2015 IL App (4th) 150070-U

FILED
June 25, 2015
Carla Bender
4th District Appellate
Court, IL

NOS. 4-15-0070, 4-15-0071, 4-15-0072, 4-15-0073 cons.

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF ILLINOIS

FOURTH DISTRICT

In re: K.A., a Minor,	)	Appeal from
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,	)	Circuit Court of
Petitioner-Appellee,	)	Macon County
v. (4-15-0070)	)	
KA'TAVEYONA FREEMAN,	)	No. 13JA16
Respondent-Appellant.	)	
	)	
In re: K.A., a Minor,	)	
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,	)	
Petitioner-Appellee,	)	
v. (4-15-0071)	)	No. 13JA16
TERRELL ADAMS,	)	
Respondent-Appellant.	)	
	)	
In re: T.A., a Minor,	)	
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,	)	
Petitioner-Appellee,	)	
v. (4-15-0072)	)	No. 13JA149
KA'TAVEYONA FREEMAN,	)	
Respondent-Appellant.	)	
	)	
In re: T.A., a Minor,	)	
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,	)	
Petitioner-Appellee,	)	No. 13JA149
v. (4-15-0073)	)	
TERRELL ADAMS,	)	
Respondent-Appellant.	)	Honorable
	)	Thomas E. Little,
	)	Judge Presiding.

JUSTICE HARRIS delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Knecht and Appleton concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held*: The appellate court affirmed, concluding the trial court's fitness and best-interest findings were not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 2 Respondents, Ka'Taveyona Freeman and Terrell Adams, appeal the trial court's termination of their parental rights to their children, K.A. and T.A. Respondents challenge both the court's fitness and best-interest determinations. Their appeals have been consolidated. We affirm.

¶ 3 I. BACKGROUND

¶ 4 The record shows that on January 25, 2013, respondent father committed a domestic battery against respondent mother and K.A. (born October 2, 2012). Respondent mother was holding K.A., then nearly four months of age, in her arms when respondent father began punching her in the face. K.A. was inadvertently struck in the face by respondent father. Respondent mother and K.A. were treated at the Decatur Memorial Hospital emergency department. According to a February 19, 2013, shelter-care report, K.A. suffered a small subconjunctival hemorrhage in his left eye, although it was unclear whether the hemorrhage was the result of being struck in the face. According to respondent mother, the red spot on K.A.'s eye was due to a cold.

¶ 5 On February 15, 2013, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) took K.A. into protective custody after respondent mother (1) failed to attend a follow-up appointment for K.A.'s eye, (2) continued to have contact with respondent father despite a no-contact order, and (3) declined to pursue domestic-battery charges against respondent father.

¶ 6 On February 19, 2013, the State filed a petition (case No. 13-JA-16) alleging K.A. was a neglected or abused minor, and it was in his best interest to be adjudicated a ward of the court. The State's neglect and abuse claims were based on the January 25, 2013, domestic-

violence incident. According to a February 19, 2013, docket entry, at the shelter-care hearing on that day, both respondent mother and respondent father (who was present in the custody the Macon County sheriff's office) stipulated there was probable cause to believe K.A. was "neglected, abused and dependent and that it [was] a matter of immediate and urgent necessity that [K.A.] be placed in shelter care." DCFS was appointed temporary guardian of K.A.

¶ 7 On April 24, 2013, respondents stipulated to one count of the State's three-count petition, which alleged K.A. was a neglected minor. On April 25, 2013, the trial court entered an adjudicatory order, finding K.A. was a neglected minor as alleged in the State's petition. The same day, the court entered its dispositional order, adjudicating K.A. neglected, making him a ward of the court, and placing custody and guardianship of K.A. with DCFS.

¶ 8 On October 16, 2013, the State filed a petition (case No. 13-JA-149) alleging T.A., born October 11, 2013, to respondent mother and respondent father, was a neglected or abused minor, and it was in his best interest to be adjudicated a ward of the court. The State's neglect and abuse claims were based on respondent's mother's failure to make sufficient progress toward K.A.'s return home, respondent father's incarceration and history of substance abuse, ongoing domestic violence, and the failure to provide follow-up medical care for K.A. According to an October 16, 2013, docket entry, at the shelter-care hearing held that day, both respondent mother and respondent father (who was present in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections), stipulated there was probable cause to believe T.A. was "neglected, abused and dependent and that it [was] a matter of immediate and urgent necessity that [T.A.] be placed in shelter care." DCFS was appointed temporary guardian of T.A.

¶ 9 On November 20, 2013, respondents stipulated to one count of the State's three-count petition, which alleged T.A. was a neglected minor. On November 21, 2013, the trial court

entered an adjudicatory order, finding T.A. was a neglected minor as alleged in the State's petition. The same day, the court entered its dispositional order, adjudicating T.A. neglected, making him a ward of the court, and placing custody and guardianship of T.A. with DCFS.

¶ 10 On July 28, 2014, the State filed motions in both cases, seeking a finding of unfitness and termination of respondents' parental rights for both minor children. The motions alleged that (1) respondents abandoned K.A. and T.A. (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(a) (West 2012)); (2) respondents failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to K.A. and T.A.'s welfare (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2012)); (3) respondents deserted K.A. and T.A. for more than three months prior to the unfitness proceedings (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(c) (West 2012)); (4) respondents failed to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for the removal of K.A. and T.A. (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(i) (West 2012)); (5) respondents failed to make reasonable progress toward the return of K.A. and T.A. to respondents within nine months after the adjudication of neglect or abuse (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(ii) (West 2012)); and (6) respondent mother had evidenced an inability to discharge her parental responsibilities due to mental impairment, mental illness, or mental retardation (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(p) (West 2012)). The State also alleged that the termination of respondents' parental rights would be in K.A.'s and T.A.'s best interest. On October 1, 2014, the State filed amended motions in both cases, seeking a finding of unfitness and termination of respondents' parental rights for both minor children. The amended motions were fundamentally the same as the original motions except that the State included the relevant nine month periods to consider (April 25, 2013, through January 25, 2014, and October 25, 2013, through July 25, 2014) for respondents' failure to make reasonable progress toward the return of K.A. and T.A. following the adjudication of neglect or abuse.

¶ 11 On November 17, 2014, the trial court conducted the first part of a fitness hear-

ing in both cases. Lori McKenzie, a clinical psychologist, testified regarding her September 2013 evaluation of respondent mother. According to McKenzie, respondent mother's intelligent-quotient testing revealed her cognitive abilities to be "at least in the average range," while her academic reading and math skills tested at the middle school level, which she stated was "average of what's out there in the general public."

¶ 12 McKenzie opined that respondent mother had the skills necessary for basic parenting, but if her children "needed some kind of specialized medical treatment or additional *** help, she might need extra assistance with understanding what to do about that." Although respondent mother reported she was not experiencing any depression or anxiety, McKenzie testified her presentation suggested "at least a mild to moderate level of depression." Respondent mother reported having suffered from depression and issues with anger management when she was younger. Based on respondent mother's presentation and history, McKenzie diagnosed her with depressive disorder and antisocial personality disorder with dependent traits. According to McKenzie, having an antisocial personality disorder does not necessarily preclude one from being a good parent; however, McKenzie was concerned that respondent mother was not ready to put her children's needs first because her relationship with respondent father was very important to her and she was willing to remain in the relationship despite the domestic violence. McKenzie opined that if respondents received counseling together, their relationship might improve. When asked whether she would have concerns regarding the children's safety with respondent mother if nothing had changed since the evaluation, McKenzie replied, "I would still have concerns if nothing had changed."

¶ 13 On cross-examination, McKenzie testified her opinion was based entirely on her evaluation conducted more than one year ago and she had no knowledge about whether respond-

ent mother had progressed since then.

¶ 14 Amy Scrimpsher, a licensed clinical social worker, testified that she was respondent mother's therapist since January 2, 2013, and had last seen her on August 25, 2014. Scrimpsher stated she diagnosed respondent mother with adjustment disorder with anxiety and depressed mood. Scrimpsher engaged respondent mother in client-centered psychotherapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy. According to Scrimpsher, respondent mother was not consistent in attending therapy sessions, which made it difficult to gauge her progress. Respondent mother's excuses for missing therapy sessions included illness and lack of transportation, and she "just didn't show up for about 11 visits that she was scheduled for over the nine months." Scrimpsher testified that at one point she stopped scheduling sessions due to respondent mother's inconsistency in attending. Although she later allowed respondent mother to reengage in therapy, she terminated therapy sessions a few months later due to respondent mother's failure attend the scheduled appointments.

¶ 15 Scrimpsher testified that respondent mother may have made "slight progress" during their sessions and that she seemed to be more consistent when respondent father was with her. Scrimpsher had concerns regarding respondent mother's ability to care for a newborn because she did not have a positive support system and had aggression issues. On cross-examination, Scrimpsher testified she would not have any concerns with respondent mother's ability to parent if she had a positive support system.

¶ 16 At this point, the hearing was continued due to respondent father's pending jury trial in order to preserve his fifth-amendment right against self-incrimination.

¶ 17 On December 18, 2014, the second part of the fitness hearing commenced. Joyce Kirkland, a domestic-violence advocate for DOVE, a domestic-violence program, and the

group facilitator for DOVE's domestic-violence support group, testified that respondent mother attended 22 group sessions between May 28, 2013, and November 18, 2014. According to Kirkland, there were a lot of gaps in her attendance and she "was a little bit slow to start services." Kirkland testified that respondent mother "was much more consistent in attendance *** during the last six months." Although respondent mother was pregnant and had some health issues related to her third pregnancy, Kirkland stated, "she shows fairly consistent attendance from about June of this year through November." According to Kirkland, although respondent mother did not share a lot of personal information, she was attentive and engaged during group sessions. Kirkland explained that DOVE does not assess whether someone is successful in their domestic-violence support group, but in her opinion, respondent mother was "learning."

¶ 18 Monique Howell, a foster-care caseworker, testified that she became the caseworker for the entire family in May 2014 and that she had access to the previous caseworker's records and notes. Since she became the caseworker, Howell stated, "there ha[ve] been some issues as far as consistency and overall compliance, there's been some safety concerns, there's been some concerns in the area of violence and there's just been concerns overall in regard to [respondent mother's] ability to parent her children."

¶ 19 Howell explained the initial service plan, which the record shows was initiated March 28, 2013, would have included requirements that respondent mother (1) engage in domestic-violence counseling, (2) complete parenting education, (3) attend all visits with her children, and (4) engage in individual psychotherapy. Howell testified that respondent mother was rated unsatisfactory on the initial service plan because "there [was] no consistency or stability in reporting for appointments." She continued, "[i]n order for her to overcome the issues that overall brought the children into care and that will help her understand and learn how to safely parent

her children, she would need to engage in these services and she would definitely need to be consistent." Howell testified, "there has always been large gaps of absence and then there are timeframes where she will be consistent. But overall, she is not consistent in any of her services." Although respondent mother completed parenting classes, Howell noted it took her over one year to complete what should be a four-month program.

¶ 20 Howell testified she was uncertain how respondent mother performed during the second service plan, which the record indicates was implemented July 26, 2013, but Howell thought "there was one point that she was making some progress." Howell also testified she had reviewed a third service plan, implemented in April 2014, and noted respondent mother was rated as having unsatisfactory progress for "[t]he same issues, failure to be consistent in domestic violence [therapy], just overall not fully engaging in the services that are recommended." We note the record does not contain an April 2014 service plan. Howell testified that she created the last service plan which, according to the record, was implemented July 25, 2014. According to Howell, respondent mother was rated as having unsatisfactory progress again as "we just can't get her to understand the importance of reporting for all of her services that are recommended by DCFS in order for her to understand and learn how to properly, safely parent her children."

¶ 21 Howell further testified that during respondent mother's visits with her children, she spoke with her regarding the importance of taking care of herself, reminded her of her appointments, and offered bus cards to assist with transportation to her appointments. Howell also reminded her of the importance of attending her appointments during monthly meetings at respondent mother's house. Despite being reminded of the importance of her attendance, Howell stated respondent mother was still inconsistent. Howell opined her inconsistency may be due to "some sort of [learning disability] that is preventing her from being able to understand the im-

portance of reporting to these appointments." According to Howell, respondent mother, who was currently pregnant, had not reported for her last three prenatal visits, had been discharged from Decatur Psychological for not reporting, and would be terminated from her current therapist if she did not report for her appointment the next day. In addition, she stated respondent mother has a pending criminal charge for battery. Howell explained that respondent mother's family continues to suffer issues of domestic violence and, as recently as the last week, respondent mother's own mother had physically assaulted her on courthouse property.

¶ 22 Howell testified that while respondent mother consistently attended visits with her children, during approximately half of the visits respondent mother had to be encouraged to interact with the children because "she was very distracted."

¶ 23 Howell further testified that respondent father's service plan was rated as unsatisfactory. He had been released from prison in December 2013 and consistently tested positive for cannabis. He was unsuccessfully discharged from individual therapy and domestic-violence counseling because he was arrested again and could not physically attend the sessions. When he was not incarcerated and able to visit with his children, Howell stated the visits went "extremely well." As of the date of the hearing, respondent father was serving a six-year prison sentence after pleading guilty to predatory criminal sexual assault.

¶ 24 Howell testified that she reviewed the prior caseworker's notes for the period of April 25, 2013, through January 2014. During that time, nothing in the notes indicated to Howell that respondents were showing progress toward the return of their children. Regarding the period of October 2013 to July 2014, Howell indicated "there was some progress between December 2013 to February 2014," but in March 2014, an incident involving respondent father and respondent mother's sister happened at respondent mother's apartment, where the children had been

visiting, which resulted in the visits returning to Webster-Cantrell Hall. From that point on, Howell stated any progress was minimal.

¶ 25 Respondent mother testified on her own behalf. She stated she tried to make it to her appointments and tried to call if she was unable to attend. According to respondent mother, the reason for her delay in starting parenting classes was because she was told to wait until respondent father got out of prison so they could start at the same time. She testified that when she had money, she brought snacks and food for her children to eat during their visits and interacted with them as much as she could. She stated that she loved her children and believed she could properly take care of them.

¶ 26 Respondent father presented no evidence.

¶ 27 At the conclusion of the fitness hearing, the trial court found respondents unfit based upon all grounds alleged in the State's amended motions seeking a finding of unfitness and the termination of parental rights.

¶ 28 On January 26, 2015, the trial court conducted a best-interest hearing in both cases. Howell testified that T.A. and K.A., 1 and 2 years of age respectively, were residing together in a potentially adoptive home and were "doing really good." The children were very bonded to their foster parents and "very well loved." The foster parents were able to properly take care of the children. Regarding respondent father, Howell testified that prior to his incarceration, he "had a wonderful bond" with the children. However, since his incarceration, he has only been able to see his children once per month through a glass window. In Howell's opinion, the children were more attached to their foster parents then to either respondent.

¶ 29 The best-interest report prepared by Howell noted that respondent mother suffered from depression, anxiety, and mood disorder, and that she is easily overwhelmed and lacks good

judgment in the safety and well-being of her children. It further noted respondent mother was "extremely inconsistent and unreliable in her service plan." During visits with her children, respondent mother was observed frequently ignoring them. She also did not provide food to the children during many visits and often forgot to change their diapers. The report also noted respondent mother's lack of familial support and instances of domestic violence between her and various family members, including her own mother. On January 20, 2015, respondent mother pleaded guilty to battery and was sentenced to 24 months' probation. Additionally, respondent mother was nine months pregnant and "nearly unable to support herself." She missed several prenatal appointments, was unemployed, and had a ninth-grade education. Regarding respondent father, the best-interest report indicated that he was serving a six-year prison sentence for predatory criminal sexual abuse. Due to his incarceration, he did not successfully complete the terms of his service plan. Further, the report noted that respondent father consistently tested positive for cannabis.

¶ 30 Respondent mother testified on her own behalf. She stated that she was moving into a one-bedroom apartment with her fiancé, but she was on a waiting list for a three-bedroom apartment. She had been seeing her therapist and was pursuing her general education development diploma. Although respondent mother felt she was capable of taking care of her children, she testified she had "too much on [her] plate right now" with her current pregnancy. She thought it would be in K.A.'s and T.A.'s best interest to stay in their current foster home until she was "able and capable" of taking care of them, which she believed would be in a couple of months.

¶ 31 Respondent father testified on his own behalf. He described his relationship with K.A. and T.A. as "a gift." He did not believe terminating his parental rights would be in K.A.'s

and T.A.'s best interest because he grew up without a father and did not want his children growing up without one.

¶ 32 Following the parties' arguments, the trial court found termination of respondents' parental rights was in the best interest of K.A. and T.A. That same day, the court entered a written order terminating respondents' parental rights to K.A. and T.A.

¶ 33 This appeal followed.

¶ 34 II. ANALYSIS

¶ 35 On appeal, respondents argue both that the trial court erred in finding they were unfit parents and in terminating their parental rights.

¶ 36 A. Fitness Determination

¶ 37 Respondents first assert that the trial court erred in finding they were unfit parents.

¶ 38 In a proceeding to terminate parental rights, the State must first prove by clear and convincing evidence that the parent is unfit. *In re Donald A.G.*, 221 Ill. 2d 234, 244, 850 N.E.2d 172, 177 (2006). In making such a determination, the court considers whether the parent's conduct falls within one or more of the unfitness grounds described in section 1(D) of the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1(D) (West 2012)). *In re D.D.*, 196 Ill. 2d 405, 417, 752 N.E.2d 1112, 1119 (2001). A reviewing court will not disturb a trial court's unfitness finding unless it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *Id.* "A decision regarding parental fitness is against the manifest weight of the evidence where the opposite conclusion is clearly the proper result." *Id.*

¶ 39 Here, the trial court found respondents unfit because they (1) abandoned K.A. and T.A. (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(a) (West 2012)); (2) failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to K.A.'s and T.A.'s welfare (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2012)); (3)

deserted K.A. and T.A. for more than three months prior to the unfitness proceedings (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(c) (West 2012)); (4) failed to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for the removal of K.A. and T.A. during any nine-month period following the adjudication of neglect or abuse (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(i) (West 2012)); and (5) failed to make reasonable progress toward the return of K.A. and T.A. to respondents during the initial nine-month period following the adjudication of neglect or abuse (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(ii) (West 2012)). (We note the court's order does not list the specific nine-month periods considered.) Further, the court found respondent mother unfit due to an inability to discharge her parental responsibilities due to mental impairment, mental illness, or mental retardation (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(p) (West 2012)).

¶ 40 On appeal, respondents assert the trial court's finding of unfitness based on their failure to (1) maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, and responsibility as to the minors' welfare; (2) make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for the minors' removal from their care; and (3) make reasonable progress toward the return of the minors within nine months after the adjudication of neglect was against the manifest weight of the evidence. They also argue the court's finding that respondent mother was unfit based on her inability to discharge her parental duties due to a mental illness was against the manifest weight of the evidence. Notably, respondents do not take issue with the court's finding of parental unfitness based on abandonment or desertion. Evidence of unfitness based on any ground enumerated in section 1(D) of the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1(D) (West 2012)) is enough to support a finding of unfitness, even where the evidence may not be sufficient to support another ground. *In re D.L.*, 326 Ill. App. 3d 262, 268, 760 N.E.2d 542, 547 (2001). Respondents' omission of these grounds on appeal is akin to a concession that they are unfit on these bases, and thus, it is not

necessary to address respondents' additional arguments pertaining to their unfitness. *Id.* (citing *In re D.L.*, 191 Ill. 2d 1, 8, 727 N.E.2d 990, 993 (2000) (the failure to challenge all grounds of unfitness found by the court rendered the appeal moot); *In re M.J.*, 314 Ill. App. 3d 649, 655, 732 N.E.2d 790, 795 (2000) (sufficient evidence of one ground of unfitness obviates the need to consider other grounds)). Accordingly, we decline to address respondents' additional arguments pertaining to their fitness.

¶ 41 B. Termination of Parental Rights

¶ 42 Respondents next contend the trial court's finding it was in the best interest of K.A. and T.A. to terminate their parental rights was against the manifest weight of the evidence. Specifically, respondents argue the trial court's termination of their parental rights was not in K.A.'s and T.A.'s best interest where the testimony established "that [respondents] visited with their children," "that a bond did exist," and that they "clearly love their children."

¶ 43 Following a finding of parental unfitness, a trial court must consider whether it is in the child's best interest to terminate a parent's parental rights. *Donald A.G.*, 221 Ill. 2d at 244, 850 N.E.2d at 177. At this stage, the State must prove that the termination of parental rights is appropriate based on a preponderance of the evidence. *In re M.R.*, 393 Ill. App. 3d 609, 617, 912 N.E.2d 337, 345 (2009). "[A]ll considerations must yield to the best interest of the child." *In re I.B.*, 397 Ill. App. 3d 335, 340, 921 N.E.2d 797, 801 (2009). When considering whether termination of parental rights is in a child's best interest, the court should consider the following factors, taking into account the child's age and developmental needs:

"(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 (as opposed to where adults believe the child should feel such 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 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 2012)).

¶ 44 "A trial court's finding that termination of parental rights is in a child's best interest will not be reversed on appeal unless it is against the manifest weight of the evidence." *In re Shru. R.*, 2014 IL App (4th) 140275, ¶ 24, 16 N.E.3d 930. "A decision is against the manifest weight of the evidence only if the facts clearly demonstrate that the court should have reached the opposite result." *In re Jay. H.*, 395 Ill. App. 3d 1063, 1071, 918 N.E.2d 284, 291 (2009).

¶ 45 Here, the trial court specifically noted for the record that it had considered every factor listed in section 1-3(4.05) of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 (705 ILCS 405/1-3(4.05) (West 2012)) prior to making its best-interest determination, the most important of which "include[d] the child's sense of attachment, including where the child actually feels loved, the child's sense of security and familiarity, continuity, as well as the child's needs for permanence including stability and continuity of relationships with parent figures and with siblings."

¶ 46 Our review of the record reflects that T.A. had been in the same traditional foster home since his birth in October 2013. K.A., who was initially placed in a relative foster home in

February 2013, has resided in the same traditional foster home as his brother, T.A., since July 2014. According to Howell, K.A. and T.A. were doing well in their foster home and were "very well loved" by their foster parents. K.A. and T.A. were more attached to their foster parents than to respondents. Further, K.A. and T.A.'s foster parents were meeting all of their needs and expressed a willingness to adopt them if respondents' parental rights were terminated.

¶ 47 Although both respondent mother and respondent father expressed their love for K.A. and T.A., the evidence fails to reflect that either would be able to properly care for K.A. and T.A. in the near future. During respondent mother's visits with her children, she was observed "frequently ignoring her children," "lashing out at her children if she was in a bad mood," failing to provide them with food, and forgetting to change their diapers. She had to be reminded to interact with her children. The only recommended service respondent mother completed was taking parenting classes, and those took her 1 1/2 years when typically they are completed within 4 months. Further, respondent herself testified at the best-interest hearing that she was unable to care for K.A. and T.A. at that time because she had "too much on [her] plate right now," but thought she might be able to do so in a couple of months. The record also reflects that respondent father began serving a six-year prison sentence for predatory criminal sexual assault in December 2014. Although the evidence indicates his visits with K.A. and T.A. went "extremely well" and he had a "wonderful bond" with them prior to his incarceration, since his incarceration, his visits had been limited to once per month.

¶ 48 Based on the above evidence, we conclude the court's decision to terminate respondents' parental rights was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 49 III. CONCLUSION

¶ 50 For the reasons stated, we affirm the trial court's judgment.

¶ 51 Affirmed.