

IN RE CHILD OF CHARLES C.

Submitted on Briefs May 23, 2023
Decided May 30, 2023

Panel: STANFILL, C.J., and JABAR, HORTON, CONNORS, LAWRENCE, and DOUGLAS, JJ.

MEMORANDUM OF DECISION

Charles C. appeals from a judgment of the District Court (Portland, *Woodman, J.*) terminating his parental rights as to one of his children. *See* 22 M.R.S. § 4006 (2023). Contrary to the father's contentions, the statutory reunification obligation of the Department of Health and Human Services is not a discrete element of proof in evaluating whether a parent is unfit. *See In re Hannah S.*, 2016 ME 32, ¶¶ 12-13, 133 A.3d 590. Further, the court did not err in finding at least one ground of parental unfitness because the father does not currently live in housing suitable for children and because he failed to meaningfully participate in the services required to alleviate jeopardy. *See In re Children of Jamie P.*, 2020 ME 85, ¶¶ 10, 13, 236 A.3d 449; *In re Child of Radiance K.*, 2019 ME 73, ¶ 34, 208 A.3d 380; 22 M.R.S. § 4055(1)(B)(2)(b)(i), (ii) (2023). We discern no error or abuse of discretion in the court's determination that termination was in the best interest of the child. *See In re Child of Sherri Y.*, 2019 ME 162, ¶¶ 7-8, 221 A.3d 120; *In re Children of Melissa F.*, 2018 ME 110, ¶ 13, 191 A.3d 348; 22 M.R.S. § 4055(1)(B)(2)(a); 19-A M.R.S. § 1653(3) (2022).¹

¹ Title 19-A M.R.S. § 1653(3) (2022) was amended, effective after the entry of the termination judgment, though not in any way that affects our analysis. *See* P.L. 2021, ch. 647, § B-46 (effective Jan. 1, 2023) (codified at 19-A M.R.S. § 1653(3)(O) (2023)).

The entry is:

Judgment affirmed.

Jason A. MacLean, Esq., Bridgton, for appellant Charles C.

Aaron M. Frey, Attorney General, and Hunter C. Umphrey, Asst. Atty. Gen., Office of the Attorney General, Bangor, for appellee Department of Health and Human Services

Portland District Court docket number PC-2020-52
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