

No. 1-12-0832

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IN THE  
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS  
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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*In re* Symone S., Eddie S., Simberly S., and Rockkim C., ) Appeal from the  
Minors (The People of the State of Illinois, Petitioner- ) Circuit Court of  
Appellee, v. Veronica S., Respondent-Appellant). ) Cook County  
)  
) Nos. 06 JA 76  
) 06 JA 77  
) 06 JA 78  
) 06 JA 79  
)  
) Honorable  
) Robert Balanoff  
) Judge Presiding.

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JUSTICE MURPHY delivered the judgment of the court.  
Presiding Justice Steele and Justice Neville concurred in the judgment.

**ORDER**

¶ 1 *HELD:* The trial court's finding that respondent failed to make reasonable progress toward the minors' return from May 1, 2008, to May 1, 2011, is not against the manifest weight of the evidence where it was supported by evidence showing that respondent was never granted unsupervised visits with the minors, did not consistently visit them, did not continue individual counseling, did not complete a GED program, remained in an abusive relationship, and did not obtain adequate housing for the minors. The trial court's finding that termination of respondent's parental rights was in the minors' best interests is not against the manifest weight of the evidence where it is supported by evidence showing

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that the foster parent provided a safe and appropriate environment for the minors, that she wanted to adopt them, that they depended on her and were closely bonded to her, that they were bonded with her immediate and extended family, that they were integrated into a local school and the community, and that she was willing to facilitate their continued relationship with respondent.

¶ 2 Respondent Veronica S. appeals from orders of the circuit court of Cook County ruling that she was unfit to have a child under the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1 *et seq.* (West 2008)) and that termination of her parental rights was in the best interests of minors Symone S., Eddie S., Simberly S., and Rockkim C. On appeal, respondent contends that the trial court's findings that she was unfit and that it was in the minors' best interest to terminate her parental rights are against the manifest weight of the evidence. For the reasons that follow, we affirm.

¶ 3 BACKGROUND

¶ 4 On February 1, 2006, the State filed petitions for adjudication of wardship requesting the court adjudicate Symone, Eddie, Simberly, and Rockkim wards of the court, alleging that they had been neglected where their environment was injurious to their welfare. The State asserted that the minors resided with respondent and that on January 30, 2006, their home "was observed to have no heat, no water and no food. The home was filthy, including there being feces on the floors. There was standing water in the basement, exposed dry wall and insulation, and four broken windows." The State further asserted that the minors were dirty, that the whereabouts of the fathers of Symone, Eddie, and Simberly were unknown, and that Rockkim's father was currently incarcerated. At that time, Symone was six years old, Eddie was five years old, Simberly was three years old, and Rockkim was nine months old.

¶ 5 On November 1, 2006, the trial court conducted an adjudicatory hearing at which the

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parties stipulated that on February 1, 2006, respondent's home was occupied by seven children and several adults; that there was trash, dirty clothes, dirty sewage water, broken drywall, broken windows, and filthy walls in the home; and that the home did not have running water, food, heat, dishes, or a working refrigerator. The parties also stipulated that while respondent denied selling and using drugs, she admitted that her boyfriend, father of one of the minors, was selling drugs. The parties further stipulated that a felony amount of marijuana was found in the home; that two of the adults, but not respondent, were arrested and charged with a felony drug offense; that respondent was arrested and charged with endangering the life and health of a child due to the condition of the home; and that respondent pleaded guilty to that offense and was ordered to attend parenting classes as part of her court supervision.

¶ 6 The court found by a preponderance of the evidence that the minors had been subjected to an injurious environment where they were dirty and unwashed and the home in which they lived had broken windows and sewage water and did not have water, heat, food, dishes, or a working refrigerator. The court advised respondent that she must cooperate with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), comply with the terms of her service plan, and correct the conditions that required the minors to be taken into the courts' care or risk termination of her parental rights.

¶ 7 On February 1, 2007, the trial court conducted a dispositional hearing and adjudged the minors wards of the court, finding that respondent was unable to care for them and that she needed to complete the parenting skills classes she was taking at that time. The court appointed the DCFS Guardianship Administrator as the minors' guardian and again advised respondent that

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if she did not comply with the terms of its service plan and correct the conditions that caused the minors to be adjudged wards of the court, she would risk having her parental rights terminated. Respondent then appealed the trial court's decision, her court-appointed attorney filed a motion for leave to withdraw as appellate counsel, and this court granted counsel's motion and affirmed the trial court's judgment, finding that respondent did not present any meritorious issues in her appeal.

¶ 8 On July 1, 2011, the State filed supplemental petitions for the appointment of a guardian with the right to consent to adoption in which it requested the court find respondent unfit to have a child under the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1 *et seq.* (West 2008)), permanently terminate her parental rights as to the minors, and find that it was in the minors' best interests for a guardian be appointed with the right to consent to adoption. The State alleged that respondent was unfit because she had failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to the minors' welfare (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2008)) and had failed to protect them from conditions in their environment injurious to their welfare (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(g) (West 2008)). The State also alleged that respondent was unfit because she had failed to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions which were the basis for the minors' removal and/or had failed to make reasonable progress toward their return within nine months of the court's adjudication of neglect or any nine-month period thereafter. 750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m) (West 2008). The State further alleged that it was in the minors' best interests for a guardian to be appointed with the right to consent to their adoption because they had resided with their foster parent, Latanya Obasuii, since February 9, 2007, Obasuii wished to adopt them, and it was in their best interests

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to be adopted by her.

¶ 9 On December 6, 2011, the State filed a pleading pursuant to section 1(D)(m)(iii) of the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(iii) (West 2008)), specifying that the relevant nine-month periods in which it was alleging that respondent had failed to make reasonable progress toward the minors' return were the five consecutive nine-month periods from August 1, 2007, to May 1, 2011. However, the State subsequently withdrew its allegations regarding the time period from August 1, 2007, to May 1, 2008, leaving four consecutive nine-month periods from May 1, 2008, to May 1, 2011.

¶ 10 On February 21, 2012, the court conducted a termination hearing at which seven service plans prepared by Cortaiga Johnson, respondent's case worker, were entered into evidence. The service plans were dated January 28, 2008, July 22, 2008, July 8, 2009, January 19, 2010, July 13, 2010, January 18, 2011, and July 19, 2011. In the service plans for January 28, 2008, July 22, 2008, and July 8, 2009, the permanency goal for the minors was a return home within 12 months, and respondent's progress toward that goal was rated as "unsatisfactory." The goal was then changed to substitute care pending the court's determination on termination of respondent's parental rights for the remainder of the service plans, and respondent's progress toward that goal was rated as "goal not achieved" in the service plan for January 19, 2010, and as "satisfactory" in the plans for July 13, 2010, January 18, 2011, and July 19, 2011.

¶ 11 In the service plan for July 8, 2009, Johnson related that respondent had been inconsistent in attending her weekly visits over the preceding few months and noted that respondent had only taken advantage of one overnight visit since they became available on March 18, 2008. In the

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service plan for January 19, 2010, Johnson related that respondent did not visit the minors in August, September, or October 2009. In the service plan for July 13, 2010, Johnson related that respondent had not visited the minors in February, March, or May 2010. In the service plan for January 18, 2011, Johnson related that respondent had not visited the minors in August, September, October, or December 2010.

¶ 12 The service plan from July 19, 2011, also included a closing summary/progress status report prepared by respondent's therapist and dated October 1, 2009, relating that respondent was making steady progress toward goal attainment, but took "a somewhat lackadaisical attitude" toward counseling and sometimes missed her counseling sessions. Respondent's therapist also related that respondent had missed several GED classes and did not see the importance of regular attendance, and that she seemed conflicted about achieving the minors' return where she did not seem willing to relinquish custody of the minors to Obasuii, but also seemed to appreciate the freedom from daily parenting. Respondent's therapist recommended that respondent continue individual counseling to develop a greater understanding of her role as a mother and complete her GED program to improve her employability.

¶ 13 Johnson, a caseworker who had worked for Hull House, and then Children's Home and Aid, testified that she was assigned to respondent's case in January 2006. A couple weeks later, Johnson went to respondent's home and could tell that respondent and her family had attempted to correct the conditions that led to the minors' removal because the home appeared clean, the front window was boarded up, and there was no sewage in the basement, but a line around the walls and a stench of sewage in the air indicating that there had been some standing water.

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¶ 14 An assessment of respondent was conducted in July 2007, and she was found to be in need of a mental health assessment, parenting classes, individual therapy, and a psychological evaluation. Respondent was to attend weekly individual therapy sessions to address personal issues from her childhood and relationship issues, including domestic violence. At that time, respondent was seeing Albert Clark, Rockkim's father, with whom she had just had another child. Johnson testified that in late 2008 or early 2009, respondent told her that she had been in a verbal and physical altercation with Clark at some point in the past. Respondent was also to provide Johnson with information regarding her employment status and job searches and complete a GED program. Throughout the relevant time periods, respondent failed to provide Johnson with information regarding her employment status and job searches and would only do so after she had found a job. In addition, respondent did not complete a GED program due to problems with her attendance.

¶ 15 During the period from May 1, 2008, to February 1, 2009, respondent continued to participate in individual therapy and parent coaching, but also maintained her relationship with Clark, which Johnson thought was inappropriate due to continued domestic violence issues. In addition, respondent was allowed supervised night and day visits with the minors at Obasuii's home and would then also be allowed unsupervised day visits in the community if she followed through on the supervised visits. However, respondent's attendance at the supervised day visits was sporadic, and she took advantage of the supervised overnight visits only one time, doing so in February 2009. Also, respondent was living with her aunt during this time period in a home that was not conducive to the visits by the minors due to the presence of various family members

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and although Johnson recommended that respondent find appropriate housing, she was unable to do so despite filling out a form for section 8 housing.

¶ 16 During the period from February 1 to November 1, 2009, respondent was allowed weekly supervised visits at Obasui's home, but was inconsistent in attending those visits and in notifying Obasui or Johnson of whether she would attend. At that time, respondent was living with her mother, Kim S., who could not be a caretaker due to a prior case with DCFS that had not been closed, and her siblings, including Roseanne M., who had an open case with DCFS. Also, respondent did not provide Johnson with evidence that she was seeking employment, did not complete a GED program, did not continue individual therapy, and maintained her relationship with Clark during this period of time. In addition, on October 13, 2009, the court entered orders changing the permanency goal from a return of the minors within 12 months to substitute care pending termination of parental rights. In those orders, the court explained that it was changing the goal because respondent had not made necessary progress in services and visitation and Obasui wished to adopt the minors.

¶ 17 During the period from November 1, 2009, to August 1, 2010, respondent was allowed monthly supervised visits, but missed at least three or four of them and did not make additional visits even though Obasui was willing to allow for them. Respondent told Johnson that she did not want to visit the minors because she was upset about the change in the permanency goal and was having issues with Obasui. At this point, the visits were moved from Obasui's home to respondent's home to help ensure her attendance. In addition, respondent was still living with her mother and siblings at this time and had not found appropriate housing. Also, respondent did not

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provide Johnson with verification that she was seeking employment, but would occasionally find short-term seasonal work. Further, respondent was not participating in individual therapy and had not completed a GED program despite Johnson's offer to help obtain necessary services and recommendation that she do so.

¶ 18 During the period from August 1, 2010, to May 1, 2011, respondent went months without visiting the minors and provided reasons for her absences including that either she or her youngest child were sick. In addition, respondent did not participate in any necessary services despite Johnson's offer to help find resources in the community, maintained her relationship with Clark, and did not successfully complete or continue individual therapy during this time period.

¶ 19 On cross-examination, Johnson stated that respondent successfully completed parenting coaching and at times implemented the skills she learned from her parenting coach during her visits. Johnson also stated that since August 1, 2007, respondent had never resided in a place where the minors' return would have been possible and only attended GED classes for about a year. Johnson further stated that she observed the interactions between respondent and the minors during some of her visits and that the exchange appeared to be positive.

¶ 20 Roseanne M., respondent's sister, testified that she lived in a five-bedroom house with her mother, respondent, her sister Kimberly, her three children, respondent's youngest child, and Kimberly's two children and that there was room in the house for beds and sleeping quarters for the minors. Roseanne also testified that she had observed respondent and the minors during two recent visits and saw that respondent acted appropriately around them and that they were happy to see her.

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¶ 21 Kim S., respondent's mother, testified that she lived with her daughters and their children in a five-bedroom house and that the house was big enough to accommodate the minors. Kim further testified that she had recently observed respondent with the minors on two occasions and that the minors appeared to have had fun both times.

¶ 22 Following closing arguments, the trial court made an oral ruling finding respondent to be unfit under each of the three grounds alleged. In doing so, the court stated that respondent had never been granted unsupervised day or night visits in the six-plus years the case had been in the court system, had not made enough progress for unsupervised visits to be an option, did not complete individual therapy, did not visit the minors on a regular basis, did not complete a GED program, remained in a violent relationship, had not obtained adequate housing, and only took advantage of one of the many available supervised overnight visits. The court also entered a written order relating that respondent was unfit under each of the three alleged grounds.

¶ 23 The court then conducted a best interests hearing, at which Johnson testified that the minors had been in non-relative foster care with Obasui since 2008 and that she believed it was in the minors' best interests to terminate respondent's parental rights. Johnson testified that the placement was safe and appropriate and that the minors were bonded with Obasui and depended on her; had a relationship with Obasui's daughter and her daughter's boyfriend Terrell, who also lived with them; and were integrated into Obasui's extended family. Simberly and Rockkim called Obasui "Mom" or "Tanya" and Symone and Eddie went to school near Obasui's home, had friends at that school and in the area, and had roots in the community. Johnson further testified that Obasui was open to the idea of adopting all four minors and that she would

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recommend that the permanency goal be adoption by Obasuii because she was able to provide a stable home for the minors and meet their needs and was willing to continue their relationship with respondent.

¶ 24 On cross-examination, Johnson stated that unusual incident reports were filed regarding bedbugs in Obasuii's home, corporal punishment, and an incident involving Simberly. Obasuii signed an acknowledgment of understanding in response to the corporal punishment incident and a relative or friend of Terrell was no longer allowed in the home in response to the incident involving Simberly. Johnson also stated that Symone and Simberly wanted to return home with respondent, that Eddie was fine with staying with Obasuii or respondent, that she was not sure whether Rockkim wanted to live with respondent, and that all four referred to respondent as their mother. Johnson further stated that she believed that the minors were more bonded to respondent than respondent was to them.

¶ 25 Obasuii testified that she was the minors' foster parent, that they had been with her since 2006, that she loved and was bonded with all four of them, and that they referred to her daughter as their sister and to Terrell as "Uncle Terrell." Obasuii also testified that she worked from home and was able to monitor and care for the minors there and that they all attended a school about two blocks away from her home and were involved in extracurricular activities. Obasuii further testified that she wanted to adopt the minors and take care of them, facilitated visits between them and respondent, and would not interfere with their relationship with respondent.

¶ 26 On cross-examination, Obasuii stated that she provided the minors with food and took them to the doctor, that respondent referred to her as "Momma," that Clark visited Rockkim more

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often than respondent visited the minors, and that Clark stated that respondent did not visit more often because "she didn't want to come." Obasui also stated that an incident regarding Simberly occurred in October 2009 in which Terrell's nephew was visiting and was directed to wake her up and Simberly claimed that he touched her butt as he did so. Simberly was then taken to the hospital where a nurse determined she was not telling the truth and Terrell's nephew was no longer allowed to visit Obasui's home. Obasui further stated that she bought new beds in response to the bedbug incident and that the situation had thus been resolved.

¶ 27 Kim S. testified that she lived with her three daughters and their children and was able to accommodate the minors in her home. Kim further testified that she believed it was in the minors' best interests to be returned to respondent because she was their mother and was capable of taking care of them and that respondent acted appropriately with her youngest child and all the children in their home.

¶ 28 Respondent testified that she had a good bond with the minors and talked with them all the time and that terminating her parental rights would not be in their best interests. Respondent also testified that the only visit she missed occurred in November 2010 and that she notified Johnson of her absence beforehand. Respondent further testified that all four minors had told her that they wanted to go home with her, that there were enough beds for them at her home, and that she provided them with clothes and half of her food stamps.

¶ 29 Following closing arguments, the trial court found that it was in the minors' best interests to terminate respondent's parental rights. In doing so, the court stated that the minors needed permanency and a stable home and that Obasui had provided them a traditional foster home over

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the previous six years. The court further stated that the placement was safe and appropriate, that the minors were bonded with Obasuii, that Obasuii had integrated the minors into her family and the community, and that Obasuii was credible when she testified that she was willing to have the minors continue their relationship with respondent

¶ 30

#### ANALYSIS

¶ 31 A court may terminate a person's parental rights where there is a showing by clear and convincing evidence that she is "unfit," as that term is defined in the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1(D) (West 2008)), and the court determines that termination of her parental rights is in the children's best interests. 705 ILCS 405/2-29(2) (West 2008); *In re C.W.*, 199 Ill. 2d 198, 210 (2002). This court may only reverse a trial court's finding regarding a parent's unfitness or the children's best interests if it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d 181, 208 (2001); *In re M.R.*, 393 Ill. App. 3d 609, 617 (2009). "A finding is against the manifest weight of the evidence where the opposite conclusion is clearly evident." *C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d at 208. Respondent contends that the trial court's findings that she was unfit to be a parent and that the termination of her parental rights was in the best interest of the minors are against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 32

#### I. Unfitness

¶ 33 In this case, the State set forth three bases for respondent's unfitness: (1) she had failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to the minors' welfare (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2008)); (2) she had failed to protect the minors from conditions in their environment injurious to their welfare (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(g) (West 2008)); and (3) she had failed

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to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions which were the basis for their removal and/or failed to make reasonable progress toward their return within nine months of the adjudication of neglect or any nine-month period thereafter (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m) (West 2008)). Although the three bases of unfitness alleged against respondent are distinct, only one ground of unfitness need be proved to find her unfit. *In re J.A.*, 316 Ill. App. 3d 553, 564 (2000).

¶ 34 Respondent first asserts that the trial court's finding that she was unfit under subsection (m) of the statute defining an unfit parent for failing to make reasonable progress toward the minors' return is against the manifest weight of the evidence where she made such progress by participating in the services requested of her. A declaration of unfitness under subsection (m) may be based on a parent's failure:

"(i) to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for the removal of the child from the parent, or (ii) to make reasonable progress toward the return of the child to the parent within 9 months after an adjudication of neglected or abused minor \*\*\*, or (iii) to make reasonable progress toward the return of the child to the parent during any 9-month period after the end of the initial 9-month period following the adjudication of neglected or abused minor."

750 ILCS 50/1(m) (West 2008).

A finding of parental unfitness may be based on any of the three grounds set forth in subsection (m). *In re Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d 1052, 1066 (2006).

¶ 35 Initially, we note that there is a conflict between the trial court's written order and oral ruling regarding whether respondent was found to be unfit under subsection (m)(i) or (m)(iii).

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The transcript from the termination hearing shows that in finding respondent unfit, the trial court stated that during the six-plus years this case had been in the system, respondent had "never achieved unsupervised day visits, never achieved unsupervised overnight visits," and at no time was "involved in enough services or progressing enough so that those were even an option." The court also stated that respondent did not progress or complete individual therapy, failed to regularly visit the minors "for months on end," only took advantage of one supervised overnight visit while such visits were available, had not completed a GED program, stayed in a violent relationship with Clark, and had not obtained adequate housing for the minors. In its written order, the court stated that respondent was unfit under subsection (m) because she had "failed to make reasonable efforts to correct conditions which were the basis for removal for the period 8/1/07 to 5/1/11." Thus, while the court found respondent unfit under subsection (m)(iii) in its oral ruling for failing to make adequate progress toward the minors' return, it found respondent unfit under subsection (m)(i) in its written order for failing to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions on which the minors' removal was based.

¶ 36 This court has held that where there is a conflict between a trial court's written and oral orders, the oral order prevails. *In re Tr. O.*, 362 Ill. App. 3d 860, 868 (2005). In this case, it is clear from the trial court's oral ruling that it found respondent unfit under subsection (m)(iii) due to her failure to make progress toward the minors' return where the court cited to her failure to reach numerous benchmarks in the substantial amount of time during which the case had been before the court. We therefore now consider whether the court's finding that respondent was unfit under subsection (m)(iii) is against the manifest weight of the evidence.

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¶ 37 A parent's reasonable progress toward a child's return "is judged by an objective standard based upon the amount of progress measured from the conditions existing at the time custody was taken from the parent." *Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d at 1067. Reasonable progress requires measurable or demonstrable movement toward the goal of reunification, which encompasses the parent's compliance with the service plans prepared by the case worker and the court's directives in light of the condition that gave rise to the child's removal and other conditions which would prevent the court from returning custody to the parent. *Id.* A parent has made reasonable progress when a court may conclude that the child may be returned to parental custody in the near future. *Id.*

¶ 38 In this case, respondent never progressed to a point where she was granted unsupervised day or overnight visits with the minors, much less to a point where the minors could be returned to her custody in the near future. Also, on October 13, 2009, the permanency goal was changed from the minors' return home within 12 months to substitute care pending a determination on termination of respondent's parental rights due to the court's finding that she had not made necessary progress regarding services and visitation. In addition, Johnson testified that respondent did not consistently attend her scheduled visits with the minors and the service plans she prepared show that respondent failed to visit the minors for months at a time.

¶ 39 In addition, respondent's therapist related in the closing summary/progress status report from October 1, 2009, that while respondent was making steady progress toward goal attainment, she had taken a "somewhat lackadaisical attitude toward individual counseling sessions" and frequently missed counseling sessions. Respondent's therapist also related that respondent was

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conflicted about the minors' return and seemed to appreciate the freedom from daily parenting supplied by Obasui. Respondent's therapist recommended that respondent participate in further individual counseling, and Johnson testified that although she provided respondent with information regarding available services, respondent did not use those services and did not continue with counseling.

¶ 40 The status report prepared by respondent's therapist also related that although respondent had enrolled in GED classes, she missed several classes and did not see the importance of regular attendance. In addition, Johnson testified that respondent did not complete a GED program due to problems with her attendance. Johnson further testified that respondent maintained a violent relationship with Clark and never obtained adequate housing for the minors.

¶ 41 Under the manifest weight of the evidence standard, a trial court's judgment should be affirmed if there is any supporting evidence in the record. *In re Estate of Wilson*, 238 Ill. 2d 519570 (2010). In this case, the court's finding that respondent had failed to make reasonable progress toward the minors' return from May 1, 2008, to May 1, 2011, is supported by evidence showing that respondent had not progressed to a point where she was allowed unsupervised visits with the minors, did not consistently visit them, did not continue individual counseling, did not complete a GED program, maintained a relationship with Clark, and did not obtain adequate housing. While respondent maintains that she had "clearly" made progress by participating in the services requested of her, evidence was presented at the termination hearing showing that she did not satisfactorily comply with all the service programs or consistently visit the minors despite multiple opportunities to do so.

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¶ 42 As such, we conclude that the trial court's determination that respondent was unfit under subsection (m)(iii) is not against the manifest weight of the evidence, and we therefore need not consider respondent's claims that the trial court's findings that she was unfit under the additional bases alleged by the State are against the manifest weight of the evidence. See *Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d at 1066 (a finding of parental unfitness may be based on any of the grounds set forth in subsection (m)); *J.A.*, 316 Ill. App. 3d at 564 (only one ground need be proved to support a finding of unfitness).

¶ 43

## II. Best Interests

¶ 44 Respondent also contends that the trial court's finding that the termination of her parental rights was in the minors' best interests is against the manifest weight of the evidence. Once a parent has been found to be "unfit," the court must then consider whether it is in the child's best interests to terminate her parental rights. *C.W.*, 199 Ill. 2d at 210. The State bears the burden of proving that termination of parental rights is in the child's best interests by a preponderance of the evidence. *In re D.T.*, 212 Ill. 2d 347, 366 (2004). In making such a determination, a court shall consider the following factors:

"(a) the physical safety and welfare of the child, including food, shelter, health, and clothing; (b) the development of the child's identity; (c) the child's background and ties, including familial, cultural, and religious; (d) the child's sense of attachments, including: (i) where the child actually feels love, attachment, and a sense of being valued \*\*\*; (ii) the child's sense of security; (iii) the child's sense of familiarity; (iv) continuity of affection for the child; (v) the

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least disruptive placement alternative for the child; (e) the child's wishes and long-term goals; (f) the child's community ties, including church, school, and friends; (g) the child's need for permanence which includes the child's need for stability and continuity of relationships with parent figures and with siblings and other relatives; (h) the uniqueness of every family and child; (i) the risks attendant to entering and being in substitute care; and (j) the preferences of the persons available to care for the child." 705 ILCS 405/1-3(4.05) (West 2010).

¶ 45 Respondent asserts that the trial court's finding is against the manifest weight of the evidence because it did not specifically address each of the statutory factors in its oral finding that it was in the minors' best interests to terminate her parental rights. However, this court has held that in making a determination on parental rights, the trial court is not required to articulate any specific rationale for its decision or explicitly mention each statutory factor. *In re Jaron Z.*, 348 Ill. App. 3d 239, 262-63 (2004). Thus, the trial court was not required to specifically address each of the listed statutory factors in this case, and we cannot conclude that its finding is against the manifest weight of the evidence on that basis.

¶ 46 In addition, evidence was presented at the best interests hearing showing that Obasui provided a safe and appropriate environment for the minors, that she wanted to adopt them, that they depended on her and were closely bonded to her, that they were bonded with her immediate and extended family, that they were integrated into a local school and the community, and that she was willing to facilitate their continued relationship with respondent. We thus conclude that the trial court's finding that the termination of respondent's parental rights was in the minors' best

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interests is not against the manifest weight of the evidence where there is substantial evidence in the record to support that finding.

¶ 47

CONCLUSION

¶ 48 Accordingly, we affirm the judgment of the circuit court of Cook County.

¶ 49 Affirmed.