

IN RE JEREMY C.

Submitted on Briefs September 25, 2003
Decided October 3, 2003

Panel: SAUFLEY, C.J., and CLIFFORD, RUDMAN, DANA, ALEXANDER,
and CALKINS, JJ.

MEMORANDUM OF DECISION

The father of Jeremy C. appeals from a judgment of the District Court (Biddeford, *Foster, J.*) terminating his parental rights pursuant to 22 M.S.R.A. § 4055(1)(A)(1), (B)(2) (1992 & Supp. 2002). He contends that: (1) the evidence presented at the hearing and with his motion to amend the judgment was insufficient to support termination of his parental rights; (2) the trial court erred in giving paramount consideration to the best interests of the child; and (3) the Department of Human Services did not meet its evidentiary burden regarding reunification efforts.

The record supports the trial court's findings, by clear and convincing evidence, of at least one ground of parental unfitness, *see In re Alana S.*, 2002 ME 126, ¶ 20, 802 A.2d 976, 981, and that termination of parental rights is in the child's best interests, *see In re Jeremiah Y.*, 2002 ME 135, ¶ 9, 804 A.2d 357, 359.

The court did not terminate the father's parental rights based primarily on the best interests of the child, but determined first that at least one statutory ground of parental unfitness existed. *See In re Scott S.*, 2001 ME 114, ¶ 19, 775 A.2d 1144, 1150. Finally, the Department's reunification efforts need not be evaluated as a discrete element of proof in a termination proceeding. *In re Daniel C.*, 480 A.2d 766, 770 (Me. 1984). Those efforts were properly considered by the court in evaluating the father's conduct related to the grounds for termination. *See id.* at 771.

The entry is:

Judgment affirmed.

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