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2012 IL App (3d) 120587-U

Order filed December 17, 2012

IN THE
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS

THIRD DISTRICT

A.D., 2012

<i>In re</i> T.G., C.S., and C.S.,)	Appeal from the Circuit Court
)	of the 12th Judicial Circuit,
Minors,)	Will County, Illinois
)	
(The People of the State of Illinois,)	
)	
Petitioner-Appellee,)	Appeal No. 3-12-0587
)	Circuit Nos. 08-JA-215
v.)	08-JA-216
)	09-JA-3
T.J.,)	
)	
Respondent-Appellant).)	Honorable Paula Gomora, Judge, Presiding.

PRESIDING JUSTICE SCHMIDT delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Carter and Holdridge concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held:* The trial court's determination that the respondent was unfit pursuant to sections 50/1(D)(b) and 50/1(D)(m)(i),(ii) and (iii) of the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1(D) (West 2011)) was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 2 Following an adjudicatory hearing in the circuit court of Will County on the State's petition to terminate parental rights, the trial court issued an order on April 30, 2012, finding that the State had proved by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent, T.J., was unfit pursuant to sections 1(D)(b), (m)(i), (m)(ii) and (m)(iii) of the Adoption Act. 750 ILCS 50/1(D) (West 2011).

¶ 3 The best interest hearing was conducted on June 4, 2010, and the trial court subsequently found that the State had proved by a preponderance of the evidence that it was in the minor children's best interest to terminate the respondent's parental rights.

¶ 4 The respondent appeals, claiming, *inter alia*, that the trial court's determination that the respondent failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility as to her children's welfare is against the manifest weight of the evidence and that the trial court's determination that respondent failed to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for the minor children's removal is also against the manifest weight of the evidence. We affirm.

¶ 5 **BACKGROUND**

¶ 6 This case was initiated on September 15, 2008, when the State filed a juvenile petition alleging that the minors, T.G. and C.S., were neglected in that their environment was injurious to their welfare. At that time T.G., who was born on September 17, 2004, was 3 years old, and C.S., who was born on November 3, 2007, was one year old. The respondent's third child, Cam. S., was born on January 7, 2009, subsequent to the filing of the initial petition.

¶ 7 The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) first became involved after C.S. was left unattended on a Joliet sidewalk in her car seat. An adjudicatory order was entered on January 12, 2010, finding that the children were neglected. A dispositional hearing followed on October 21, 2010, and the children were placed in the custody and guardianship of the DCFS pursuant to the trial court's order. T.S. was placed in the care of her paternal grandmother, Angela G. C.S. was placed with a relative and Cam. S. was placed in a traditional foster home.

¶ 8 On June 17, 2011, the State filed a motion to terminate parental rights against the respondent and the children's natural fathers. Gregory G. was listed as the putative father of T.G. and Carlos S. was listed as the putative father of C.S. Following a paternity test, it was discovered that Carlos S. was not the biological father of Cam. S. The respondent identified Devin W. as Cam. S.'s father, and after a diligent search, Devin W. was not found and did not come forward. The motion alleged that the respondent had failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern and responsibility as to the children's welfare; failed to make reasonable efforts to correct conditions that led to the removal of the minor children; or to make reasonable progress toward the return of the children within nine months after the adjudication of neglect of the minor children was made, or during any nine-month period after the initial nine-month period (from October 2010 to July 2011).

¶ 9 The termination proceedings began on February 10, 2012. The State called Kristen Ibarra of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. Ms. Ibarra was the caseworker for T.G., C.S., and Cam. S. from 2008 through 2011. Ms. Ibarra first came into contact with the respondent in

January 2009 and prepared an "integrated assessment" in February 2009. This assessment indicated that respondent was involved in a romantic relationship with Carlos S., the father of C.S., and that confrontations between the two often became violent. The respondent was then tasked with having a domestic violence assessment performed and to follow its recommendations, which she did in June 2010. Respondent was also to complete an anger management program.

¶ 10 Ms. Ibarra further testified that as the caseworker, her job entailed developing a service plan for the respondent. These service plans gave tasks for the respondent to complete and then provided an evaluation of the respondent's progress. The plans were prepared every six months on a March to September cycle. Ms. Ibarra prepared the first task plan on March 18, 2010, which evaluated the respondent's progress over the previous six months (September 2009 through March 2010). During that time, the respondent was tasked with completing an anger management program and a parenting class. Ms. Ibarra testified that the respondent was rated unsatisfactory on both. As to the parenting class, the respondent failed to demonstrate the skills she learned and, thus, was rated unsatisfactory. The respondent testified that she could not complete the anger management program due to her incarceration; she was transferred to different facilities and was not able to complete the program in such a short amount of time.

¶ 11 Respondent was further tasked with obtaining independent housing, seeking employment, and refraining from engaging in criminal activity. Ms. Ibarra testified that during the time she worked the case, the respondent never obtained independent housing, instead residing with

different sisters on a temporary basis. The respondent was similarly unable to show proof of stable employment. Throughout the life of the case, the respondent was only to provide Ibarra with one paycheck stub, and that was shortly before Ibarra ended her involvement with the case in 2011. Finally, Ibarra testified that while she was the caseworker, the respondent was incarcerated three different times. Part of the service plan included a visitation schedule for the respondent, allowing her weekly visitation on Fridays for 1½ hours. From September 2009 through March 2010, the respondent was incarcerated and not allowed visitation due to her transition to different facilities.

¶ 12 Ms. Ibarra testified that the September 2010 service plan for the respondent contained the same tasks as the March 2010 plan. Again, respondent was rated unsatisfactory for failing to comply with the plan recommendations. While the respondent completed the anger management assessment, she did not perform any of the followup recommendations. Similarly, the respondent did not follow through on the parenting classes or coaching, and did not perform any of the recommendations from the domestic violence program. While the respondent indicated she had employment during this period, she was unable to provide any proof. Again, respondent failed to secure independent housing, and was either incarcerated or living temporarily with a sister during the period.

¶ 13 Respondent was again entitled to visitation with the minor children pursuant to the plan, but from August 2010 through November 2010, she did not attend her scheduled visits due to the existence of a warrant for her arrest. According to the respondent, she did not exercise her

visitation rights out of fear that she would be arrested in front of the children. While the respondent did not visit the children at the agency out of fear of arrest, she testified that she did visit them at the foster home. The respondent testified that once it became clear that she could not raise the money for bond, she turned herself in to the Joliet police to get the matter behind her. The respondent further conceded that she was incarcerated for one-quarter of the life of Cam. S, and was absent for almost one-half of T.G. and C.S's lives.

¶ 14 The respondent also had an assessment from Hope for Nonviolence. The first recommendation was that the respondent "receive domestic violence treatment until she receives a satisfactory completion, which necessitates that she attend groups, completes all homework assignments, and demonstrate [sic] knowledge of tools for being nonviolent and/or non-abusive." Ms. Ibarra testified that the respondent did not perform any of these recommendations. The assessment also recommended extensive parenting classes where the respondent would learn various types of discipline for the minor children. Ibarra testified that respondent did not perform this recommendation. Finally, the assessment further recommended the respondent be provided necessary resources for psychiatric services given that she had a history of emotional mental health issues that were unaddressed. Specifically, the assessment stated that the "[f]ailure to identify and treat mental health issues may affect her ability to benefit from any and all services." Ms. Ibarra testified that she could not refer the respondent for a psychological and/or psychiatric assessment because the respondent had failed to comply with any other services or recommendations.

¶ 15 The service plan from March 21, 2011, which covered the period from September 2010 through March 2011, involved the same tasks and no additional services beyond those previously recommended. All prior tasks were still ongoing and were all graded unsatisfactory. The visitation plan remained the same during this period, and after the respondent was released from incarceration on March 4, 2011, she began visiting the children on March 16.

¶ 16 Ms. Ibarra then testified as to the final service plan from September 2011. No new services or tasks had been added to this plan, and none of the previous tasks had been achieved with the exception of the employment requirement, for which the respondent received a satisfactory rating. However, the overall rating on the service plan was unsatisfactory, and the goal of the plan was changed from reunification to substitute care pending court determination on termination of parental rights.

¶ 17 On cross-examination, Ms. Ibarra testified that she was aware that the respondent had visits with the children at the foster house outside the normally scheduled visitation. Ibarra further acknowledged that the respondent demonstrated love and affection with the children during these visits. These unscheduled visits were supervised by the foster parents. Ibarra recalled one incident where the foster parent reported that the respondent had arrived unannounced, and when she (the foster parent) refused the visit, the respondent attempted to kick in the door. Toward the end of Ibarra's involvement on the case, the foster parents no longer wanted to supervise the visits, and indicated that they would rather them be supervised at the agency by an agency worker. Ms. Ibarra testified on redirect that the goal was changed from

reunification to substitute care because the case had been open for three years and there needed to be permanency for the children.

¶ 18 The State then called the respondent, who testified that T.G. was born on September 17, 2004. In 2006, the respondent was serving a two-year sentence for aggravated battery and retail theft. She was released in February of 2007. Respondent was then arrested in June of 2007 for domestic battery to Carlos S. The respondent's parole from the 2006 sentence was revoked. She was released again in October 2007. C.S. was born November 3, 2007. Respondent was taken into custody in 2008 on a warrant in the domestic battery case against Carlos S. Respondent was also arrested for felony intimidation in 2008. Cam. S. was born January 7, 2009. Later that year, the respondent was arrested in Cook County for retail theft and received a two-year sentence on that charge. Respondent was released in February 2010. Later in February, the respondent pled guilty to the domestic battery against Carlos S. and received 12 months' probation. Finally, there was an arrest warrant issued for the respondent on the charge of retail theft in Will County in July 2010. Respondent became aware of the warrant in August 2010 and eventually surrendered to the Joliet police on October 29. She received a sentence of 150 days on that charge, and was released in March 2011.

¶ 19 Respondent testified as to unscheduled visits with the children. Specifically, that she did not attend scheduled visits from August through October 2010 because of the outstanding warrant, but that she did visit them when the children visited each other at Angela G.'s home every week. Respondent further claimed that her sister, Lavita, had custody of respondent's other

two minor children, Darvelle and LeShawn. At the time of her testimony, the respondent was living with her sister, and denied ever telling her caseworker that the living situation with her sister was temporary.

¶ 20 The State called Angela G., who testified that she was the foster parent to T.G., her grandchild. T.G. had been placed with her since February 2010. C.S. and Cam. S are not placed with Angela G. Angela G. denied she ever provided visitation between the respondent and the three minors at her home. She did testify, however, that the respondent had stopped by unannounced for visits many times, and that the respondent would stay for 20 to 30 minutes. Angela G. further stated that the respondent would bring T.G. food and toys on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas or Valentine's Day, and that she once sent T.G. a card while she was incarcerated.

¶ 21 Finally, the State recalled Ms. Ibarra to clarify the case notes regarding visitation and the respondent's actual visiting record. On cross-examination, it was determined that the visit supervisor, Liz Navaro, noted only one unannounced visit by respondent during the siblings regularly scheduled visits with each other.

¶ 22 Following argument, the trial court took the matter under advisement to review the exhibits. On April 30, 2012, the trial court found by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent was unfit within the meaning of the statute in that she had failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility over the welfare of the children. The trial court also found that the respondent failed to make reasonable efforts towards the return of the

children during the nine-month period after adjudication. On June 4, 2012, the court heard testimony on the best interest of the children and concluded that the State had met its burden of proof and that it would be in the minor children's best interest that the respondent's parental rights be terminated.

¶ 23 On July 20, 2012, this court gave the respondent leave to file a late notice of appeal.

¶ 24 ANALYSIS

¶ 25 I. Failure to Maintain A Reasonable Degree of Interest, Concern or Responsibility

¶ 26 Respondent first contends that the trial court erred in finding her to be an unfit parent. Specifically, she argues that the trial court's finding that she failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility as to her children's welfare pursuant to section 50/1(D)(b) of the Adoption Act (the Act) (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2011)) was against the manifest weight of the evidence. We disagree.

¶ 27 The termination of parental rights constitutes a permanent and complete severance of the parent-child relationship. See *Santosky v. Kramer*, 455 U.S. 745, 758-59 (1982); *In re Adoption of Syck*, 138 Ill. 2d 255, 274 (1990). Accordingly, proof of parental unfitness must be clear and convincing. *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d 181, 208 (2001). On review, the findings of the trial judge must be given great deference since he or she had the opportunity to view and evaluate the testimony of the witnesses. *In re R.G.*, 165 Ill. App. 3d 112, 134 (1988). In order to reverse a trial court's finding that there was clear and convincing evidence of parental unfitness, the reviewing court must conclude that the trial court's finding was against the manifest weight of the

evidence. *Syck*, 138 Ill. 2d at 274; *Blakey v. Blakey*, 72 Ill. App. 3d 946, 947 (1979). For a finding to be against the manifest weight of the evidence, the opposite result must be clearly evident from the review of the evidence. *In the Interest of R.B.W.*, 192 Ill. App. 3d 477, 500 (1989).

¶ 28 "Our supreme court has instructed that when reviewing a finding of unfitness based upon a parent's failure to maintain interest, concern or responsibility for the children, a court must examine the parent's conduct in the context of the parent's circumstances. [Citation.] Relevant circumstances include, for example, difficulty in obtaining transportation, the parent's poverty, statements made by others to discourage visitation, and whether the parent's lack of contact with the children can be attributed to a need to cope with personal problems rather than indifference towards them. [Citation.] If visitation is impossible, letters, cards, gifts, and telephone calls may suffice to show a parent's concern and interest in the children. [Citation.] In a fitness determination, a parent's efforts, not the success of those efforts, are relevant. [Citations.]" *In re T.D.*, 268 Ill. App. 3d 239, 246 (1994).

¶ 29 Here, the respondent acknowledges that during her periods of incarceration she was unable to visit, but argues that once she was released she exercised scheduled visits with one exception, *i.e.*, when she avoided visits to evade an outstanding warrant, and that she continued to have unscheduled visits with the children at the home of the foster parents. This court has found that the failure to visit a child is not proof of unfitness if the parent offers a reasonable explanation. *In re Jason U.*, 214 Ill. App. 3d 545, 552 (1991). However, avoiding an arrest

warrant does not a reasonable explanation make. On this point, we find *In re S.J.*, 233 Ill. App. 3d 88 (1992), illustrative. There, the respondent parents were found to be unfit. The appellate court affirmed the trial court's finding of unfitness against the respondent-father, N.B., while reversing the trial court's finding of unfitness of the respondent-mother as against the manifest weight of evidence based on the factors set forth in *Syck*. *Id.* at 91. In upholding the trial court's finding of the respondent-father's unfitness, this court stated, "[w]e recognize that N.B. failed to visit S.J. or cooperate with DCFS because he was trying to avoid arrest and imprisonment on an outstanding warrant. This excuse might negate an inference that N.B. had no subjective interest in or concern for the well-being of his child * * * [h]owever, it does not show * * * that N.B. demonstrated a *reasonable* level of interest, concern and responsibility for his infant daughter." (Emphasis in original.) *Id.* at 114. The court went on to "state plainly that we do not consider N.B.'s desire to escape arrest the sort of mitigating circumstance discussed in *Syck*. Public policy requires that a parent not be able to turn his desire to evade justice into a valid excuse for his failure to pay crucial (and statutorily required) attention to his neglected child." *Id.*

¶ 30 The respondent further points to the gifts she gave to T.G., and the card that she sent T.G. during one of her periods of incarceration. We note that this was a card, singular. The respondent admitted to being incarcerated for a quarter of T.G.'s life and almost half of the lives of C.S. and Cam. S., yet the record reflects one lone instance where the respondent sent a card to one of her three children during one of her periods of incarceration. The record is devoid of any evidence of other letters or gifts sent, or telephone calls made, while the respondent was in

custody.

¶ 31 The respondent and one of the foster parents, Angela G., offered conflicting testimony regarding the visits. While the respondent testified that she only missed one visit during the period of the outstanding warrant when taking into account her "unofficial visits," this was contradicted by the evidence referencing only three visits during this time frame as recorded by the visit supervisor. Additionally, Angela G. denied ever providing visitation between the respondent and the three children at her home. Angela G. did testify, however, that over the course of the two years that T.G. had been in her custody, the respondent had visited "probably about a hundred times," and that those visits lasted about 20 to 30 minutes. We note that "the trial court is in the best position to address the credibility of witnesses" (*In re Adoption of H.B.*, 2012 IL App (4th) 120459, ¶ 35), and Angela G.'s testimony appears to be only one of a myriad of reasons why the trial court in this case found that there was clear and convincing evidence that the respondent was unfit. The trial court went on to state that "with respect to visitation and during the relevant time period and State's petition to terminate parental rights, that with [Cam. S.], [the respondent] missed over 25 percent of her visits with her."

¶ 32 In light of the evidence and testimony adduced at the adjudication hearing, we cannot say that the trial court's finding that the respondent failed to show a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility was against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 33 II. Failure to Make Reasonable Efforts to Correct Conditions That Were the Basis of Removal or Reasonable Progress Toward Return of the Children

¶ 34 The respondent also contends that the trial court erred in finding her unfit on the basis that she failed to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for removal or reasonable progress towards the return of her children within nine months after the children were adjudicated neglected pursuant to sections 50/1(D)(m)(i), (m)(ii), and (m)(iii) of the Adoption Act. 750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m) (West 2012).

¶ 35 The respondent is again challenging the trial court's finding of unfitness, albeit on different bases. The burden of proof and this court's standard of review are therefore the same as above, *i.e.*, proof of parental unfitness must be clear and convincing, and this court will not reverse the finding of the trial court unless it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d at 208; *Syck*, 138 Ill. 2d at 274.

¶ 36 We recognize that sections 50/1(D)(m)(i) and 50/1(D)(m)(ii) are two independent bases for a finding of unfitness, and also that there is an absence of any statutory language defining what constitutes "reasonable efforts" and "reasonable progress." In *In re S.J.*, this court delineated the two standards, stating that "[a]pplying the 'reasonable efforts' standard involves a subjective judgment based upon the amount of effort reasonable for the particular person; deciding whether a parent has made 'reasonable progress' toward the return of the child involves an objective judgment based upon progress measured from the conditions existing when the parent was deprived of custody." *In re S.J.*, 233 Ill. App. 3d at 117; see also, *In re L.L.S.*, 218 Ill. App. 3d 444, 458-59 (1991); *In re S.G.*, 216 Ill. App. 3d 668, 669-70 (1991).

¶ 37 However, our supreme court, in an effort to reduce conflicting decisions of this court

regarding the appropriate benchmark of reasonable efforts or reasonable progress, rejected such narrow views as constructed in the cases above. *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d at 212.

¶ 38 Instead, the court held that "the benchmark for measuring a parent's progress toward the return of the child under section 1(D)(m) of the Adoption Act encompasses the parent's compliance with the service plans and the court's directives, in light of the condition which gave right to the removal of the child, and in light of other conditions which later become known and which would prevent the court from returning custody of the child to the parent." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Id.* at 216-17. For further clarity in regard to DCFS service plans, the court noted "that compliance with DCFS service plans is intimately tied to a parent's progress toward the return of the child, so much so, that where a service plan has been established to correct the conditions that were the basis for the removal of the child from the parent, the failure to make reasonable progress now includes the failure to 'substantially' fulfill the terms of that service plan." *Id.* at 217.

¶ 39 With this framework in mind, we now turn to the evidence adduced at the unfitness hearing regarding both the respondent's reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that led to the children's removal and her reasonable progress toward a return of the children following the adjudicatory hearing. The respondent states that the initial basis for the children's removal was lack of adequate supervision, but argues that it "proliferated in to a service plan that involved anger management, domestic violence, parenting and visitation." It appears that the respondent is arguing not that she failed to comply with the service plan, but, rather, that the service plan

was "misguided" and, thus, she should not have had to comply with its terms. This contention is belied by the evidence.

¶ 40 First, the argument that the service plan somehow "proliferated" into a series of unnecessary hoops that DCFS made the respondent jump through for no apparent reason is without merit. The initial basis for removal (lack of adequate supervision) may have been remedied, but this on its own does not warrant reunification with the children. Indeed, it has been observed by this court that "[W]hat may appear to be a momentary lapse in parental judgment can turn out to be a symptom of more profound emotional, psychological, or even psychiatric problems which impair the performance of parental duties, but which come to light only with further investigation." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d at 214 (quoting *In re C.S.*, 294 Ill. App. 3d 780, 789 (1998)). Here, once the children were removed, it became clear that there were other, more systemic problems that either were interfering, or had the potential to interfere, with the respondent's parenting.

¶ 41 Domestic violence was clearly an issue. The respondent testified that she pled guilty to domestic battery that had occurred in June 2007 while she was pregnant with C.S. She testified that there was violence between her and Carlos S., both while they were together and after their romantic relationship had ended. During her domestic violence assessment, the respondent admitted to being violent towards Carlos by pushing him, punching him and giving him a black eye. Carlos often retaliated, and the respondent testified that Carlos had pushed her, pulled her hair, choked her, punched her, pushed her to the ground, pinned her to the bed and tried to stop

her from leaving. During one incident, Carlos kicked the respondent in the stomach while she was pregnant with Cam. S. The respondent then testified that she did not think these instances of violence had any impact on T.G. and C.S. because they were not around when they occurred.

¶ 42 The idea that a relationship as tumultuous as the one between the respondent and Carlos had no impact whatsoever on the children seems untenable. Even if every altercation did not lead to physical violence, verbal abuse and aggressiveness can potentially impact the children who witness it. Moreover, in light of the allegations of domestic violence, the caseworker was not "misguided" in including in the service plan the requirement that the respondent undergo a domestic violence assessment, complete classes, and follow its recommendations. While the respondent completed the assessment, she admittedly never began domestic violence counseling. The respondent points to a shoplifters' anonymous class that she enrolled in voluntarily. These classes, according to the respondent, cost her \$25 per session. The respondent also acknowledged that these classes were not part of her service plan. We recognize that the respondent did have a problem with impulse control, and some of her incarcerations were a direct result of retail theft charges. We commend her for making an effort to address those problems. We further recognize that while substantial compliance with the DCFS service plan is necessary, strict adherence to the plan is not an absolute requirement in securing the return of the minor children, and that the trial court has the discretion to look at a parent's actions that are outside the scope of such a plan. *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d at 214 (rejecting the narrow view that in construing

section 1(D)(m) of the Adoption Act, the measure of a parent's progress toward the return of the child should focus solely on the parent's compliance with DCFS service plans).

¶ 43 However, on review, we cannot say that the trial court abused its discretion in finding the respondent unfit for failing to make any reasonable progress toward the return of the children.

¶ 44 The respondent completed the initial domestic violence assessment, but did not commence counseling. She did not complete anger management classes as directed under the service plan. She stated that she attempted to enroll while she was incarcerated, but she was transferred between facilities and her time in custody was too short to participate in the classes. She further testified that she had been enrolled in an anger management class (the record seems to indicate that this was at some point after she had been released from custody), but that she was dropped because Catholic Charities would no longer pay for it. Yet, somehow, the respondent was able to attend shoplifters' anonymous classes on the north side of Chicago and pay \$25 per class out-of-pocket for those expenses.

¶ 45 The respondent was also directed to seek gainful employment, find independent housing, take extensive parenting coaching classes and refrain from further criminal activity. Despite testifying that she attended the administrative review and was aware of the tasks she was to complete under the plan, the respondent failed to fulfill any of those obligations. While the respondent testified as to working as a caretaker for her disabled brother and for a brief stint at factory in Mokena, she was only able to provide Ms. Ibarra with one paycheck stub. The respondent admitted to not taking the parenting coaching classes because she felt "once a parent,

that is not something you forget."

¶ 46 It is apparent from the record that the respondent actively chose not to participate in those programs that Ms. Ibarra made abundantly clear to her were part of the service plan and would need to be successfully completed to secure the return of her children. As such, the trial court's finding that the respondent was unfit for failure to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that were the basis for removal or reasonable progress towards the return of the children pursuant to sections 50/1D(m)(i) , (m)(ii) and (m)(iii) was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 47

CONCLUSION

¶ 48 For the foregoing reasons, the judgment of the Will County circuit court is affirmed.

¶ 49 Affirmed.