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CLERK SUPREME COURT

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

IN THE INTEREST OF A.T.,	)	Filed November 30, 1987
A Minor Child,	)	7-430 / 87-209
I.T., Natural Mother,	)	
Appellant.	)	450

Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Linn County (No. JT 622), Brent G. Harstad, Judge.

The natural mother of a three-year-old girl appeals from the juvenile order terminating her parental rights. **AFFIRMED.**

Richard L. Boresi of King, Smith & Boresi, Cedar Rapids, for appellant.

Thomas J. Miller, Attorney General; Valencia Voyd McCown, Assistant Attorney General; and Robert Kimm, Assistant County Attorney, for State.

Thomas J. O'Flaherty of Cedar Rapids for child.

Considered by Oxberger, C.J., and Donielson and Schlegel, JJ.

OXBERGER, C.J.

The natural mother, I.T., appeals the juvenile court's order terminating her parental rights. The only issue is whether the State proved by clear and convincing evidence that termination was necessary. We affirm.

Our review of the proceedings to terminate parent-child relationships is de novo. In the Interest of L.P., 370 N.W.2d 839, 840 (Iowa App. 1985); In the Interest of M.H., 367 N.W.2d 275, 278 (Iowa App. 1985). We accord weight to the factfindings of the juvenile court, especially when considering the credibility of the witneses whom that court heard and observed firsthand, but we are not bound by them. Interest of L.P., 370 N.W.2d at 840; Interest of M.H., 367 N.W.2d at 278. Central to a determination of this nature are the best interests of the child. In Interest of Dameron, 306 N.W.2d 743, 745 (Iowa 1981). The State has the duty to see that every child receives minimally adequate care and treatment and will intercede when parents abdicate their responsibility. Interest of Dameron, 306 N.W.2d at 745; Interest of M.H., 367 N.W.2d at 278. The State may revoke the rights of parents if its allegations are proven by clear and convincing evidence. Iowa Code § 232.116(5)(c) (1987); Interest of Dameron, 306 N.W.2d at 745.

I.T. asserts the State failed to prove that termination was necessary, and that she was not given an opportunity to improve her parenting skills by the Department of Human Services. The State argues I.T. failed to cooperate with the Department, and that A.T. would suffer abuse and neglect if returned to I.T.

We initially note that not only may the court look at the past behavior of the parent, but that it is an important factor. Interest of M.H., 367 N.W.2d at 275. We look to the child's long-range and immediate interests and consider what the future could hold for the child if returned to the parent. Id. We may obtain insight for this determination from evidence of the parent's past perform-

ance, for that performance may be indicative of the quality of the future care that parent is capable of providing. Interest of Dameron, 306 N.W.2d at 745; Interest of M.H., 367 N.W.2d at 278. Also, the current statutory termination provisions are preventative as well as remedial, and therefore, mandate action to prevent probable harm to a child and do not require delay until after harm has occurred. In Interest of N.H., 383 N.W.2d 570, 572 (Iowa 1986); Interest of Dameron, 306 N.W.2d at 745. Our de novo review leads us to conclude that A.T.'s best interests require a termination of I.T.'s parental rights.

The record shows that I.T. gave birth to A.T. while in high school, and that I.T. has had considerable involvement with the law. I.T. has also been shown to have an alcohol abuse problem and a tendency towards violence. She was involved in numerous fights prior to being expelled from school. After one of these fights, she retrieved A.T. from the school's day care and ran down the hall without properly supporting the child's head.

On March 7, 1985, I.T. entered into a probation agreement which was made part of a consent decree. The probation agreement was directed to improving I.T.'s parenting skills and providing A.T. with a stable home. She was ordered to visit with the Adolescent Parent Program with her probation officer and stay home at nights. She was also required to enroll in school. I.T. failed to follow through on this obligation: she failed to keep several appointments; she moved without notifying anyone of her whereabouts; and she was expelled from school for poor attendance.

I.T. was then placed in the RAPP program designed for teenage mothers. I.T. was discharged from this program after taking A.T. and not returning. When she left the program, A.T. was in need of medical assistance for a burn on her leg. I.T. and A.T. were taken into custody so A.T. could receive treatment.

I.T. then failed to keep an appointment to have the burn rechecked because she said she could take care of it herself.

Prior to this leaving the program, I.T. left it once before. This incident also led to a child abuse report being filed against I.T. When she was apprehended, I.T. was intoxicated and running down the street holding A.T. only by the head.

I.T. was then placed in the Alternative Services Program. This program is designed to teach the skills necessary for independent living, and I.T. was placed in it as a condition to getting A.T. back from foster care. I.T. understood that failure in this program would have a direct impact on her receiving permanent custody of A.T. Again, I.T. failed to keep appointments and broke various rules of the program.

While in this program, I.T. entered into a Case Permanency Plan which required attendance at parenting classes and regular visitation with A.T. I.T. became pregnant and began to improve, but shortly thereafter recommendations were made to close the case plan. I.T. had not kept up a regular visitation schedule. She failed to visit A.T. from May through August of 1986. She claims she did not have transportation. However, I.T. was provided with transportation if necessary. She was required to call in advance if she would be unable to attend. I.T. never made these calls, and the volunteer transportation program was terminated and she was given the responsibility to arrange transportation. She also testified she was "busy" and was unable to visit A.T.

I.T. claims she was not given a fair opportunity by the Department to improve. We disagree. A case plan was set up and I.T. consistently failed to cooperate. She missed appointments on a consistent basis, broke the various rules adopted for her, and during the final stages of the programs completely failed to contact the Department in an effort to obtain help.

This court has said that "a parent, through self-improvement and assistance from professionals and social agencies, may overcome the badges of poor parenthood and immaturity." In Interest of C.W.; 342 N.W.2d 885, 887 (Iowa App. 1983). I.T., with this assistance, has failed to overcome these badges. The responsibility to overcome these inadequacies rests with the parent. The parent must take some action to improve his or her parenting capabilities. The parent must also realize the immense responsibility involved in child-rearing. When a parent abdicates his or her duty, there is little choice but to take action to protect the best interests of the children involved.

AFFIRMED.