2016 IL App (2d) 160648-U
No. 2-16-0648
Order filed November 16, 2016

IN THE

APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS

SECOND DISTRICT

In re RAINE L. and EVELYN L., Minors	)	Appeal from the Circuit Court
	)	of Winnebago County.
	)	
	)	Nos. 14-JA-114
	)	14-JA-115
	)	
(The People of the State of Illinois,	)	Honorable
Petitioner-Appellee, v. Jerrit B.,	)	Francis Martinez,
Respondent-Appellant).	)	Judge, Presiding.

JUSTICE JORGENSEN delivered the judgment of the court.
Presiding Justice Schostok and Justice McLaren concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held*: The trial court did not err in finding respondent father an unfit parent to his two daughters, where his inconsistent parenting efforts and failure to complete services supported a finding that he failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility. Affirmed.

¶ 2 Respondent, Jerrit B., appeals from the trial court's finding that he is an unfit parent to his daughters, Raine L. and Evelyn L., and terminating his parental rights. He argues that the trial court's unfitness finding was against the manifest weight of the evidence. We affirm.

¶ 3 I. BACKGROUND

¶ 4 Raine and her twin sister, Evelyn, were born on July 30, 2008. Their mother is Tosha L., and their father is respondent. Respondent did not have any contact or relationship with the girls from when they were born until April 2015.

¶ 5 On March 20, 2014, the State filed a neglect petition in case No. 14-JA-114, alleging that Raine, age 5, was a neglected minor (705 ILCS 405/2-3 (West 2014)), in that: (1) her environment was injurious to her welfare, where Raine was struck with a belt, causing marks, and had to do "wall sits" and hold the push-up position as a form of punishment (count I) and Tosha and her paramour, Donovan B., engaged in domestic violence in the minor's presence (count II), thereby placing the minor at risk of harm; and (2) the minor was abused in that a parent or other person responsible for the minor's welfare or other person residing in the home inflicted excessive corporal punishment, in that the minor was struck with a belt, causing marks, and had to do "wall sits" and hold the push-up position as a form of punishment (count III), and that person created a substantial risk of physical injury to such minor other than by accidental means, which would likely result in death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function, in that the minor's mother's paramour struck the minor with a belt, causing marks (count IV). 705 ILCS 405/2-3(1)(b), 3(2)(v), 3(2)(ii) (West 2014).

¶ 6 On the same date, the State filed a neglect petition in case No. 14-JA-115, alleging that Evelyn, age 5, was a neglected minor. The State raised allegations similar to those in Raine's petition, but omitting that Evelyn was made to hold the push-up position and omitted count IV.

¶ 7 As to respondent, both petitions alleged that his whereabouts were unknown. On the same date, the trial court authorized service by publication on respondent. It also appointed the

Department of Children and Family Service (DCFS) as temporary guardian with the right to place the minors.

¶ 8 On May 20, 2014, a default judgment was entered against respondent for failing to appear after he was served by publication.

¶ 9 On June 11, 2014, based on Tosha L.'s factual stipulation on count I, the minors were adjudicated neglected or abused and the remaining counts were dismissed on the State's motion, based on an agreement that services be performed based on all counts. Also on that date, the minors were made wards of the court and DCFS was appointed their guardian with the right to place them.

¶ 10 A September 10, 2014, DCFS family service plan noted that respondent had not had contact with the case worker and had not attended services. On December 1, 2014, following a permanency hearing, the trial court found that respondent had not made reasonable efforts.

¶ 11 In January 2015, respondent, who lives in Kentucky, first made contact, by telephone, with DCFS. In April 2015, he had a supervised visit with the minors at their foster placement. This was his first contact with the minors during their lifetimes.

¶ 12 At a May 5, 2015, permanency review hearing, a Children's Home & Aid supervisor informed the court that respondent was called and had stated that he would be in court. However, he was unable to appear because he lives in Kentucky and could not obtain a ride to Rockford. The trial court noted that there were no open "F" cases in the county clerk's systems regarding fathers for the children (*i.e.*, respondent had not used the court system to try to obtain a relationship with his daughters).

¶ 13 Respondent did appear at a July 20, 2015, hearing, and counsel was appointed to represent him. At this hearing, the trial court deferred making any findings as to respondent's

efforts and progress because he was new to the case and because there was no service plan provided.

¶ 14 A September 9, 2015, DCFS visitation plan noted that the minors were in traditional foster care in Rockford and that it was their third placement.

¶ 15 An October 26, 2015, permanency hearing report to the court by Alexandra Spain, the Children's Home & Aid caseworker, stated that respondent's first visit with his daughters in April 2015 was supervised and appropriate. He did not keep in contact with the social worker as much as he should and was not appropriate with the worker "regarding phone conversations." The case manager further noted that respondent's phone calls had been consistent until late July 2015, but he had not called the minors at their foster home since that time. He scheduled visits on October 2, and 3, 2015, but canceled the first one and re-scheduled for October 16, and 17, 2015. Respondent did not call the case manager to confirm the visit until late on October 16, and, therefore, the visit did not occur. The case manager contacted respondent to re-schedule, but had not heard back from him. DCFS asked respondent to find services in Kentucky, which he did through the Seven Counties agency. The services included: drug assessment/drug classes, individual counseling, and parenting classes. He was assigned a counselor in September 2015, and DCFS was awaiting information from the counselor. Respondent was rated unsatisfactory in a September 4, 2015, service plan.

¶ 16 A. Permanency Review Hearing

¶ 17 A permanency review hearing occurred on November 9, 2015. The State called Spain. Spain testified that she had spoken to respondent a few days earlier, and he had informed her that he had tried to contact Seven Counties in Kentucky, but no one had returned his call.

¶ 18 Respondent testified on his own behalf that he was engaged in counseling but had to change counselors because his stepmother worked in the Shelbyville office, which was considered a conflict of interest. In early September 2015, respondent was moved to the LaGrange Seven Counties facility.

¶ 19 Addressing visitations, respondent testified that he last saw his daughters over the past weekend. He missed a visit scheduled for the middle of October due to miscommunication between himself and the caseworker. Respondent travels 8 ½ hours from his home to the girls' residence.

¶ 20 As to his calls to his daughters, respondent denied that he stopped calling them in July 2015, explaining that he had problems with his phone. The next month, the problem was resolved, but he acknowledged that he had not called his children in "a while," specifically, since July 2015. He testified that the only number he had was a work number for the foster father, but did not mention to the caseworker any phone issues until October 2015.

¶ 21 At the conclusion of the hearing, the trial court found that respondent was an absentee parent and had failed to make reasonable efforts or progress. The court changed the goal to substitute care, pending termination of parental rights. It noted that the disposition and adjudication was on June 11, 2014, which was nearly two nine-month periods before the permanency hearing, and the children needed permanency.

¶ 22 On November 23, 2015, the State moved to terminate respondent's parental rights. In a three-count complaint, it alleged that respondent was an unfit parent, in that he had failed to: (1) maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to the minors' welfare (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2014)); (2) make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for the children's removal during a nine-month period after the adjudication of neglect

or abuse or dependent minor (June 11, 2014, to March 11, 2015, and/or March 11, to December 11, 2015) (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(i) (West 2014)); and (3) make reasonable progress toward the return of the children to him during a nine-month period after the adjudication of neglect or abuse or dependent minor (June 11, 2014, to March 11, 2015, and/or March 11, to December 11, 2015) (750 ILCS 50/1(m)(ii) (West 2014)).

¶ 23 In a February 2, 2016, report for the court prior to the arraignment on termination of parental rights, Spain reported that, since July 2015, respondent's calls to his daughters had been inconsistent. He had a supervised visit on November 7, 2015, and, on November 9, 2015, he contacted the children at the foster home. Spain reported that, since these two contacts, the children had begun to act out. The girls were usually sweet and cooperative, but after phone calls and visits, they would steal and lie. Their counselor determined that respondent's inconsistent contact was inappropriate and detrimental to the girls' emotional well being. A supervisor suspended phone calls until the children stabilized through therapeutic intervention. The report further noted that, since the last review, the case worker had asked respondent to find services in Kentucky. He had started at Seven Counties, but, when the case worker tried to speak to someone at Seven Counties, she received no response. (However, a December 9, 2015, letter from the Kentucky agency states that respondent had completed his substance use and mental health assessments and had agreed to attend twice weekly substance abuse treatment counseling, as well as twice monthly parenting classes as needed.) When asked how his services were progressing, respondent stated that he stopped them because he was unable to pay for the services. The case worker spoke with respondent at the end of January 2016, and he stated that he wished to speak to his daughters. Respondent was told that they still needed stabilization.

¶ 24 On February 9, 2016, the court entered an order, adjudicating respondent the minors' father. In a March 18, 2016, service plan, respondent was rated unsatisfactory. At a June 15, 2016, hearing, Tosha L. signed specific consents to adoption for her children.

¶ 25 B. Fitness Hearing

¶ 26 (1) Alexandra Spain

¶ 27 The fitness hearing occurred on July 7, 2016. Spain testified that she has been the caseworker since April 2015. Since first making contact with the agency in January 2015, respondent remained in contact until July 2015. After that, contact became "sporadic," as "his phone was off a lot." This remained the case until October 2015.

¶ 28 Respondent participated in an integrated assessment for services in January 2015 and was referred for individual counseling, parenting, and drug assessment and classes. He did not complete a drug assessment; Seven Counties never forwarded paperwork to Spain concerning a drug assessment. The Kentucky agency also did not contact Spain regarding payment for the services; respondent needed assistance to pay for services. Respondent did, apparently, start substance abuse classes, but Seven Counties never forwarded proof of such. Spain had a conversation in September 2015 with Seven Counties, and respondent had obtained a counselor at that time (in LaGrange). Afterwards, they did not return calls. In May 2016, Spain received a letter, stating that respondent had been discharged from individual and drug treatment counseling in December 2015 due to lack of participation. Respondent never informed Spain that he had been discharged, but only stated that he was looking for a different service provider (which he apparently never found). Respondent never engaged in parenting classes.

¶ 29 As to Raine and Evelyn's counseling, respondent never became involved, such as providing transportation or communicating with his daughters' counselor. He never attended

doctor's appointments or school meetings; he was never made aware of them by Spain's agency, and he never asked about them. He "periodically" contacted the minors during the case; after July 2015, phone conversations stopped until October 2015. However, there were scheduling issues. Finally, in November 2015, Children's Home & Aid counselors stopped the visits and phone calls with respondent because the girls were distressed and acting out due to inconsistent visits and phone calls with respondent. In total, respondent has visited the children three or four times in person, in addition to the periodic phone calls. The visits were all supervised because he had not participated in services. Since October 2015, respondent had maintained periodic telephone contact with Spain.

¶ 30 Spain further testified that respondent told her that he had been looking for his children for years and had hired a private investigator; however, he was unable to find them. Respondent is employed, working in a tire factory.

¶ 31 Respondent had informed Spain that he was uncertain if he could attend a court date because he was going to be on vacation in Ireland in February. This was the last court date before the arraignment. He also visited Arizona to see family.

¶ 32 (2) Respondent

¶ 33 Respondent, age 28, testified on his own behalf. He stated lives in Eminence, Kentucky, with his girlfriend and her three children.

¶ 34 Raine and Evelyn will be eight years old this month. Respondent first became aware of this case in early 2015. He was notified by a previous foster parent after respondent commented on a Facebook photo of the girls. The foster parent gave respondent the caseworker's number, and he contacted her.

¶ 35 Prior to this case, respondent had no contact with his daughters because Tosha took them after they were born (in Rockford) and told respondent that he would never see them again. Respondent took steps to locate his children, including messages on Facebook and Myspace and hiring a private investigator. He also had his family try to contact Tosha. His only success was when respondent's sister-in-law received a letter from Tosha that the girls were okay, but that she wanted nothing to do with respondent's family.

¶ 36 Respondent testified that he had issues with drugs when he was 21 years old. He lived in Arizona at the time. He met Tosha online and then moved to Illinois, in part to "sober up," which did not occur. When Tosha was six months' pregnant with the girls, she asked him to leave due to his drug use. Respondent moved to Kentucky, where his grandfather lived, and then to Arizona. He attempted to contact Tosha before he went into rehab, but she told him that he would never see or speak to his children. The next contact he had concerning his children was through the former foster mother on Facebook. Respondent and his girlfriend had been going through Facebook, trying to find Tosha, who had blocked him and his family. However, respondent's girlfriend found her.

¶ 37 Since this case commenced, respondent has visited his children three times (in the Rockford area). The visits were emotionally difficult for respondent, but the girls appeared happy and excited. When they were in their previous foster placement, respondent called the girls at least twice per week. Once they were moved to their current foster placement, he spoke them less often because it would take a day or two to receive a call back. He tried to call at least once per week.

¶ 38 Addressing services, respondent testified that he completed an integrated assessment with a previous caseworker. He attempted to engage in services by personally going to Seven

Counties. He engaged in drug and alcohol classes and parenting classes, but did not complete them because his insurance company denied coverage and he could not afford to pay out-of-pocket for the services. Respondent stated that he was told that Children's Home & Aid could not arrange for payment because the case had been going on for so long. The drug and parenting classes would have cost $300 per month and would last six to nine weeks, unless the agency required more classes.

¶ 39 Respondent works as a mechanic and has had the position for nearly one year. Prior to this, he worked at Fire Fresh Barbeque in Shelbyville. When he went to Seven Counties for the first time, he worked at Walmart Tire & Lube. He had State insurance at this time and when he worked at the restaurant. Addressing his vacation, respondent testified that he did not go overseas. His stepfather had won a trip to Ireland for two people. Respondent declined to go because he had a court date in this case. Respondent did travel to Arizona after his aunt became very sick. He stayed for 1 ½ months. Respondent was unemployed at the time and rode with his grandmother to Arizona.

¶ 40 According to respondent, he tried to contact Spain about once per month to arrange to visit his daughters. He earned minimum wage and did not have funds to both travel and pay his bills. He cancelled two visits because his car broke down. It takes between five and eight hours to travel from his home to Rockford.

¶ 41 In addition to phone calls and visits, respondent sent text messages to the girls or their previous foster parents. He also bought them an IPad and had video chats with them via Skype. For his first visit with the girls, around Easter 2015, he spent about $800 on gifts for them, including shoes, clothes, and toys. He also paid for bowling.

¶ 42 Respondent testified that he inquired with the caseworker about the girls' health. He was never made aware of doctor visits. Respondent does not know what grade the girls will be in at school because he was told that they were going to be held back. After visits were terminated in November 2015, respondent asked about re-engaging in them each time he saw Spain at court.

¶ 43 (3) Trial Court's Findings

¶ 44 At the conclusion of the hearing, the trial court found that respondent is an unfit parent for Raine and Evelyn based on all three counts in the State's motion. On count I, the court found that respondent failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility. Addressing responsibility, the court noted that, while respondent resides in Kentucky and he testified that he was not advised of certain things, the court expected parents to show a degree of responsibility and interest and inquiry and make themselves available for medical appointments, services, etc. Addressing counts II and III, the court found that respondent failed to make reasonable efforts or progress during any nine-month period. In the first period, respondent "was essentially unavailable." Respondent's attempts to engage in services were unsuccessful. He provided no documentation that he had hired a private investigator, and the court found respondent unconvincing on this point.

¶ 45 C. Subsequent Proceedings

¶ 46 On August 5, 2016, the best interests hearing commenced. At the conclusion of the hearing, the trial court found that it was in the minors' best interests to terminate respondent's parental rights and appoint DCFS as their guardian with the right to consent to their adoptions. Respondent appeals the fitness finding, not the best interests determination.

¶ 47 II. ANALYSIS

¶ 48 Without separately addressing the three bases upon which the trial court found him unfit, respondent argues that the trial court's findings were erroneous, where the evidence spanned only three months of his involvement in the case before his visits were suspended in November 2015 because his daughters were acting out and not because of any bad action by respondent. He claims that the case was "functionally completed" when the trial court changed the goal on November 9, 2015, to termination of parental rights. He argues that the appropriate periods for assessing the evidence are: (1) January 2015 (when he first made contact with the case worker) through early November 2015 (the permanency review hearing where the goal was changed to termination of parental rights); or (2) July 20, 2015, (his first court appearance) through November 9, 2015. Respondent contends that expanding the timeframes would punish him: (1) for not being able to locate his children when their mother was actively hiding them from him; and (2) when the State's agents prohibited contact with them.

¶ 49 Without specifically addressing the evidence, specifically the nature and frequency of his contacts with his daughters and his services, respondent also argues that there was virtually no evidence that he was unfit, and the trial court failed to make specific findings concerning his fitness (see *In re B'yata I.*, 2013 IL App (2d) 130558, ¶ 41 (remanding for entry of express factual findings supporting the court's unfitness determination)). Instead, he urges, the court "functionally determined that it would be in the best interests of the minor[s] to be adopted and therefore found [respondent] to be unfit." Respondent asks that we vacate the termination order and remand for specific factual findings concerning his fitness. For the following reasons, we reject respondent's claims.

¶ 50 "A parent's right to raise his or her biological child is a fundamental liberty interest, and the involuntary termination of such right is a drastic measure." *Id.* at ¶ 28. A court may

terminate a parent's rights where it finds, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the parent is an "unfit person" as defined in the section 1(D) of the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1(D) (West 2014)). *In re Enis*, 121 Ill. 2d 124, 130 (1988). The State must prove unfitness by clear and convincing evidence. *In re M.H.*, 196 Ill. 2d 356, 365 (2001). "A determination of parental unfitness involves factual findings and credibility assessments that the trial court is in the best position to make." *In re Tiffany M.*, 353 Ill. App. 3d 883, 889-90 (2004). A reviewing court accords great deference to a trial court's finding of parental unfitness, and such a finding will not be disturbed on appeal unless it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *In re T.A.*, 359 Ill. App. 3d 953, 960 (2005). A court's decision regarding a parent's fitness is against the manifest weight of the evidence only where the opposite conclusion is clearly apparent. *In re J.J.*, 201 Ill. 2d 236, 249 (2002). In assessing whether the court's decision is contrary to the manifest weight of the evidence, a reviewing court must remain mindful that every matter concerning parental fitness is *sui generis*. *In re Cornica J.*, 351 Ill. App. 3d 557, 566 (2004). Each case must therefore be decided on the particular facts and circumstances presented. *In re D.D.*, 196 Ill. 2d 405, 422 (2001). "As the grounds for unfitness are independent, the trial court's judgment may be affirmed if the evidence supports the finding of unfitness on any one of the alleged statutory grounds." *In re H.D.*, 343 Ill. App. 3d 483, 493 (2003).

¶ 51 The Adoption Act provides that a court may find a parent unfit if the parent fails to maintain reasonable concern, interest, or responsibility for the welfare of a child. 750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2014). The parent may be found unfit for failing to maintain either interest, or concern, or responsibility; proof of all three is not required. *In re Jaron Z.*, 348 Ill. App. 3d 239, 259 (2004).

> "[I]n determining whether a parent showed reasonable concern, interest or responsibility as to a child's welfare, we have to examine the parent's conduct concerning the child in the context of the circumstances in which that conduct occurred. Circumstances that warrant consideration when deciding whether a parent's failure to personally visit his or her child establishes a lack of reasonable interest, concern or responsibility as to the child's welfare include the parent's difficulty in obtaining transportation to the child's residence, the parent's poverty, the actions and statements of others that hinder or discourage visitation, and whether the parent's failure to visit the child was motivated by a need to cope with other aspects of his or her life or by true indifference to, and lack of concern for, the child." [Citations omitted.] *In re Adoption of Syck*, 138 Ill. 2d 255, 278-79 (1990).

¶ 52 If visitation is impractical, the parent can show reasonable concern, interest, and responsibility in a child through letters, telephone calls, and gifts, depending on the frequency and tone of those communications. *Id.* at 279. Completion of service plan objectives also can be considered evidence of a parent's concern, interest, and responsibility. See *In re T.Y. & T.Y.*, 334 Ill. App. 3d 894, 906 (2002) (court considered the parent's failure to complete services when finding him unfit under section 1(D)(b)). Courts will consider the parent's efforts that show interest in the child's well-being, regardless of whether those efforts were successful. *Syck*, 138 Ill. 2d at 279.

¶ 53 Here, the trial court found that respondent failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility. Contrary to respondent's claim, the court made specific findings, faulting respondent for failing to maintain responsibility and interest. It specifically found that he did not inquire about, or make himself available for, medical appointments, or avail

himself of services, etc. We conclude that the court's unfitness finding on this basis was not against the manifest weight of the evidence because respondent's inconsistent parenting efforts and failure to complete services since he first contacted DCFS in January 2015 precluded a finding that he *maintained* a *reasonable* degree of interest, concern, or responsibility.[1]

¶ 54 This case was initiated on March 20, 2014, when the neglect petitions were filed. In January 2015, respondent first made contact with DCFS, via telephone. At the fitness hearing, he explained that, due to his drug abuse just before his daughters were born, Tosha would not let him see his children. He claimed that he had made efforts via social media and by hiring a private investigator to locate his daughters afterwards and through January 2015, but he offered no proof of these efforts, such as documentation of hiring an investigator.

¶ 55 Respondent did not have his first visit, which was supervised, with his children until April 2015, even though he first made contact with the agency in January 2015. He offered no explanation for this delay. The visit was appropriate, according to the case manager. Respondent did not appear at a May 5, 2015, permanency review hearing, and a Children's Home & Aid supervisor informed the court that respondent had stated that he was unable to obtain transportation to Rockford from his home in Kentucky. Also at this hearing, the court noted that there were no open "F" cases in the county's system, which reflected that he had not used the court system to try to obtain a relationship with his children.[2]

---

[1] Respondent appears to primarily take issue with the period before January 2015. We affirm on the basis of the evidence after respondent made contact with DCFS.

[2] Although not raised below, the State further notes that there was no evidence that respondent ever registered with the Putative Father Registry (750 ILCS 50/12.1 (West 2014)) within 30 days of the girls' births and that this results in statutory bar from bringing an action to

¶ 56 The evidence concerning the phone calls was critical because respondent's Kentucky residence and financial situation made scheduling personal visits challenging. Given the inconsistent calls, the trial court's finding was not unreasonable. As related by Spain in an October 26, 2015, permanency report and at the fitness hearing, respondent had been making consistent phone calls to his daughters until late July 2015, but, afterwards, "his phone was off a lot" until October 2015. She noted that he had scheduled two visits in October 2015, but cancelled the first one and re-scheduled for two visits later in the month. After he did not call Spain to confirm the first visit, that visit was cancelled. The trial court reasonably discounted respondent's explanation for the sporadic nature of the calls. Respondent claimed that he spoke to his daughters less often after July 2015 because it took a day or two to receive a call back from their new foster placement. He also claimed that he had problems with his phone for one month, but, as of October 2015, still had not called them in "a while," specifically, since July 2015. Respondent did not mention the phone issues to the caseworker until October 2015, and the evidence reflected that he made no calls between July and October 2015.

¶ 57 In total, respondent visited his children three or four times in person and had periodic phone calls with them. His lack of consistency in visits and calls with the minors caused stress for the girls (they would steal and lie), resulting in suspension of visits in November 2015. Respondent's failure to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to his daughters was further evidenced by his failure to inquire about or attend doctor's visits,

---

assert any interest in the children. *In re A.S.B.*, 293 Ill. App. 3d 836, 845-46 (1997). The State contends that, had respondent registered, DCFS could have located him when the case was initiated.

school functions, etc. His explanation that he *did* inquire with Spain (solely) about their health is not reflective of maintaining a *reasonable* degree of interest, concern, or responsibility.

¶ 58 Respondent's failure to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to his daughters was also supported by the evidence, as noted by the trial court, concerning his lack of completion of services. DCFS asked respondent to locate services in Kentucky, and he located them through Seven Counties. He participated in an integrated assessment in January 2015, and was referred for individual counseling, parenting, and drug assessment and classes. Respondent never engaged in parenting classes, and he did not complete a drug assessment (Spain never received confirmation from Seven Counties). As to individual and substance abuse counseling, respondent did, apparently, start such classes (by September 2015 due to delays related to switching offices), but respondent was discharged from that counseling in December 2015 due to lack of participation. Respondent never informed Spain of his discharge. The trial court did not err in discounting respondent's testimony that he did not complete certain services because he was unable to pay out-of-pocket for them ($300 per month for up to nine weeks of classes) after his insurance company denied coverage, where respondent spent $800 on gifts for Raine and Evelyn at his first visit.

¶ 59 In summary, the trial court's findings were not against the manifest weight of the evidence. Since only one ground of unfitness need be shown, we do not address the trial court's findings as they relate to the remaining two grounds of unfitness. *B'yata I.*, 2014 IL App (2d) 130558-B, ¶ 39.

¶ 60 III. CONCLUSION

¶ 61 For the reasons stated, the judgment of the circuit court of Winnebago County is affirmed.

¶ 62 Affirmed.