appellant mother.

Thomas J. Miller, Attorney General; Charles K. Phillips, Assistant Attorney General; and Michon Hinz, Assistant County Attorney, for the appellee State.

Richard Campbell, Des Moines, guardian ad litem for the child.

Heard by Oxberger, C.J., and Donielson and Sackett, JJ.

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OXBERGER, C.J.

The child in question is a girl, K.K.C., born in January 1979. Her parents have never been married to each other, and her father has had no role in her life for many years. His whereabouts are presently unknown.

K.K.C. lived with her mother from birth until 1986. In 1985 she was adjudicated to be a child in need of assistance due to neglect, a need for treatment to cure emotional damage or mental disorder, and one incident of physical abuse. At the time of the CINA adjudication the child was left in her mother's custody, subject to supervision. However, in April 1986 the child was placed in foster care where she has remained since that time.

The mother, P.C., has a history of chronic anxiety, episode depression, valium addiction, and relationships with abusive men. K.K.C. has been found wandering the streets and has been repeatedly left with less-than-reliable babysitters. K.K.C. has behavioral and emotional problems. P.C. has been found to be wholly unable to address these special needs. P.C. is undergoing counseling. She concedes she is not ready at this time to resume care of K.K.C. Visitation between P.C. and K.K.C. has become strained and distant.

In December 1987 the State filed the present petition to terminate the parental rights of both natural parents. After a hearing, the juvenile court did terminate the

parental rights of both parents. With respect to the father, the juvenile court relied on the ground of abandonment. With respect to the mother, the juvenile court relied on the ground for termination stated in Iowa Code section 232.116(1)(e). The mother has appealed the termination order. The father has not. She challenges the sufficiency of the evidence to establish (1) the child cannot eventually be returned to her custody, and (2) that termination is in the child's best interest.

Our review of proceedings to terminate a parent-child relationship is de novo. We accord weight to the fact-findings of the juvenile court, especially when considering the credibility of the witnesses the court has heard and observed firsthand, but we are not bound by them. Our primary concern is the best interests of the child. In re Dameron, 306 N.W.2d 743, 745 (Iowa 1981). We look to the child's long-range, as well as immediate, interests. Id. We consider what the future holds for the child if returned to his or her parents. Id. Insight for this determination can be gained from evidence of the parent's past performance, for that performance may be indicating of the quality of the future care the parent is capable of providing. Id. Our statutory termination provisions are preventative as well as remedial. Id. They are designed to prevent probable harm to a child. Id. A child should not be forced to endlessly suffer the

parentless limbo of foster care. Long v. Long, 255 N.W.2d 140, 146 (Iowa 1977). He or she need not await the maturity of the natural parent. In re T.D.C., 336 N.W.2d 738, 744 (Iowa 1983).

The issue which we are faced with is a parent whose child was originally removed from her home on the basis of a lack of supervision, a report of physical abuse, and a need for treatment to cure K.K.C.'s emotional damage or mental disorder. P.C. had been evaluated as having a history of chronic anxiety, episodic depression, valium addiction and various other disorders which prevented her from properly caring for her child. P.C. was a product of an emotionally traumatic childhood.

K.K.C. had been found wandering in the Hubbell Avenue area. She had also been reported as bringing some of her mother's pills to school. K.K.C. has been described as having numerous problems. She is violent toward others, self-destructive and exhibits sexually inappropriate behavior.

P.C. attended an ongoing program of therapy and evaluation at Polk County Mental Health Center. She has also attended stress management classes, assertiveness training classes, pain control classes, anger workshop classes, co-dependency treatment and sought out parent-effectiveness training materials. We note P.C. has been more than willing to seek out services which will

improve her situation. The problem, however, lies in the fact that upon completion of these services P.C. still does not feel she is able to care for K.K.C. K.K.C. has been in foster care since April 1986. In a situation such as this, we find much of the analysis of In re A.C., to be appropriate:

> There are a number of stern realities faced by a juvenile judge in any case of this kind. Among the most important is the relentless passage of precious time. The crucial days of childhood cannot be suspended while parents experiment with ways to face up to their own problems. Neither will childhood await the wanderings of judicial process. The child will continue to grow, either in bad or unsettled conditions or in the improved and permanent shelter which ideally, at least, follows the conclusion of a juvenile proceeding.
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> The law nevertheless demands a full measure of patience with troubled parents who attempt to remedy a lack of parenting skills. In view of this required patience, certain steps are prescribed when termination of the parent-child relationship is undertaken under Iowa Code chapter 232. But, beyond the parameters of chapter 232, patience with parents can soon translate into intolerable hardship for their children.
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> It is unnecessary to take from the children's future any more than is demanded by statute. Stated otherwise, plans which extend the twelve-month period during which parents attempt to become adequate in parenting skills should be viewed with a sense of urgency.

415 N.W.2d 609, 613-14 (Iowa 1987).

K.K.C. has been made to wait long enough for P.C. to attempt to remedy her lack of parenting skills. We find termination of P.C.'s parental rights is in K.K.C.'s best interests.

AFFIRMED.