

**NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT I.O.P. 65.37**

IN RE: F.A.G., JR., Z.R.G., K.M.G., J.G.,  
L.G.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF  
PENNSYLVANIA

APPEAL OF: R.G.

No. 2038 WDA 2013

Appeal from the Order Entered November 26, 2013  
In the Court of Common Pleas of Greene County  
Orphans' Court at No(s): CP-30-DP-14, 15, 16-2009  
CP-30-DP-16, 17-2012

IN RE: Z.R.G., F.A.G., JR., J.A.G.,  
K.M.G., L.H.G.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF  
PENNSYLVANIA

APPEAL OF: F.G., BIRTH FATHER

No. 2039 WDA 2013

Appeal from the Order Entered November 26, 2013  
In the Court of Common Pleas of Greene County  
Orphans' Court at No(s): 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 OC 2013

BEFORE: BOWES, JENKINS, and FITZGERALD,\* JJ.

MEMORANDUM BY FITZGERALD, J.:

**FILED JULY 29, 2014**

At docket number 2038 WDA 2013, R.G. ("Mother") appeals from the

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\* Former Justice specially assigned to the Superior Court.

order entered in the Greene County Court of Common Pleas on November 26, 2013, terminating her parental rights to the children, F.A.G., Jr., born in August 2005, Z.R.G., born in October 2006, K.M.G., born in April 2008, J.G.,<sup>1</sup> born in March 2010, and L.G.,<sup>2</sup> born in September 2011 (collectively "Children"), and changing Children's goal to adoption. At docket number 2039 WDA 2013, F.G. ("Father") appeals from the order entered in the Greene County Court of Common Pleas on November 26, 2013, terminating his parental rights to Children, and changing Children's goal to adoption. The trial court terminated Mother's and Father's (collectively "Parents") parental rights pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(a) and (b) of the Adoption Act. For ease of disposition, we address these two appeals together, as did the trial court. We affirm.

The trial court summarized the facts and procedural history of this case as follows:

Greene County Children and Youth ["CYS"] has petitioned the [c]ourt to terminate the parental rights of [Parents], to [Children]. A sixth child, A.G., is not part of this proceeding but has been deemed to be dependent and is currently in foster care.

The . . . family became known to [CYS] in 2009, primarily because of a lack of suitable housing. The older three children were placed in foster care. [Parents] found temporary housing and [Children] were returned to them. The family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, and the case was

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<sup>1</sup> J.G. and J.A.G. are the same child.

<sup>2</sup> L.G. and L.H.G. are the same child.

closed on October 14, 2011. In March of 2012, the . . . family again came to the attention of [CYS]. The precipitating event was a call to Children and Youth Services of Washington County (PA) by the South Strabane Township Police Department. It seems that a guest at the Motel 6 on Murtland Avenue called police (or had alerted the desk clerk who made the call) that a number of children were apparently without supervision. Police responded and learned that Father, the only adult present, had outstanding warrants. They took him into custody and called CYS. Angela Marling, the on-call caseworker, arrived and took custody of [Children]. She described the condition of the room as deplorable with dirty diapers and clothes, old pizza, and a cigarette lighter on the floor. The bathroom floor was covered with water because [Children] were using the bathtub as a swimming pool.

Ms. Marling called her counterpart in Greene County and all four children were placed in foster care. The youngest child at that time, L.G., was not at the motel. The [CYS] caseworker, Dusti Bedilion, testified that Mother called her the next day, demanding return of [Children]. Ms. Bedilion described the call as loud, threatening and foul-mouthed. Regardless, Mother did not attend the shelter hearing the next day and in fact not [sic] attended few if any of the permanency hearings.

On April 3, 2012, [CYS] took custody of L.G., who had been left with a relative when Father and [Children] were in the motel room.

Since the finding of dependency in April 2012, [Children] have been in foster care. There has been virtually no contact with Mother in that time, because she has either been in jail or has been missing and her whereabouts unknown. Father has attended almost all of the permanency hearings and most of his scheduled visits with [Children] at [CYS], but he has never addressed the primary reason for [CYS's] involvement, the lack of suitable housing. Apparently the official residence of the family is 45 Reeseman's Mobile Home Park. Ms. Bedilion, the family caseworker, visited the address on several occasions during the first year of [Children's] current placement. No one was ever home. She left notes but heard no response. On one occasion she found the place

boarded up. Alyssa Ondash, the caseworker who succeeded Ms. Bedilion, had no better luck, although Father sometimes used the mailing address of 37 Reeseman's Mobile Home Park.

From the beginning of April 2012, through the termination of parental rights hearing on October 4, 2013, neither parent has been able to confirm housing. [CYS] has never been able to verify that [Parents] or either one had a residence of any kind, let alone a residence suitable for five or six children. Father signed a Family Service Plan ["FSP"] which required him to find suitable housing and display some evidence that he could keep it for six months, but he has never accomplished this task. Mother never signed a [FSP].

Trial Ct. Op., 11/26/13, at 1-3.

On June 5, 2013, CYS filed petitions to terminate the parental rights to Children. The petitions alleged grounds for termination pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(a)(1), (2), (5), (8), and (b). Following a hearing on the petitions on October 4, 2013, the trial court granted CYS's petitions and changed Children's goals to adoption on November 26, 2013. Father timely appealed on December 17, 2013. Mother timely appealed on December 19, 2013.<sup>3</sup>

Mother raises the following issues for our review:

1. Did the court err in finding that [Mother] failed to maintain relationships with [Children] and also failed to exercise reasonable firmness in refusing to yield that interfere [sic] with a close relationship with [Children] during the time of her incarceration?
2. Did the court err in terminating [Mother's] parental rights where [Mother] made attempts at maintaining a

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<sup>3</sup> Parents and the trial court complied with Pa.R.A.P. 1925.

relationship with [Children] during the time in which she was incarcerated?

3. Did the court err in terminating [Mother's] parental rights based on the fact [Mother] was unable to obtain housing and was prevented from doing so based on financial hardship?

Mother's Brief at 4 (unpaginated).

Father raises the following issue for our review:

Whether the [I]ower [c]ourt erred in terminating [Father's] parental rights where [Father's] only barrier to having [Children] returned was his inability to secure appropriate housing due to his financial difficulties.

Father's Brief at 8.

Our standard and scope of review is well-established:

In an appeal from an order terminating parental rights, our scope of review is comprehensive: we consider all the evidence presented as well as the trial court's factual findings and legal conclusions. However, our standard of review is narrow: we will reverse the trial court's order only if we conclude that the trial court abused its discretion, made an error of law, or lacked competent evidence to support its findings. The trial judge's decision is entitled to the same deference as a jury verdict.

***In re L.M.***, 923 A.2d 505, 511 (Pa. Super. 2007) (citations omitted). "[O]ur standard of review requires [u]s to accept the findings of fact and credibility determinations of the trial court if they are supported by the record." ***In re Adoption of S.P.***, 47 A.3d 817, 826 (Pa. 2012).

Furthermore:

Termination of parental rights is controlled by statute. **See** 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511 . . . . Our case law has made clear that under Section 2511, the court must engage in a bifurcated process prior to terminating parental rights. Initially, the focus is on the conduct of the

parent. The party seeking termination must prove by clear and convincing evidence that the parent's conduct satisfies the statutory grounds for termination delineated in Section 2511(a). Only if the court determines that the parent's conduct warrants termination of his or her parental rights does the court engage in the second part of the analysis pursuant to Section 2511(b): determination of the needs and welfare of the child under the standard of best interests of the child. One major aspect of the needs and welfare analysis concerns the nature and status of the emotional bond between parent and child, with close attention paid to the effect on the child of permanently severing any such bond. ***Id.***

***Id.*** (some citations omitted).

We have previously stated:

The standard of clear and convincing evidence is defined as testimony that is so "clear, direct, weighty and convincing as to enable the trier of fact to come to a clear conviction, without hesitation, of the truth of the precise facts in issue." It is well established that a court must examine the individual circumstances of each and every case and consider all explanations offered by the parent to determine if the evidence in light of the totality of the circumstances clearly warrants termination.

***In re J.L.C.***, 837 A.2d 1247, 1251 (Pa. Super. 2003).

***In re R.N.J.***, 985 A.2d 273, 276 (Pa. Super. 2009).

A parent must utilize all available resources to preserve the parental relationship, and must exercise reasonable firmness in resisting obstacles placed in the path of maintaining the parent-child relationship. Parental rights are not preserved by waiting for a more suitable or convenient time to perform one's parental responsibilities while others provide the child with his or her physical and emotional needs.

***In re K.Z.S.***, 946 A.2d 753, 759 (Pa. Super. 2008) (citation omitted).

Before filing a petition for termination of parental rights, the Commonwealth is required to make reasonable efforts to promote reunification of parent and child. However, the Commonwealth does not have an obligation to make such efforts indefinitely. The Commonwealth has an interest not only in family reunification but also in each child's right to a stable, safe, and healthy environment, and the two interests must both be considered.

***In re Adoption of R.J.S.***, 901 A.2d 502, 507 (Pa. Super. 2006) (citations omitted).

"Where an incarcerated parent faces termination of parental rights, it is critical that the fact of incarceration and the practical limits it imposes on the parent/child relationship not obscure the focus of the statutory inquiry."

***In re P.S.S.C. and P.D.S.C.***, 32 A.3d 1281, 1285 (Pa. Super. 2011).

Furthermore, this Court has held:

[U]nder 23 Pa.C.S.[ ] § 2511(a)(1), incarceration alone cannot support termination due to a parent's failure to perform parental duties. Moreover, a parent's absence and failure to support a child due to incarceration is not conclusive on the issue of whether the parent has abandoned the child. Nonetheless, a parent's responsibilities are not tolled during incarceration, and therefore the court must inquire whether the parent utilized those resources available while he or she was in prison to continue a close relationship with the child.

***Id.*** at 1286 (citations omitted).

We first address Mother's issues. The trial court did not specify under which provisions of Section 2511(a) it found that CYS had presented sufficient grounds for termination of Mother's parental rights. However, this Court may affirm the trial court's decision to terminate parental rights with

regard to any one subsection of 2511(a). **See *In re B.L.W.***, 843 A.2d 380, 384 (Pa. Super. 2004). Therefore, we focus our analysis on whether the trial court properly terminated Mother's rights pursuant to Section 2511(a)(1). That section states:

§ 2511. Grounds for involuntary termination

**(a) General rule.**—The rights of a parent in regard to a child may be terminated after a petition filed on any of the following grounds:

(1) The parent by conduct continuing for a period of at least six months immediately preceding the filing of the petition either has evidenced a settled purpose of relinquishing parental claim to a child or has refused or failed to perform parental duties.

23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(a)(1).

Mother essentially makes two arguments in support of her three issues on appeal. First, she claims that the trial court erred in concluding that she failed to maintain a relationship with Children during their placement. Mother's Brief at 10-13. Specifically, Mother relies on Ms. Ondash's testimony that Mother "initiated contact with her on two occasions." ***Id.*** at 10. Mother also claims that she "received information regarding the status of her children while her location was unknown through [Father]." ***Id.*** She notes that Father testified that he "had communication with [Mother] during the time CYS was unable to ascertain her location" and that "Father kept [Mother] updated on the condition of her children through out [sic] the course of CYS involvement." ***Id.*** at 11. Mother claims she exercised "reasonable firmness in refusing to yield to obstacles that may interfere with



a close relationship with [Children]" during and prior to her incarceration. **Id.** at 12.

Children's former CYC caseworker, Ms. Bedilion testified that Children's case with CYC was opened on March 26, 2012, due to inadequate housing, overcrowded house, and inappropriate caregivers. N.T., 10/4/13, at 42-43. Ms. Bedilion testified that on that date, Children were deemed dependent, and a safety plan was established. **Id.** at 44. Ms. Bedilion also testified as to Parents' inability or unwillingness to obtain housing suitable for Children. **Id.** at 47. She noted that neither Mother nor Father ever gave her a physical address where Mother was residing. **Id.** at 48. She testified that Mother never appeared at her office for meetings or visitation. **Id.** at 58. Ms. Bedilion also testified that Mother never signed a FSP, and the only time she met with Mother was an accidental encounter at a grocery store. **Id.** at 47, 50. Ms. Bedilion described phone conversations with Mother as "threatening phone calls of, you know, screaming, yelling." **Id.** at 50.

Children's current CYC caseworker, Ms. Ondash, who became Children's caseworker on March 1, 2013, testified to the following about Mother's FSP goals and Mother's efforts to maintain a relationship with Children. Since March 1, 2013, there have been service plans for Parents that required Parents to inform CYC within twenty-four hours of a new phone number or contact information. **Id.** at 63-64. Parents were also required to attend parenting classes, hearings, CYC meetings, and treatment plan

meetings. **Id.** at 64. Additionally, Parents were required to find suitable, sustainable, and appropriate housing for at least six months and maintain the cleanliness of the home for that same amount of time. **Id.**

Ms. Ondash also testified that since she became Children's caseworker, Parents never had housing, and never gave her a home address. **Id.** During the period of time she was the caseworker, Mother was incarcerated in Greene County prison and SCI-Muncy. **Id.** at 70-71. She testified that she introduced herself to Mother at the Greene County jail and that Mother called her twice on the phone. **Id.** at 65. During the first conversation, Mother asked why CYS was petitioning the court to change Children's goal and why Children were not being returned to her. **Id.** at 65. During the second conversation, in April 2013, Mother "was very vulgar" and made threats toward Ms. Ondash, Children's foster parents, and CYS employees. **Id.**

Mother never gave Ms. Ondash any information regarding employment or a source of income. **Id.** at 67. Mother was offered visitation with Children, but has never attended any visits. **Id.** at 68. Moreover, Mother has never attempted to maintain a relationship by giving CYS any money to pay for their care, by calling them from prison, or by sending cards, gifts, drawings, or letters to them. **Id.** at 68, 71. Mother has never contacted CYS to ask how Children are progressing in school. **Id.** at 68.

The trial court found the following:

As to [M]other, there is little we can say because she has played almost no part in these proceedings. The evidence is that she has been in and out of jail since before [Children] were placed. Of course, incarceration alone is not an explicit basis upon which to involuntarily terminate parental rights, but an incarcerated parent's responsibilities are not tolled during their incarceration. Any parent, including an incarcerated parent, must exercise reasonable firmness in refusing to yield to obstacles that interfere with a close relationship with his or her children. Here, there is almost no evidence of any attempt by Mother to maintain a relationship during her stints in jail. She sent no cards, letters or gifts to [Children]. On those occasions when she was no [sic] in jail she made no contact with [CYS] to establish or reestablish a relationship with [Children], other than the call she made shortly after March 31, 2012, when she apparently arrived back in Pennsylvania after parole from her sentence in Georgia. She never signed a [FSP]. Even Father, if he testified truthfully, has no idea where she is. He suggests Florida, West Virginia or Ohio. We know she was in jail in Georgia and we know she has some connections in Cleveland. As we observed above, Father made some regular attempts to maintain relationships with [Children]. Mother made none. In one of her few communications with [CYS] that was not initiated by [CYS], the accidental encounter in a local supermarket, she was advised to call in. She never did. Although Mother has been incarcerated for much of the time she has not been incarcerated all of the time. Even if [CYS] had complied with her unreasonable requests such as to take all of the children to SCI-Muncy, there is no evidence that she would have attended visits at [CYS] when she was not incarcerated. In fact, the evidence is exactly the opposite. She seems to have had no interest [in CYS] visits.

Trial Ct. Op. at 12-13 (citations omitted).

The trial court found the testimony of Ms. Bedilion and Ms. Ondash that Mother never visited Children, or attempted to maintain a relationship with them by sending Children cards, drawings, or letters, to be credible.

After review, we determine that the record supports the trial court's conclusion that CYD proved by clear and convincing evidence that Mother failed to make any efforts to remain a part of Children's lives at any time since their placement in April 2012. As a result, we find no abuse of discretion in the trial court's conclusion that termination of Mother's parental rights pursuant to Section 2511(a)(1) is appropriate. **See *In re S.P.***, 47 A.3d at 826; ***In re P.S.S.C.***, 32 A.3d at 1285; ***In re R.N.J.***, 985 A.2d at 276.

Second, Mother argues the trial court erred in terminating her parental rights because Section 2511(b) prohibits terminating parental rights "solely on the basis of environmental factors such as inadequate housing, furnishings, clothing and medical care if found to be beyond control of the parent." Mother's Brief at 14 (citing 23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(b)). Mother claims she was unable to achieve her FSP goal of obtaining stable housing suitable for Children solely because of her incarceration. ***Id.*** at 13-14. She claims that CYD should have afforded her more time in which to obtain housing. ***Id.***

§ 2511. Grounds for involuntary termination

**(b) Other considerations.**—The court in terminating the rights of a parent shall give primary consideration to the developmental, physical and emotional needs and welfare of the child. The rights of a parent shall not be terminated solely on the basis of environmental factors such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care if found to be beyond the control of the parent. With respect to any petition filed pursuant to

subsection (a)(1), (6) or (8), the court shall not consider any efforts by the parent to remedy the conditions described therein which are first initiated subsequent to the giving of notice of the filing of the petition.

23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(b).

Our review of the record indicates that Mother's parental rights were not terminated exclusively because she was incarcerated or because she failed to obtain suitable housing for Children. Rather, the trial court terminated Mother's rights because it found, for the six month period preceding the filing of the termination petition, that Mother "evidenced a settled purpose of relinquishing parental claim" to Children by failing to maintain a relationship with them. **See** 23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(a)(1). We reiterate the trial court's finding that "there is almost no evidence of any attempt by Mother to maintain a relationship during her stints in jail." Trial Ct. Op. at 12. Moreover, although Mother has been incarcerated during much of Children's placement, she has not been incarcerated all of the time. "On those occasions when she was [not] in jail she made no contact with [CYS] to establish or reestablish a relationship with [Children]." **Id.** at 12-13. Accordingly, this issue merits no relief. We find no abuse of discretion in the trial court's conclusion that termination of Mother's parental rights pursuant to Section 2511(b) is appropriate. **See In re R.N.J.**, 985 A.2d at 276.

We now turn to Father's issue on appeal. Father claims the trial court erred in terminating his parental rights because he was unable to secure

appropriate housing due to his financial difficulties. Father's Brief at 14. Father argues that if he had custody of his children, he would have government financial assistance that would make it easier for him to secure housing. *Id.* at 14, 18. Father also relies on Sections 2511(b)'s prohibition against terminating parental rights solely on environmental factors. *Id.* at 15, 17. Essentially, Father blames CY5 and the trial court for preventing him from securing the financial means necessary to satisfy his FSP goals. Father is not entitled to relief.

We focus our review on the trial court's decision to terminate Father's parental rights pursuant to Section 2511(a)(8). That section states:

§ 2511. Grounds for involuntary termination

**(a) General rule.**—The rights of a parent in regard to a child may be terminated after a petition filed on any of the following grounds:

\* \* \*

(8) The child has been removed from the care of the parent by the court or under a voluntary agreement with an agency, 12 months or more have elapsed from the date of removal or placement, the conditions which led to the removal or placement of the child continue to exist and termination of parental rights would best serve the needs and welfare of the child.

23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(a)(8). Our Court has explained:

termination under subsection (a)(8) does not require evaluating [a parent's] willingness or ability to remedy the conditions that initially caused placement, nor does it require an evaluation of the availability or efficacy of CY5 services. Though the state is required to make **reasonable efforts** to promote family stability and preserve family unity we cannot require CY5 to extend services beyond what our legislature has deemed a

reasonable time after state intervention or require Herculean efforts by CYS or other agencies after the goal has changed to adoption. Nor, in the interests of the children, should we. The state's interest in preserving family unity must be weighed along with the state's interest in protecting children, and a child's right to a healthy and stable environment. A child's life simply cannot be put on hold in the hope that the parent will summon the ability to handle the responsibilities of parenting.

***In re Adoption of M.E.P.***, 825 A.2d 1266, 1276 (Pa. Super. 2003)

(citations omitted) (emphasis in original).

In the instant case, the trial court made the following findings:

Admittedly, Father has displayed affection for these children or at least some of them and has tried to maintain a connection with them. There was no evidence that he ever willfully harmed them or physically abused any of them. We will assume he loves them and wants what is best for them, but parenting involves more than that. Since March 31, 2012, Father has provided absolutely nothing in the way of food, shelter or clothing for [Children]. Furthermore, this situation, at least as far as lack of shelter is concerned, existed for some period prior to March 31, 2012.

. . . Here, Father, unencumbered by [Children] for a year and one-half, has not yet managed to find a permanent residence for himself, let alone for himself and five or six children. He testified that he has lived in approximately eight different places in the last two years and it seems that these places are the homes of various relatives who let him stay for a few weeks or a few months and then ask him to move on.

Father has shown no ability or willingness to correct this situation. This inability has caused the children to be without essential care and subsistence. The situation has endured for a period of longer than [twelve] months and the conditions that led to the original placement, lack of housing, still exists, despite the efforts of [CYS] and other service providers. One wonders why Father does not start

out every morning at the offices of Misty Hannah<sup>[4]</sup> and Heather Yeager<sup>[5]</sup> demanding and begging for their help in finding housing. Instead, he kept some appointments and missed others. He failed to return calls. He did not act like a man who is attempting to remedy a situation that caused him to lose his children.

Section 2511(b) provides: "The rights of a parent shall not be terminated solely on the basis of environmental factors, such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care found to be beyond the control of the parent." For [Children], there has been no housing. In fact, as near as we can understand, Father has no housing either. He says that if he had all [Children] back he could afford appropriate housing, presumably because of cash benefits he would receive for them from the Department of Public Welfare or other agencies. Even giving Father the benefit of the doubt that he wants to be a parent, he fails to explain why he did not have adequate housing when he had all of [Children] and their benefits prior to March 31, 2012.

Father, in his response to [CYS's m]emorandum, suggests that he can remedy the conditions that led to placement of [Children] "in a reasonable amount of time." We find the statute directs that he has had a reasonable amount of time. [Section] 2511(a)(8) offers a 12 month period for a parent to correct unacceptable conditions. . . . [Children] were placed on March 31, 2012, and the termination hearing took place on October 4, 2013, 18 months later. . . . The law of Pennsylvania and the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act require that when a child is placed in foster care, [CYS] shall attempt to remedy the problems that caused placement but after reasonable efforts to cure the problem have not been effective, the needs and welfare of [Children] require [CYS] to work toward termination of parental rights.

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<sup>4</sup> Ms. Hannah is a family preservation specialist at Pressley Ridge, a social service agency that assists parents in regaining custody of their children. **See** N.T. at 98.

<sup>5</sup> Ms. Yeager is the housing resource coordinator for Greene County Human Services. **See id.** at 113.



\* \* \*

In light of the evidence and testimony, we find that the totality of the circumstances shows that after all this time . . . Father [is] not ready to assume custody of [Children], either now or in the foreseeable future.

Trial Ct. Op. at 10-12, 13 (some citations omitted).

The trial court's conclusion that Father has not, within the requisite statutory period, resolved the issues that led to Children's placement is adequately supported by the record evidence. We acknowledge the trial court noted that Father "has, for the most part, been a faithful participant in [ ] supervised visits." *Id.* at 7. However, it is undisputed that Father has not completed his FSP goal of obtaining suitable housing for Children. On appeal, Father seeks to have this Court re-weigh the evidence. Our standard of review, however, does not permit us to invade the credibility determinations of the trial court and re-weigh the evidence, absent an abuse of discretion. **See *In re S.P.***, 47 A.3d at 826.

As we find there is competent evidence in the record to support the trial court's credibility and weight determinations, we find no abuse of the court's discretion in concluding that CYS sustained its burden with regard to Section 2511(a)(8). **See *In re Adoption of R.J.S.***, 901 A.2d at 507; ***In re Adoption of M.E.P.***, 802 A.2d at 1276.

Neither parent raises a specific challenge to the trial court's conclusion that Children's developmental, physical and emotional needs and welfare would be best served by terminating parental rights. However, with respect

to Mother, we note that subsumed within her Section 2511(a) argument, she claims “[C]hildren had a bond with [M]other which remained despite lack of contact.” Mother’s Brief at 9. She baldly avers “the court erred in centering its judicial inquiry on the fault of the parent rather than the best interests of [Children].” **Id.** For his part, Father claims that “[h]e maintained his connection [with Children], and to sever that connection would be against the best interests of [Children].” Father’s Brief at 19. He also avers:

Further, despite the vague argument by [CYS] that [Children] call their foster parents mom and dad, there is no indication that [Children] have bonded with their foster family. Moreover, it is clear they have a strong bond with [Father]. Testimony revealed that they climb and play on and around him during visits. They call him dad. . . . It is in their best interest to be returned to the care of their loving father.

**Id.**

With regard to Section 2511(b), this court has stated:

Once the statutory requirement for involuntary termination of parental rights has been established under subsection (a), the court must consider whether the child’s needs and welfare will be met by termination pursuant to subsection (b). In this context, the court must take into account whether a bond exists between child and parent, and whether termination would destroy an existing, necessary and beneficial relationship.

**In re Z.P.**, 994 A.2d 1108, 1121 (Pa. Super. 2010) (citations omitted). This Court has explained that the focus in terminating parental rights under Section 2511(a) is on the parent, but it is on the child pursuant to Section 2511(b). **In re Adoption of C.L.G.**, 956 A.2d 999, 1008 (Pa. Super. 2008).

In analyzing the parent-child bond, the court is not required to order that an expert perform a formal bonding evaluation. ***In re K.K.R.-S.***, 958 A.2d 529, 533 (Pa. Super. 2008).

While a parent's emotional bond with his or her child is a major aspect of the subsection 2511(b) best-interest analysis, it is nonetheless only one of many factors to be considered by the court when determining what is in the best interest of the child. The mere existence of an emotional bond does not preclude the termination of parental rights. ***See In re T.D.***, 949 A.2d 910 (Pa. Super. 2008) (trial court's decision to terminate parents' parental rights was affirmed where court balanced strong emotional bond against parents' inability to serve needs of child).

***In re N.A.M.***, 33 A.3d 95, 103 (Pa. Super. 2011) (some citations omitted).

The trial court concluded that termination of Parents' parental rights was in Children's best interest in that it offered Children "some hope of a stable, safe and reliable family environment." Trial Ct. Op. at 15. Specifically, the court found:

Based on the evidence and testimony, it seems clear that none of [Children] could have much of [a] bond with Mother. She was in jail from early January 2012 until the time [Children] were placed in foster care. At the time, J.G. was 22 months old and L.G. was five months old. The oldest three were six and one-half, five and three and one-half. They have had very little contact with her since. [Children] have had regular contact with Father because of his regular participation in supervised visits at [CYS]. . . . [Children] seem to have bonded with the foster parents.

We believe it would be simply unjust to perpetuate the uncertain status of [Children] in foster care while [Parents] attempt to find the wherewithal to take care of even themselves let alone [Children]. They show absolutely no indications of being able to do so in the foreseeable future.

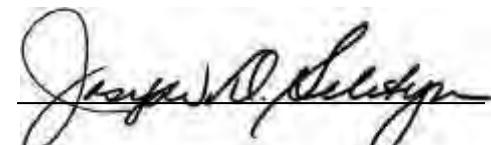
**Id.** at 14-15.

With regard to Mother, the trial court did not abuse its discretion in finding the lack of a bond and that Children's needs and welfare will be best served by terminating her parental rights pursuant to Section 2511(b). With respect to Father, although it seems that he made an effort to maintain a relationship with Children by attending twenty-nine of thirty-seven offered visits with them, "the mere existence of an emotional bond does not preclude the termination of parental rights." **See In re N.A.M.**, 33 A.3d at 103. The trial court did not abuse its discretion in determining that the termination of Father's parental rights would be in the best interests of Children. **See id.; In re Z.P.**, 994 A.2d at 1121; **In re Adoption of M.E.P.**, 802 A.2d at 1276.

For all the foregoing reasons, we affirm the trial court's orders granting the petitions to terminate Parents' parental rights and changing the Children's goals to adoption.

Orders affirmed.

Judgment Entered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph D. Seletyn", written over a horizontal line.

Joseph D. Seletyn, Esq.  
Prothonotary

Date: 7/29/2014