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NOS. 4-17-0136, 4-17-0137, 4-17-0138, 4-17-0139, 4-17-0140 cons.

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF ILLINOIS

FOURTH DISTRICT

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| In re: N.A., a Minor<br>(The People of the State of Illinois,<br>Petitioner-Appellee,<br>v. (No. 4-17-0136)<br>Carmon Anthony,<br>Respondent-Appellant). | ) | Appeal from<br>Circuit Court of<br>Sangamon County<br>No. 13JA180 |
| In re: L.W., a Minor<br>(The People of the State of Illinois,<br>Petitioner-Appellee,<br>v. (No. 4-17-0137)<br>Carmon Anthony,<br>Respondent-Appellant). | ) | No. 13JA181 |
| In re: S.W., a Minor<br>(The People of the State of Illinois,<br>Petitioner-Appellee,<br>v. (No. 4-17-0138)<br>Carmon Anthony,<br>Respondent-Appellant). | ) | No. 13JA182 |
| In re: M.L., a Minor<br>(The People of the State of Illinois,<br>Petitioner-Appellee,<br>v. (No. 4-17-0139)<br>Carmon Anthony,<br>Respondent-Appellant). | ) | No. 13JA183 |
| In re: Z.A., a Minor<br>(The People of the State of Illinois,<br>Petitioner-Appellee,<br>v. (No. 4-17-0140)<br>Carmon Anthony,<br>Respondent-Appellant). | ) | No. 13JA184<br><br>Honorable<br>Karen S. Tharp,<br>Judge Presiding. |

JUSTICE STEIGMANN delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Harris and Holder White concurred in the judgment.

**ORDER**

¶ 1 *Held*: The appellate court affirmed the trial court's judgment, which terminated respondent's parental rights.

¶ 2 In December 2013, the State filed petitions to adjudicate as abused or neglected minors all five children of respondent, Carmon Anthony. Those five children were N.A. (born January 2, 2001), L.W. (born June 28, 2006), S.W. (born May 16, 2007), M.L. (born January 29, 2010), and Z.A. (born December 9, 2010). In October 2014, after respondent stipulated that all five children were neglected, the trial court entered a dispositional order making the minors wards of the court.

¶ 3 In January 2016, the trial court filed petitions to terminate respondent's parental rights as to all five children. After fitness hearings in September 2016 and January 2017, the court found respondent an unfit parent. In January and February 2017, the court conducted a best-interest hearing. Later that month, the court entered an order finding that it was in the children's best interest to terminate respondent's parental rights.

¶ 4 Respondent appeals, arguing that the trial court erred by finding that (1) respondent was unfit to parent and (2) it was in the best interest of the children to terminate respondent's parental rights. We disagree and affirm.

¶ 5 I. BACKGROUND

¶ 6 A. The Events Preceding the State's Motion To Terminate Respondent's Parental Rights

¶ 7 In December 2013, the State filed petitions to adjudicate all five children as abused or neglected minors. Specifically, the State alleged that L.W. was an abused minor under

section 2-3(2) of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 (705 ILCS 405/2-3(2) (West 2012)) because of excessive corporal punishment inflicted by respondent and her paramour, Antonio Leachman. (Leachman is not a party to this appeal.) In addition, the State alleged that all five minors were neglected under section 2-3(1) of the Juvenile Court Act (705 ILCS 405/2-3(1) (West 2012)) because (1) their environment was injurious to their welfare as a result of excessive corporal punishment, domestic violence, and drug use by respondent and her paramour; and (2) they were not receiving the proper care and supervision necessary for their well-being.

¶ 8 In January 2014, the trial court entered a shelter-care order, removing the minors from respondent's home and granting temporary custody and guardianship to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

¶ 9 In August 2014, respondent stipulated to the allegation that all five children were neglected minors because their environment was injurious to their welfare. That same month, the trial court entered a written order finding all five children "neglected minors in that their environment is injurious to their welfare as evidenced by the domestic violence between [respondent] and *** Leachman."

¶ 10 In October 2014, the trial court entered a dispositional order, making the minors wards of the court and maintaining DCFS as their guardian.

¶ 11 B. The State's Petition To Terminate Respondent's Parental Rights

¶ 12 In January 2016, the State filed petitions to terminate respondent's parental rights as to all five minor children. The State alleged that respondent was an unfit parent for failing to do the following: (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 which were the basis for the removal of the minor children (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(i)

(West 2014)); and (3) make reasonable progress toward the return of the minor children within the nine-month periods of (a) August 13, 2014, to May 13, 2015; and (b) May 13, 2015, to February 13, 2016 (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(ii) (West 2014)).

¶ 13 1. *The September 2016 and January 2017 Fitness Hearings*

¶ 14 In September 2016, the trial court conducted a fitness hearing. Linda Jones testified that she had been the minors' DCFS caseworker from December 2013 to March 2016. The children were removed from the home after a mental-health assessor visited and discovered that respondent had taped L.W.'s arms together for one to two hours as a disciplinary measure.

¶ 15 Jones explained that respondent's first service plan, established in June 2014, required her to do the following: (1) cooperate with DCFS; (2) attend substance-abuse treatment; (3) comply with random drug tests; (4) attend anger-management classes; (5) visit with her children; (6) attend counseling; and (7) take parenting classes. At a December 2014 review of that service plan, respondent was rated satisfactory in all categories. Respondent had successfully completed an outpatient substance-abuse program. However, because of a computer problem, DCFS was unable to drug test respondent during this service period. DCFS requested and was granted the ability to place the children with respondent. DCFS made plans to return the children to respondent and increased her visitation time.

¶ 16 Jones testified further that at respondent's next review, in June 2015, DCFS rated her unsatisfactory for cooperation and counseling because she was not attending counseling regularly. Respondent was rated unsatisfactory for anger-management training and domestic-violence training for stating that she would continue disciplining her children as she had before receiving services. In addition, DCFS began drug testing respondent during this service period. Of the six drug tests respondent was required to take, she did not provide a sample for two of

them and tested positive for marijuana on another. As to parenting, respondent was rated satisfactory.

¶ 17 Jones testified that the next service plan applied from June 2015 to December 2015. At the December 2015 review of that service plan, respondent was rated unsatisfactory in several categories. For instance, she was rated unsatisfactory in cooperating for continuing to miss counseling sessions, eventually leading to her unsuccessful discharge from counseling. Respondent told Jones that she thought the counseling was "stupid" and "elementary." Respondent also missed three drug tests, which she admitted missing because she was using marijuana. She was rated unsatisfactory in domestic-violence counseling for saying that she would not change how she disciplined her children. Respondent continued to receive a satisfactory grade for visitation, despite her visitation time being reduced in November 2015. Jones testified that throughout her observations of respondent's visits with her children, respondent did not interact much with her children. During one particular visit, respondent became "very upset, very irritated, very agitated, [and] very loud" when a visitation specialist asked her and her children to quiet down because other people in the office were working. Jones tried to calm respondent, but respondent only became louder and had to be separated from her children.

¶ 18 Jones testified further that from December 2015 to February 2016, respondent did not participate in any services. According to Jones, over the course of respondent's services, respondent had 137 visits scheduled, of which she attended all but 18.

¶ 19 The fitness hearing was continued until January 2017. Respondent testified that she taped L.W.'s arms because he was trying to stab his brother with a knife. L.W. told respondent that he thought going to jail was funny, so respondent taped his arms to show him what handcuffs were like and to teach him that jail was "not nice, it's not pretty." Respondent stated

that she learned various coping skills from anger-management treatment that helped her manage her anger. However, respondent became upset with Jones because she felt Jones was not treating her fairly.

¶ 20 Respondent testified further that she completed parenting classes in May 2014. She explained some of the parenting skills she learned during those classes and averred that the classes made her a better parent. Respondent admitted that she told Jones that she would continue using some of her old disciplinary methods in combination with the techniques she learned in class. Respondent denied telling Jones that she would continue to use corporal punishment. Respondent meant that she would continue to ground her children and remove their possessions when appropriate to correct misbehavior. In respondent's opinion, Jones had misrepresented respondent's comments about how she planned to discipline her children in the future. Respondent stated that after taking the parenting classes, she no longer spanked her children.

¶ 21 Respondent testified further that she missed some planned visits because the visits were scheduled last-minute and she could not arrange transportation. Respondent explained that during one visit, she became upset because the visitation caseworker "snatched" S.W. by the arm when S.W. was being loud and began to storm out of the visit. Respondent stated that she later apologized to the caseworker.

¶ 22 As to substance abuse, respondent testified that she successfully completed substance-abuse treatment in May 2014 and had stopped using marijuana. During the time she was not using marijuana, respondent admitted that she missed two drug tests. She missed one test because Jones called her one hour before the testing center closed, and respondent could not get to the center in time. Respondent testified that she was currently using marijuana and that marijuana relaxed her and calmed her nerves. She began using it again to relieve stress. In March 2015,

respondent agreed with Jones to again attend substance-abuse treatment. Respondent signed paperwork to begin treatment, but Jones never submitted the papers to the treatment center. Respondent testified that she never used marijuana to the point where she was unable to parent her children. However, respondent explained that she understood that it was inappropriate to use marijuana while parenting and that she would stop using it if her children were returned to her.

¶ 23 As to counseling, respondent testified that she learned a lot during counseling sessions, but she thought some of the counseling "packets" given to L.W. were not age-appropriate for him. The counselor, Cynthia Wadsworth, refused to give L.W. a higher-age-range packet. When respondent asked Jones for a different counselor, Jones refused, explaining that Wadsworth was the only counselor available through DCFS. Wadsworth eventually terminated the counseling because respondent was not making an appropriate effort to engage with the lessons. Jones did not refer respondent to another counselor.

¶ 24 2. *The Trial Court's Fitness Finding*

¶ 25 The trial court found that respondent was unfit. In support of that conclusion, the court found that, shortly after December 2014, Jones preempted the return of respondent's children due to respondent's failed drug tests. The court also clarified that respondent's DCFS case started, not because respondent taped L.W.'s arms, but because of domestic violence that occurred between respondent and Leachman. The court found that the State had proved by clear and convincing evidence that respondent was unfit because she failed to make reasonable progress toward the return of the minors for the following two nine-month periods: (1) August 13, 2014, to May 13, 2015; and (2) May 13, 2015, to February 13, 2016.

¶ 26 3. *The January and February 2017 Best-Interest Hearings*

¶ 27 The following evidence was presented at the best-interest hearings conducted in

January and February 2017.

¶ 28 a. Evidence as to S.W.

¶ 29 Rice Child and Family Center (Rice) caseworker, Meghan Breen, testified that she had been S.W.'s caseworker since December 2015. Prior to coming to Rice, S.W. had multiple unsuccessful foster placements and "several psychiatric hospitalizations." Breen testified that S.W. suffered from dangerous and impulsive behaviors, aggression, suicidal ideations, and self-harming behaviors. Breen explained that when S.W. experienced stressful situations, she responded "explosively" by threatening staff, kicking and punching objects, and threatening or attempting to harm herself. Since living in Rice, S.W. had improved her ability to control herself but still struggled in that area.

¶ 30 Breen explained that Rice was a short-term facility and that S.W. would most likely be discharged in June 2017. Breen testified that S.W. would be most successful in a highly structured environment with predictable routines. Breen recommended a specialized foster home. Breen listened when S.W. spoke on the phone with respondent and noted that S.W. feels bonded to respondent. Breen also commented that the phone calls went well and that respondent had acted appropriately. Breen opined that S.W. would have difficulty if she lost all contact with respondent. Nonetheless, Breen thought it was in S.W.'s best interest to terminate respondent's parental rights so that S.W. could transition to a permanent home with a structured environment.

¶ 31 Respondent testified that visitation with S.W. ceased for a summer after S.W. became angry and "acted out" after visiting. Respondent explained that a different personality of S.W.'s would emerge at the end of visits because S.W. did not want the visits to end.

¶ 32 b. Evidence as to N.A.

¶ 33 Emily Dorsey testified that she had been N.A.'s caseworker through DCFS since

March 2016. N.A. was 16 years old at the time of the hearing and was living in a foster placement with her former babysitter, Megan Whitlow. The placement was fulfilling N.A.'s needs. N.A. was attending school regularly and had successfully completed counseling. N.A. had a healthy social life with her peers from school. In addition, Dorsey testified that N.A.'s health needs were being met. N.A. shared a room with Megan's daughter, Anna. N.A. told Dorsey that if she could not return to respondent's home, she wished to continue living with Whitlow. Dorsey considered Whitlow a potential adoptive resource.

¶ 34 Dorsey observed some supervised visits between respondent and N.A. and was concerned by some of respondent's actions. Once, respondent was lecturing N.A. about things she was doing wrong and told her, "[T]his is the reason why you didn't get any Christmas presents." Further, Dorsey thought it inappropriate that respondent would talk to N.A. about respondent's DCFS case. Dorsey opined that it would be detrimental for N.A. to lose all contact with respondent, but Dorsey did not think that N.A. should resume living with respondent.

¶ 35 Respondent testified that she had a good bond with N.A. The two of them talked about N.A.'s relationships and school, went shopping, and watched movies. Respondent bought clothes and shoes for N.A. and attended her soccer games. Respondent testified that she liked Whitlow and that N.A. and Whitlow had a strong bond.

¶ 36 c. Evidence as to L.W.

¶ 37 Virginia Acosta testified that she was L.W.'s caseworker through Camelot Care Center. Since July 2016, L.W. was living in a specialized foster placement with Shavonda Huggins. The placement was specialized because L.W. had a mood disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. According to Acosta, Huggins did well responding to L.W.'s behavioral challenges. Also living in the home were Huggins' two sons, aged 9 and 18. L.W. got along

with the sons and was developing a bond with Huggins. Huggins took care of L.W.'s medical needs. L.W. had friends in the community and in school, and Huggins maintained consistent communication with L.W.'s teacher. L.W. had visits with his siblings twice a month, in addition to phone calls. Huggins told Acosta that she hoped to adopt L.W. Acosta opined that it was in L.W.'s best interest to remain with Huggins.

¶ 38 Respondent testified that L.W. did not easily express his emotions, so respondent would make a point to ask him about how he was feeling and ask him how his day went. She also tried to talk L.W. through his anger when he would get upset.

¶ 39 d. Evidence as to M.L.

¶ 40 Nicholas Nasuta testified that he was M.L.'s case manager through Camelot Care Center. Since March 2016, M.L. was living in a traditional foster placement with Barbara Curry. Nasuta testified that M.L. had a great relationship with Curry, was "flourishing," and was doing well in school. Z.A. was living in the same foster placement, but DCFS removed him because he was abusing M.L. Nasuta opined that M.L. would function best in a structured environment and that terminating respondent's parental rights would not harm M.L. Nasuta explained that Curry was willing to adopt M.L.

¶ 41 Dorsey testified that, while placed with Curry, M.L. attended school regularly, started occupational therapy, and made progress in counseling. M.L. felt safe and comfortable in Curry's home. Curry took care of all M.L.'s needs and had integrated him into her family by inviting him on trips and inviting him to celebrate holidays with Curry's family. Dorsey explained that M.L. had an attachment to respondent but that Dorsey's long-term goal for M.L. was to be adopted by Curry. Dorsey opined that respondent was incapable of providing for M.L.'s needs. M.L. told Dorsey that he wanted to live in his foster home instead of with respondent.

¶ 42 Respondent testified that M.L. would be very upset if respondent's parental rights were terminated.

¶ 43 e. Evidence as to Z.A.

¶ 44 Nasuta testified that he was also Z.A.'s case manager and that Z.A. was living in a specialized foster placement with Dora Johnson since November 2016. Z.A. needed a specialized placement because he had behavioral issues and took psychotropic medication. Nasuta testified that Z.A. was making progress in his placement and had developed a good relationship with Johnson. In addition to Z.A. and Johnson, Johnson's mother and another foster child, who was 17 years of age, lived in the home. Nasuta testified that Z.A. would not be harmed if respondent's parental rights were terminated. As with M.L., Nasuta testified that Z.A. would benefit from a structured environment. Johnson was willing to adopt Z.A.

¶ 45 Dorsey testified that Z.A. was diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. He was defiant at home and at school and was often suspended from school. Visits between respondent and Z.A. were "chaotic," and Z.A. would often not listen to respondent's attempts to redirect his defiant behavior. Z.A. struggled to "regulate his emotions" and would become "very hyperactive and defiant during visits." However, respondent provided Z.A. with a meal every visit, missed only one visit, and stayed for the entirety of the visits. Z.A. was seeing a school counselor and a psychiatrist. In addition, Johnson was provided with "intensive placement stabilization services," which consisted of a mentor and other services to help her support Z.A.

¶ 46 Dorsey testified further that Z.A. needed an environment with a lot of structure, where the expectations were clear and consistent. Dorsey doubted that respondent could provide for Z.A.'s extensive medical needs when respondent struggled to meet the demands of her own

DCFS service plans. Dorsey explained that, despite the grief Z.A. would suffer from terminating respondent's parental rights, termination was the only way to provide Z.A. with the stability and permanency he needed.

¶ 47 Respondent testified that when Z.A. was living with respondent, he would shadow her everywhere. He liked going to the park, playing sports, and playing video games. Respondent explained that Z.A. had an anger problem and could not react appropriately when he did not get something he wanted.

¶ 48 4. *The Trial Court's Termination Decision*

¶ 49 Immediately after the best-interest hearing, the trial court delivered an oral ruling, terminating respondent's parental rights as to all five children. The court explained that it had considered all the best-interest factors in reaching its decision. See 705 ILCS 405/1-3(4.05) (West 2016). The court acknowledged the strong bond between respondent and her children but found that respondent was not able to meet the children's needs for stability, structure, and discipline. In addition, the court found that respondent had parenting issues that needed to be addressed and that would not be resolved in the near future. According to the court's findings, the children's placements provided their best opportunities for permanence.

¶ 50 Later that month, the trial court entered a written order adopting its oral ruling, finding that it was in the best interest of the minors to terminate respondent's parental rights.

¶ 51 II. ANALYSIS

¶ 52 Respondent argues that the trial court erred by finding that (1) respondent was unfit to parent and (2) it was in the best interest of the children to terminate respondent's parental rights. We disagree.

¶ 53 A. The Trial Court's Fitness Determination

¶ 54 1. *The Applicable Statute and the Standard of Review*

¶ 55 Section 1(D) of the Adoption Act (750 ILCS 50/1(D) (West 2014)) defines an "unfit person" as "any person whom the court shall find to be unfit to have a child, without regard to the likelihood that the child will be placed for adoption." The Adoption Act then lists several grounds that will support a finding of unfitness, including the following:

> "Failure by a parent *** to make reasonable progress toward the return of the child to the parent during any 9-month period following the adjudication of neglected or abused minor ***." 750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(ii) (West 2014).

¶ 56 In *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d 181, 216-17, 752 N.E.2d 1030, 1050 (2001), the supreme court discussed the following standard for measuring "reasonable progress" under section 1(D)(m) of the Adoption Act:

> "[T]he 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 rise 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."

¶ 57 In *In re L.L.S.*, 218 Ill. App. 3d 444, 461, 577 N.E.2d 1375, 1387 (1991), this court discussed reasonable progress under section 1(D)(m) of the Adoption Act and held as follows:

" 'Reasonable progress' *** exists when the [trial] court *** can conclude that *** the court, in the *near future*, will be able to order the child returned to parental custody. The court will be able to order the child returned to parental custody in the near future because, at that point, the parent *will have fully complied* with the directives previously given to the parent ***." (Emphases in original.)

¶ 58 The supreme court's discussion in *C.N.* regarding the benchmark for measuring a respondent parent's progress did not alter or call into question this court's holding in *L.L.S.* For cases citing the *L.L.S.* holding approvingly, see *In re Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d 1052, 1067, 859 N.E.2d 123, 137 (2006), *In re Jordan V.*, 347 Ill. App. 3d 1057, 1068, 808 N.E.2d 596, 605 (2004), *In re B.W.*, 309 Ill. App. 3d 493, 499, 721 N.E.2d 1202, 1207 (1999), and *In re K.P.*, 305 Ill. App. 3d 175, 180, 711 N.E.2d 478, 482 (1999).

¶ 59 The State has the burden to prove unfitness by clear and convincing evidence. *In re Gwynne P.*, 215 Ill. 2d 340, 349, 830 N.E.2d 508, 514 (2005).

¶ 60 2. *This Case*

¶ 61 In this case, we conclude that the State met its burden to establish that respondent was unfit because she failed to make reasonable progress during the nine-month period from May 13, 2015, to February 13, 2016. See *In re C.W.*, 199 Ill. 2d 198, 210, 766 N.E.2d 1105, 1113 (2002) (only one ground is necessary to uphold a finding of unfitness).

¶ 62 Jones testified that in June 2015, respondent received a new service plan. At the December 2015 review of that plan, respondent was rated unsatisfactory in all but one category. Respondent had been unsuccessfully discharged from counseling, had not cooperated with her

required drug-screening program, admitted using marijuana, stated her intent to maintain her methods of excessively disciplining her children, and was frequently angry during meetings. From December 2015 to February 2016, respondent did not participate in any services.

¶ 63 The trial court's decision that respondent was unfit was supported by clear and convincing evidence. Respondent clearly failed to meet the benchmark of reasonable progress—complying with her service-plan goals. Respondent was rated unsatisfactory in all but one category and then completely ceased participating in services soon thereafter. Her actions during the nine-month period of May 13, 2015, to February 13, 2016, can in no way be considered reasonable progress. Without any participation in services, it was impossible for respondent to meet her service-plan goals and have her children returned to her in the near future. Therefore, clear and convincing evidence was provided to support the court's decision that respondent failed to make reasonable progress from May 13, 2015, to February 13, 2016.

¶ 64 B. The Trial Court's Best-Interest Determination

¶ 65 1. *The Applicable Law and Standard of Review*

¶ 66 At the best-interest stage of parental-termination proceedings, the State bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that termination of parental rights is in the child's best interest. *In re Jay. H.*, 395 Ill. App. 3d 1063, 1071, 918 N.E.2d 284, 290-91 (2009). In reaching a best-interest determination, the trial court must consider, within the context of the child's age and developmental needs, the following factors:

> "(1) the child's physical safety and welfare; (2) the development of the child's identity; (3) the child's familial, cultural[,] and religious background and ties; (4) the child's sense of attachments, including love, security, familiarity, continuity of affection, and the least[-] disruptive placement alternative; (5) the child's wishes

and long-term goals; (6) the child's community ties; (7) the child's need for permanence, including the need for stability and continuity of relationships with parent figures and siblings; (8) the uniqueness of every family and child; (9) the risks related to substitute care; and (10) the preferences of the person available to care for the child." *Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d at 1072, 859 N.E.2d at 141.

See also 705 ILCS 405/1-3(4.05) (West 2016). At the best-interest stage of termination proceedings, " 'the parent's interest in maintaining the parent-child relationship must yield to the child's interest in a stable, loving home life.' [Citation.]" *In re T.A.*, 359 Ill. App. 3d 953, 959, 835 N.E.2d 908, 912 (2005).

¶ 67 This court affords great deference to a trial court's best-interest decision because the trial court is in a better position to see witnesses and judge their credibility. *In re K.B.*, 314 Ill. App. 3d 739, 748, 732 N.E.2d 1198, 1206 (2000). "We will not reverse the trial court's best-interest determination unless it was against the manifest weight of the evidence." *Jay. H.*, 395 Ill. App. 3d at 1071, 918 N.E.2d at 291. A best-interest determination is against the manifest weight of the evidence only if the facts clearly demonstrate that the court should have reached the opposite result. *Id.*

¶ 68 2. *This Case*

¶ 69 The trial court's finding that terminating respondent's parental rights was in the best interest of all five minors was not against the manifest weight of the evidence. The common theme for all five children was that respondent could not provide them with the structure and predictability they needed. S.W. had serious mental-health issues and exhibited explosive behaviors. Although respondent had a good bond with S.W., S.W.'s caseworker testified that terminating respondent's parental rights was in S.W's. best interest because he would be better served in

a highly structured environment.

¶ 70 N.A. was doing well in her placement with her former babysitter, Whitlow, who was an adoptive resource. Again, although N.A. and respondent shared a close bond, N.A.'s caseworker testified that N.A. would not be well served by living with respondent.

¶ 71 L.W. required a specialized foster placement because of his health issues. In that specialized foster placement, L.W. was thriving. Huggins was able to properly care for L.W.'s needs, and L.W. was able to maintain a relationship with his biological family. Huggins was considered an adoptive resource.

¶ 72 M.L. was living in a foster placement with Curry, where he was "flourishing." Again, M.L. had an attachment to respondent, but the foster placement was better serving his needs. M.L. felt safe and comfortable living with Curry and was making progress in counseling. Dorsey testified that respondent was incapable of providing for M.L.'s needs and that Curry was an adoptive resource.

¶ 73 Z.A. was living in a specialized foster placement because of his severe behavioral issues. In that placement, he developed a good relationship with Johnson, who was an adoptive resource. Z.A.'s caseworker, Nasuta, testified that Z.A. would benefit from a structured environment, which respondent had not provided. The visits between respondent and Z.A. were described as "chaotic." DCFS provided Johnson with the services to support Z.A. and his extensive needs. Dorsey testified that respondent was unlikely to meet Z.A.'s needs when she had not completed her own services.

¶ 74 The trial court weighed the applicable statutory factors and determined that it was in each child's best interest to terminate respondent's parental rights. In general, the evidence established that respondent was not providing the children with the structure they needed and

that termination provided the best opportunity for permanence. We reject respondent's request that we reweigh the factors already considered by the trial court. The trial court's decision to terminate respondent's parental rights was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 75 III. CONCLUSION

¶ 76 For the foregoing reasons, we affirm the trial court's judgment.

¶ 77 Affirmed.