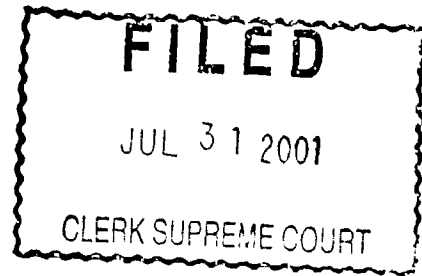


IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

No. 1-406 / 01-0254
Filed July 31, 2001



IN THE INTEREST OF B.D. and D.D., JR.,
Minor Children,

A.O., Mother,
Appellant.

Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Linn County, Susan F. Flaherty,
Associate Juvenile Judge.

The mother of two minor children appeals a juvenile court order
terminating her parental rights. **AFFIRMED.**

Charles H. Nadler of Nadler & Weston, Cedar Rapids, for appellant.

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

H. Nick Gloe of Faches, Gloe & Quint, Cedar Rapids, guardian ad litem for
minor children.

Robert W. Davison, Cedar Rapids, for father.

Considered by Mahan, P.J., and Miller and Vaitheswaran, JJ.

MAHAN, P.J.

April, the mother of Breanna and Donald, Jr., appeals the juvenile court order terminating her parental rights. She claims the State failed to use reasonable efforts as defined by her psychiatrist in promoting reunification. We affirm.

Background facts and proceedings

April and Donald are the parents of two minor children, Breanna, born July 18, 1997, and Donald Jr., born November 4, 1998. April suffers from depression and is diagnosed as mentally retarded. The family first came to the attention of DHS in February 1998, because of a founded abuse report concerning Breanna for denial of critical care, lack of adequate shelter, and lack of supervision. Among the problems were unsanitary conditions in the home, alcohol and drug use in the home, and failure to attend to Breanna's medical needs. DHS offered services, but after April left Breanna in the care of her maternal grandmother, April and Donald did not see the need for additional assistance.

In April 1999, DHS received reports the family was homeless, the parents were unable to provide the children proper medical care or nutrition, and they suffered from alcohol and substance abuse. Despite the offer of services by DHS, social workers reported little progress was made. Therefore, in September 1999, the children were removed from their parents' custody and placed in foster care. In October 1999, the children were adjudicated to be in need of assistance.

By July 2000, the State filed a petition to terminate April's and Donald's parental rights, based on their intellectual limitations, their cancellation of

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numerous scheduled visitations, their continued problems with alcohol and substance abuse, domestic assault in their home, and April's refusal to address her mental health issues. Following a hearing, the juvenile court entered an order terminating both parents' rights.

Claim on appeal

On appeal, April claims the State failed to use reasonable efforts as defined by her psychiatrist in promoting reunification. The State claims April failed to preserve error on this issue by failing to request any additional services.

Discussion

April did not request additional or different services until the termination hearing. Even then, she testified she didn't think she needed additional services except some parenting classes. April does not suggest what additional or different services would help her. She just complains what she received was not reasonable, given her mental/intellectual status. She quotes language from a psychologist who evaluated her:

To deal with family reunification, this individual will **need** to be **supervised and guided**. She needs a considerable amount of **parenting and living training**. . . . She will need **constant help** to avoid [abuse] situations.

(emphasis hers).

The importance of a parent raising objections to services early in the process so appropriate changes can be made has been emphasized repeatedly. See *In re B.K.K.*, 500 N.W.2d 54, 57 (Iowa 1993); see also *In re J.L.W.*, 570 N.W.2d 778, 781 (Iowa Ct. App. 1997). Thus, in considering the sufficiency of evidence to support termination, our focus is on the services provided by the

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State and April's response, not on services April now claims DHS failed to provide. See *In re C.B.*, 611 N.W.2d 489, 494 (Iowa 2000)

Contrary to her claim, April received additional parenting training from a provider who was trained in working with low-functioning parents, because of her limitations. She received much repetition and role modeling without any improvement in her skills. We conclude the services offered were reasonable, but April was unable to make the necessary changes and improvements to enable DHS to return her children to her care. We therefore affirm the juvenile court's termination of her parental rights to Breanna and Donald Jr.

AFFIRMED.

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