

NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT O.P. 65.37

IN THE INTEREST OF: A.C., A MINOR	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
	:	PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
APPEAL OF: S.C., MOTHER	:	
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	:	
	:	
	:	No. 54 EDA 2026

Appeal from the Order Entered December 4, 2025
In the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County Juvenile Division at
No(s): CP-51-DP-0000503-2023

IN THE INTEREST OF: A.S.K.-C., A	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
MINOR	:	PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
	:	
APPEAL OF: S.C., MOTHER	:	
	:	
	:	
	:	
	:	No. 55 EDA 2026

Appeal from the Decree Entered December 4, 2025
In the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County Juvenile Division at
No(s): CP-51-AP-0000405-2025

BEFORE: LAZARUS, P.J., SULLIVAN, J., and STEVENS, P.J.E.*

MEMORANDUM BY STEVENS, P.J.E.:

FILED AUGUST 28, 2026

S.C. ("Mother") appeals the December 4, 2025 decree that involuntarily terminated her parental rights to her daughter, A.C. a/k/a A.S.K.-C. ("Child"), born in May 2023. Mother also appeals the December 4, 2025 order that

* Former Justice specially assigned to the Superior Court.

changed Child's permanency goal from reunification to adoption.¹ We affirm the termination decree and dismiss Mother's goal change appeal as moot.

We glean the relevant factual and procedural history of this matter from the certified record, in particular, the records of Child's dependency that were admitted into evidence by the Philadelphia Department of Human Services ("DHS" or "the Agency"). **See generally** DHS Exhibit 1. DHS has been involved with Mother in matters that predate the instant case concerning Child. **See id.** at 26 (indicating that Mother's parental rights have previously been terminated with respect to at least one other child). The Agency's involvement in the instant cases began in June 2023 after DHS learned that Mother and Child had each tested positive for phencyclidine ("PCP") at the time of Child's birth and Child exhibited withdrawal symptoms. **See id.**

On June 7, 2023, DHS assumed emergency protective custody of Child, which was confirmed in a June 9, 2023 shelter care order. **See id.** at 23-24. On August 11, 2023, the trial court adjudicated Child dependent and set her initial permanency goal as reunification. **See id.** at 25-26. The trial court entered an aggravated circumstances order based upon the prior termination

¹ The identity of Child's father was not established. While an individual, W.K, Jr., was identified as a potential father, his paternity was neither confirmed nor denied during these proceedings. **See** N.T., 12/4/25, at 18. To that end, the trial court entered decrees on December 4, 2025 involuntarily terminating the parental rights of both W.K., Jr., and any other putative father of Child. No individual appealed these holdings.

of Mother's parental rights for a different child in a separate proceeding.² **See id.** at 26.

Following her removal from Mother's care, Child was placed in a pre-adoptive kinship placement with Mother's maternal cousin, J.C. ("Maternal Cousin"), and her husband, V.C. (collectively, "Foster Parents"). Child has consistently remained in their care throughout these proceedings.

Initially, the trial court afforded Mother supervised visits with Child twice per week. **See id.** at 27, 29. Beginning in January 2025, however, Mother's visits were reduced to once per week. **See id.** at 35. During the course of these proceedings, Mother never progressed to unsupervised visitation. Since it is relevant to our disposition, we note that Child has two older siblings: a seventeen-year-old brother, D.M., and a sister, A.M., who is significantly younger than D.M.

In furtherance of reunification, Mother was directed to provide random drug screens and referred for parenting education through the Achieving Reunification Center ("ARC"). At the time of Child's dependency adjudication, Mother was already in substance abuse treatment. The certified record further indicates that Mother participated in various inpatient and outpatient substance abuse programs during the course of Child's dependency.

² This order, however, directed the Agency to continue with their efforts "to preserve the family and reunify" Child and Mother. DHS Exhibit 1 at 26. The child implicated in the prior termination proceedings is not well-identified.

The trial court held regular permanency review hearings between August 2023 and September 2025. **See id.** at 25-38. Mother's compliance with her permanency objectives and overall progress towards alleviating the circumstances that led to Child's placement were initially adjudged to be substantial. During the full course of the dependency proceedings, however, the trial court found that Mother's compliance and progress steadily decreased in quality until the court held that her compliance and progress were deemed to be minimal beginning in January 2025. There are no indications that Mother improved her compliance thereafter. As discussed further *infra*, Mother has never resolved her addiction to PCP and remains an active user.

On September 10, 2025, DHS filed a petition seeking to involuntarily terminate Mother's parental rights to Child pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(1), (2), (5), (8), and (b). The same day, the Agency also filed a petition requesting that Child's permanency goal be changed from reunification to adoption. At this point in time, Child was approximately two years old and had been in placement with Foster Parents for virtually the entirety of her life.³ On November 14, 2025, Mother filed a competing petition

³ Our Supreme Court has determined that this Court must engage in *sua sponte* review to ensure that a child's legal interests are represented by an attorney appointed in conformity with 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2313(a). **See *In re Adoption of K.M.G.***, 663 Pa. 53, 81, 240 A.3d 1218, 1235, (2020). Child was represented during the dependency proceedings by the Child Advocacy Unit of the Defender Association of Philadelphia. Specifically, the certified record reflects that Iain Saltzberg-Pollard, Esquire, served as Child's guardian (*Footnote Continued Next Page*)

in the dependency case requesting that Child's permanency goal be changed from reunification to permanent legal custodianship ("PLC").

ad litem ("GAL") during the dependency proceedings. There is no order appointing an attorney to represent Child's legal interests in the underlying termination proceedings. Instead, Attorney Saltzberg-Pollard continued to represent Child in the termination proceedings without the benefit of a formal appointment. Additionally, a second attorney, Elizabeth Flanagan, Esquire, also appeared on behalf of Child in the termination proceedings. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 4. Their respective roles, however, are unclear. On the cover page of the transcripts of the November 20, 2025 termination hearing, Attorney Saltzberg-Pollard is identified as a "child advocate" while Attorney Flanagan is noted as Child's GAL. **See id.** at 1. However, Attorney Flanagan later identified herself as a "[c]hild [a]dvocate" during the proceedings and Attorney Saltzberg-Pollard's description of his role was inaudible. **See id.** at 4-5. Moreover, Attorney Saltzberg-Pollard's prior involvement in the dependency proceedings as Child's GAL creates another layer of uncertainty here. Overall, it is entirely unclear to what extent Child was represented by a separate GAL and legal interest counsel during the subject proceedings.

Assuming, *arguendo*, that Child was only represented by attorneys operating in the role of GAL in the proceedings before the trial court, we observe no structural error. In this particular context, "if the preferred outcome of a child is incapable of ascertainment because the child is very young and pre-verbal," then the mandate of Section 2313(a) is satisfied "where the court has appointed a GAL who "represents the child's best interests" during the termination proceedings. **In re T.S.**, 648 Pa. 236, 256-57, 192 A.3d 1080, 1092 (2018). At the time of the termination hearing, Child was approximately two years old and barely capable of speaking. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 64, 102. Specifically, the record indicates that she was only able to express herself in sentences that were two or three sentences long and remained unable to articulate more complex thoughts. **See id.** Since the record indicates that Child's "preferred outcome" was "incapable of ascertainment" due to her age and limited ability to communicate, we hold that Section 2313(a) was satisfied here. **See T.S.**, 648 Pa. at 256-57, 192 A.3d at 1092. We also recognize that "[i]t would be a better practice for the court to place an order on the record formalizing the GAL's role for termination purposes." **Id.** at 253, 1090 n.19. Nonetheless, since Child was represented throughout these proceedings, "we are disinclined to elevate form over substance." **Id.** Accordingly, we conclude that Section 2313(a) has been satisfied here.

Ultimately, the court held a joint termination and goal change hearing on November 20, 2025. Therein, DHS presented testimony from CUA case manager Theresa Watts and Maternal Cousin. Mother was present and represented by counsel. Although Mother declined to testify on her own behalf, the Agency called her as a witness. Mother adduced testimony from Iesha Littlejohn, a case aid who supervised visits between Child and Mother. During the course of the hearing, Mother lodged a number of procedural and evidentiary objections and submitted a letter brief summarizing these legal arguments. **See generally** Letter Brief, 11/24/25, at 1-28.

On December 4, 2025, the trial court reconvened the hearing and indicated its intent to, *inter alia*, grant the termination petition pursuant to Section 2511(a)(2), (5), (8), and (b). **See** Notes of Testimony (N.T.), 12/4/25, at 17. The trial court explained its rationale on the record in detail. **See id.** at 1-16. The same day, the trial court filed a decree that involuntary terminated Mother's parental rights. Contemporaneously, the trial court filed an order changing Child's permanency goal from reunification to adoption.

On January 5, 2026, Mother timely filed separate notices of appeal and concise statements of error complained of on appeal pursuant to Pa.R.A.P. 1925(a)(2)(i) and (b) at the above-captioned cases.⁴ On January 22, 2026,

⁴ Mother's last day in which to file a notice of appeal technically fell on January 3, 2026, which was a Saturday. **See, e.g.**, Pa.R.A.P. 903(a). Accordingly, Mother's time in which to appeal was extended until the next business day, (Footnote Continued Next Page)

this Court consolidated these cases *sua sponte* pursuant Pa.R.A.P. 513. On January 23, 2026, the trial court filed a consolidated statement pursuant to Rule 1925(a) indicating that it would be relying upon the rationale already articulated in its on-the-record statements at the December 4, 2025 hearing.

Mother has raised the following issues for our consideration:⁵

1. Did the trial court err by permitting DHS to call Mother to testify where she was not noticed as a witness?
2. Did the trial court err by refusing to sequester Foster Parents?
3. Did the trial court commit an abuse of discretion under Pa.R.E. 802 by relying on inadmissible hearsay to change the permanency goal of Child from reunification to adoption and terminating Mother's parental rights?
4. Did the trial court commit an error of law and abuse of discretion by involuntarily terminating Mother's parental rights to Child under 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(2), (5), (8), and (b)?
5. Did the trial court err by finding that termination of Mother's parental rights is best suited to Child's needs and welfare under Section 2511(a)(5), (8), and (b) without considering evidence regarding Child's sibling and extended family relationships, including by prohibiting Mother from calling Child's brother and maternal grandmother as witnesses?
6. Did the trial court commit an error of law and abuse its discretion under the Pennsylvania and U.S. Constitutions by changing the permanency goal of Child from reunification to

Monday, January 5, 2026. ***See, e.g., Scheibe v. Woodloch Resort***, 338 A.3d 176, 180 (Pa.Super. 2025) (citing 1 Pa.C.S.A. § 1908). Accordingly, Mother's notices of appeal and concise statements were timely filed.

⁵ The Defender Association of Philadelphia submitted a brief on behalf of Child arguing in favor of affirming the trial court's decisions.

adoption and terminating Mother's parental rights as DHS has failed to show that such termination is narrowly tailored to a compelling state interest?

7. Did the trial court err by prohibiting Mother from cross-examining Ms. Watts about the bases for her opinions and alternative goals?
8. Did the trial court commit an error of law and abuse of discretion by changing the permanency goal of [Child] from reunification to adoption pursuant to the Juvenile Act, 42 Pa.C.S.A. § 6351, where DHS failed to provide sufficient evidence that adoption is best suited to Child's needs and welfare?

Mother's Brief at 4-5 (cleaned up; issues reordered for ease of disposition).

Since its resolution is dispositive in these matters, we will focus our review upon the issues concerning the validity of the decree that involuntarily terminated Mother's parental rights. Specifically, we begin by addressing Mother's arguments that raise challenges to various evidentiary rulings issued by the trial court. We review evidentiary rulings under an abuse of discretion standard. **See Zieber v. Bogert**, 565 Pa. 376, 380, 773 A.2d 758, 760 n. 3 (Pa. 2001). To the extent these claims involve questions pertaining to the interpretation of the Pennsylvania Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure ("the Rules"), our standard of review is *de novo* and our scope of review is plenary. **See Interest of K.P.**, 199 A.3d 899, 901 (Pa.Super. 2018).

In her first issue, Mother asserts that the trial court erred by permitting DHS to call Mother as a witness during the joint termination and goal change hearing. **See** Mother's Brief at 37-41. Primarily, Mother maintains that the Agency violated Pa.R.J.C.P. 1340 ("Discovery and Inspection") by failing to

provide a mandatory disclosure indicating that Mother was a “witness to the occurrence that forms the basis of allegations of dependency” prior to the hearing.⁶ ***Id.*** at 38 (cleaned up) (quoting Pa.R.J.C.P. 1340(b)(1)). Concomitantly, Mother also argues that the trial court violated her due process rights by permitting DHS to call her as a witness. ***See id.*** at 39-40.

At a basic level, “[t]he object of all interpretation and construction of statutes is to ascertain and effectuate the intention of the General Assembly.” ***In re C.L.P.***, 126 A.3d 985, 989 (Pa.Super. 2015) (cleaned up). The plain language of the statute is, generally, the best indicator of legislative intent. ***Id.*** We may look beyond the plain language of the statute only where the

⁶ We note that the Rules are intended to “govern dependency proceedings in all courts.” Pa.R.J.C.P. 1100(A). Ordinarily, these rules would not apply to involuntary termination proceedings before an orphans’ court. ***See id.*** (“These rules shall not apply to orphans’ court, domestic relations and delinquency proceedings.”). Our Supreme Court, however, has explained that “in a circumstance unique to the City of Philadelphia, our Constitution places the First Judicial District’s adoptions docket within the jurisdiction of its . . . Juvenile Division, where an agency-initiated adoption is cross-listed with the the associated dependency matter, **and the Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure – and motions practice – predominate.**” ***Interest of K.N.L.***, ___ Pa. ___, 284 A.3d 121, 150 n.22 (Pa. 2022) (emphasis added). In the instant case, the court held a joint hearing that simultaneously considered both the Agency’s petition for termination of parental rights and the separate request for a permanency goal change. ***See*** N.T., 11/20/25, at 13-14. The evidence, testimony, and arguments offered by the parties was not bifurcated but entirely comingled. Under these circumstances, we will address Mother’s argument under Rule 1340 insofar as it relates to the admissibility of evidence relied upon by the trial court to involuntarily terminate Mother’s parental rights. ***See, e.g., K.N.L.***, 284 A.3d at 150 n.22.

words are unclear or ambiguous, or the plain meaning would lead to “a result that is absurd, impossible of execution or unreasonable.” ***Id.***

Mother’s arguments also implicate well-established principles governing statutory construction of the Rules. **See** Pa.R.J.C.P. 101(c) (“In the construction of the Pennsylvania Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure, the principles set forth in [the Rules] 104 to 115 shall be observed”). Among those rules of construction is the presumption that “[t]he Supreme Court intends a rule to be construed to secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of every action or proceeding to which it is applicable.” Pa.R.J.A. 109(b). Further, “[e]very rule shall be construed, if possible, to give effect to all its provisions. When the words of a rule are clear and free from all ambiguity, the letter of it is not to be disregarded under the pretext of pursuing its spirit.” Pa.R.J.A. 108(b). Also, “[w]ords and phrases shall be construed according to rules of grammar and according to their common and approved usage; but technical words and [those with] peculiar [] meaning or as are expressly defined by rule shall be construed according to such peculiar [] or express meaning or definition.” Pa.R.J.A. 106(a).

From the outset of our analysis, we note that there is no case law interpreting Rule 1340 on substantive grounds. Accordingly, Mother’s claim pursuant to Rule 1340 constitutes an issue of first impression.

As such, a review of the relevant language is necessary and instructive:

Rule 1340. Discovery and Inspection.

* * *

B. Mandatory disclosure.

(1) *By the county agency.* In all cases, **on request by a party** and subject to any protective order which the county agency might obtain under this rule, the county agency shall disclose to a party, all of the following **requested items or information**, provided they are material to the instant case. The county agency shall, when applicable, permit a party to inspect and copy or photograph such items:

(a) **the name and last known address of each witness** to the occurrence that forms the basis of allegations of dependency unless disclosure is prohibited by law.

* * *

D. Continuing Duty to Disclose. If, prior to **or during a hearing**, either party discovers additional evidence or material previously requested or ordered to be disclosed by it, which is subject to discovery or inspection under this rule, **or the identity of an additional witness or witnesses**, such party promptly shall notify the opposing party or the court of the additional evidence, material, or witness.

E. Remedy. If at any time during the course of the proceedings it is brought to the attention of the court that a party has failed to comply with this rule, the court may order such party to permit discovery or inspection, may grant a continuance, or may prohibit such party from introducing evidence or witnesses not disclosed, **or it may enter such other order as it deems just under the circumstances.**

Pa.R.J.C.P. 1340(B)(1)(a), (D)-(E) (emphases added). The commentary to Rule 1340 indicates that the disclosures required by Rule 1340(B) are intended “to ensure that a party has the ability to prepare adequately for the hearing.” *Id.* at cmt (citing *In re J.C.*, 603 A.2d 627 (Pa.Super. 1992)).

From the outset, we note that the “mandatory disclosures” contemplated by Rule 1340(B)(1) are only triggered by a “request by a party” and only apply to specifically “requested items or information.” Pa.R.J.C.P. 1340(B)(1). Our review of the certified record indicates that Mother claims to have submitted a request for “discovery, exhibits, and witnesses from DHS on September 18, 2025[.]” Motion for Continuance, 9/24/25, at 3 ¶ 7. No copy of any such request, however, appears in the certified record. The absence of this critical document raises significant questions regarding whether Mother sufficiently complied with her preliminary obligations under Rule 1340(B)(1).

Assuming, *arguendo*, that Mother’s bald allegations are sufficient as a threshold matter, we observe no abuse of discretion or error of law. The gravamen of Mother’s argument is that Rule 1340 should operate so as to preclude DHS from calling witnesses that have not been identified prior to the subject proceeding. **See** Mother’s Brief at 37-39. Respectfully, however, we find that Mother’s arguments fail to effectuate all of the relevant portions of Rule 1340. **Cf. C.L.P.**, 126 A.3d at 989; 1 Pa.C.S.A. § 1921(a)). Contrary to Mother’s claims, the plain text of Rule 1340 clearly contemplates situations wherein a child welfare agency may provide a “mandatory disclosure” regarding the “identity” of an additional witness “during a hearing.” Pa.R.J.C.P. 1340(B)(1)(a), (D). The trial court was similarly empowered to take “just” action under the circumstances. Pa.R.J.C.P. 1340(E); **see also** 42 Pa.C.S.A § 5935 (“In any civil action or proceeding, . . . , a party to the record,

. . . , may be compelled by the adverse party to testify as if under cross-examination.”). Based upon the foregoing, we reject Mother’s contention that Rule 1340 requires strict, pre-hearing notice of all witnesses intended to be called by the Agency. As such, no relief is due on this point.

Turning to the second aspect of Mother’s argument, she also maintains that permitting the Agency to call her as a witness violated her due process rights.⁷ **See** Mother’s Brief at 39-40. It is well-settled that “any individual whose parental rights are to be terminated must be afforded due process.” ***In re Adoption of K.M.D.***, 261 A.3d 1055, 1059 (Pa.Super. 2021). In this context, “[d]ue process requires nothing more than adequate notice, an opportunity to be heard, and the chance to defend oneself in an impartial tribunal having jurisdiction over the matter.” ***Id.***

In support of this claim of error, Mother has relied entirely upon ***In Interest of Jones***, 429 A.2d 671 (Pa.Super. 1981). In that case, a child welfare agency in dependency proceedings relied upon reports from an unnamed informant who testified *in camera* outside of the subject parent’s presence. **See id.** at 674. While the parent was not present during the *in camera* testimony, their counsel was afforded an opportunity to cross-examine the individual. **See id.** Both in the trial court and on appeal, the subject parent argued that their due process rights had been violated. **See**

⁷ Mother also timely objected and preserved this issue. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 75 (“It’s a complete violation of her due process rights.”).

id. Ultimately, this Court concluded that the parent had “a right under the due process clause to confront and cross-examine the informant” and that the failure to permit her to confront the witness constituted a violation of her due process rights. **Id.** at 677-78. Thus, the court reversed and remanded.

Jones, however, is inapposite to the instant controversy. Critically, the instant appeals do **not** pertain to circumstances wherein Mother was purportedly deprived of her right to confront an unidentified witness, *i.e.*, the central consideration and justification for the holding in **Jones**. **See id.** at 677 (“The **right to confrontation** asserted by the mother is a claim of real constitutional substance.”) (emphasis added). There is no colorable allegation that Mother’s right to confront a witness was transgressed by the trial court and, furthermore, **Jones** offers no other analysis or discussion that could apply to the instant controversy.⁸ As such, this case also affords no relief. Based upon the foregoing, we find no overall merit in Mother’s first issue.⁹

⁸ The holding in **Jones** also involved the interpretation of the constitutionality of a statute upon which Mother has neither relied nor discussed. **See Jones**, 429 A.2d at 677-78 (citing 42 Pa.C.S.A. § 6341(d)).

⁹ Mother also argues that the Agency calling her as a witness violated her right against self-incrimination pursuant to the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. **See** Mother’s Brief at 40 (“[I]t also violated her rights by requiring her to give . . . crucial testimony in support of terminating her own parental rights[.]”) (citing U.S. CONST., Amend. V). Mother’s counsel, however, did not contemporaneously preserve an objection on this specific ground during the underlying proceedings. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 75-80. Furthermore, she did not preserve this issue in her post-hearing letter brief. **See** Letter Brief, 11/24/25, at 22-23. As such, this particular element of
(Footnote Continued Next Page)

Mother's second issue challenges the trial court's denial of her request to sequester Maternal Cousin during the November 20, 2025 hearing.¹⁰ **See** Mother's Brief at 35-37. In pertinent part, Mother argues that "[f]oster parents do not have a right to be present during termination hearings." **Id.** at 35. She also claims that Maternal Cousin "was able to use the advantage of having heard [the Agency's] testimony to testify consistently" with the prior statements. **Id.** at 36. Thus, she argues in favor of reversing the trial court's decree that terminated Mother's parental rights. **See id.** at 37.

The sequestration of witnesses under Pennsylvania law is generally governed by Pennsylvania Rule of Evidence 615, which provides as follows:

Rule 615. Sequestering Witnesses

At a party's request the court may order witnesses sequestered so that they cannot learn of other witnesses' testimony. Or the court may do so on its own. But this rule does not authorize sequestering:

- (a) a party who is a natural person;
- (b) an officer or employee of a party that is not a natural person (including the Commonwealth) after being designated as the party's representative by its attorney;

Mother's argument is waived. **See** Pa.R.A.P. 302(a) ("Issues not raised in the trial court are waived and cannot be raised for the first time on appeal.").

¹⁰ Specifically, Mother's counsel made an oral sequestration motion during the November 20, 2025 hearing. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 14-15. Although Mother requested that both Foster Parents be sequestered, we note that only Maternal Cousin testified as a witness in these proceedings. **See** Pa.R.E. 615 (indicating that sequestration requests only apply to "witnesses").

(c) a person whose presence a party shows to be essential to presenting the party's claim or defense; or

(d) a person authorized by statute or rule to be present.

Pa.R.E. 615. The commentary to Rule 615 notes that "the rule is discretionary not mandatory." **Id.** at cmt. As such, "[t]he decision to sequester witnesses is left to the discretion of the trial judge and will be reversed only for an abuse of discretion." **Koller Concrete, Inc. v. Tube City IMS, LLC**, 115 A.3d 312, 318 (Pa.Super. 2015) (cleaned up). Furthermore, "[a] request for sequestration of a witness . . . should be specific and should be supported by some reason or reasons demonstrating that the interests of [j]ustice require it." **Id.** (cleaned up). Finally, "an appellant must demonstrate that he or she was actually prejudiced by a trial judge's sequestration order before any relief may be warranted." **Commonwealth v. Stevenson**, 894 A.2d 759, 767 (Pa.Super. 2006), *overruled on separate grounds*, **Commonwealth v. Hicks**, 652 Pa. 353, 362, 208 A.3d 916, 921 n.1 (2019).

Assuming, *arguendo*, that Maternal Cousin was not within one of the classes of individuals exempted pursuant to Rule 615(1)-(4), we observe no abuse of discretion in the trial court's denial of Mother's sequestration request. In particular, we gather guidance from the holding **In re Adoption of J.F.**, 572 A.2d 223, 225 (Pa.Super. 1990). Therein, a mother appealed the involuntary termination of her parental rights and argued, *inter alia*, that the trial court erred by refusing to sequester the child's stepmother during the

testimony of her husband, the child's biological father. On appeal, this Court affirmed and reasoned as follows with respect to sequestration:

[W]e find that [the mother] was not prejudiced by the court's refusal to sequester [stepmother] as a witness. [The mother] claims [stepmother] was allowed to hear her husband's testimony and thereby was in a position to conform her subsequent testimony to his. We find the court did not err in refusing to sequester [stepmother] as she had every opportunity prior to the hearing to conform her testimony to her husband's if that was their intent.

J.F., 572 A.2d at 225. We read **J.F.** for the proposition that in the context of sequestration, a party must make a strong showing of prejudice that rises above the mere possibility that witnesses might conform their testimony.

Here, the only allegation of prejudice advanced by Mother is that Maternal Cousin and Ms. Watts each testified that Maternal Cousin was willing to continue to allow post-adoption contact between Child and her biological family. **See** Mother's Brief at 36 (citing N.T., 11/20/25, at 49, 92). Since Ms. Watts testified before Maternal Cousin at the November 20, 2025 hearing, Mother now baldly asserts that Maternal Cousin inappropriately molded her testimony to fit Ms. Watts' representations. There is no indication, however, that this parity in testimony was the result of the trial court's denial of Mother's request for sequestration. Raising the mere possibility that Maternal Cousin might have altered her testimony in response to Ms. Watts' averments, without more, is insufficient to merit relief. **See, e.g., J.F.**, 572 A.2d at 225.

Mother's third claim for relief asserts that it was improper for the trial court to rely upon certain portions of testimony from Mother and Ms. Watts,

which she characterizes as inadmissible hearsay. **See** Mother's Brief at 25-29. Specifically, Mother alleges that the trial court erroneously relied upon hearsay testimony to conclude that: (1) Child was removed from Mother's care due to substance abuse; (2) Mother did not successfully complete substance abuse treatment; and (3) Mother did not consistently provide clean drug screens.¹¹ **See id.** Upon review, we must disagree.

The Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence define "hearsay" as "a statement that the declarant does not make while testifying at the current trial or hearing" and that "a party offers in evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted in the statement." Pa.R.E. 801(c)(1)-(2). In this context, a "statement" includes "a person's oral assertion, written assertion, or nonverbal conduct, if the person intended it as an assertion." Pa.R.E. 801(a).

¹¹ During the course of the underlying proceedings, Mother's counsel lodged a sweeping number of objections identifying alleged instances of hearsay testimony. In her brief, however, Mother has only identified the limited testimony discussed above with specific argument and references to the certified record. "It is well-settled that an appellant must provide the Superior Court with proper references to the specific place in the certified record at which challenged testimony appears." **In re Child M.**, 681 A.2d 793, 799 (Pa.Super. 1996) (citing Pa.R.A.P. 2119(c)). "We cannot scour the record on [an] appellant's behalf trying to find mistakes by the hearing judge. It is the appellant's responsibility to precisely identify any purported errors." **Id.** Moreover, Rule 2119(a) requires a "full discussion of the points raised." **Id.** To the extent that Mother relies upon other instances of alleged hearsay aside from those clearly identified and specifically discussed in her brief, we will not address her "sweeping charges" of hearsay in the absence of "references to" and argument concerning "specific instances of alleged lower court error[.]" **Id.** (finding waiver pursuant to Pa.R.A.P. 2119(a) and (c)).

As a general matter, hearsay is inadmissible aside from specific exceptions enumerated under Pennsylvania law. **See** Pa.R.E. 802.

It is well-established, however, that testimony does not qualify as hearsay if it does not involve an “extrajudicial statement” but merely constitutes an “observation” within the witness’s “personal knowledge.” **Commonwealth v. Johnson**, 576 Pa. 23, 40, 838 A.2d 663, 673 (Pa. 2003) (“[I]t is hornbook law that what a person knows firsthand from his own knowledge is not hearsay[.]”); **see also Child M.**, 681 A.2d at 800 (holding the “direct observations” within the personal knowledge of various witnesses in an involuntary termination of parental rights case was not hearsay).

The first portion of Mother’s hearsay arguments concerns her allegation that “there was no admissible evidence that the reason [Child] was removed was due to Mother’s drug use.” Mother’s Brief at 25-26. She has identified portions of her own, and Ms. Watts’s, testimony wherein DHS adduced testimony concerning Child’s removal from Mother’s care. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 20-23. Specifically, Ms. Watts testified Child was removed after she was “born substance exposed and . . . spent some time in the [neonatal intensive care unit (“NICU”)] as she was going through withdrawal symptoms.” **Id.** at 22. Along similar lines, Mother testified that Child was removed from her care because of Mother’s “substance abusing,” which resulted in Child being hospitalized in the NICU. **See id.** at 81. Mother maintains this testimony was hearsay. **See** Mother’s Brief at 25-26.

Assuming, *arguendo*, that Ms. Watts's testimony on this particular point was hearsay, its admission and consideration by the trial court was harmless error. It is axiomatic that "harmless error is established where the erroneously admitted evidence was merely cumulative of other untainted evidence." ***Blumer v. Ford Motor Co.***, 20 A.3d 1222, 1232 (Pa.Super. 2011) (cleaned up). Here, the ultimate reason for Child's removal from Mother's care was well-established in the records from the underlying dependency proceedings that were entered into evidence by DHS. **See** DHS Exhibit 1 at 24 ("Mother and baby tested positive for PCP at the birth of the child. . . . Child is having medical care for withdraw symptoms."). We also reject Mother's contention that her own testimony explaining the reasons for Child's removal was hearsay since her averments were based upon her direct observations and personal experience. **See Child M.**, 681 A.2d at 800.

Mother similarly maintains that the totality of the testimony regarding her history of substance abuse treatment constituted hearsay. **See** Mother's Brief at 27. Specifically, Ms. Watts averred that Mother has participated in approximately four separate inpatient and four separate outpatient programs over two and one-half years of service. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 32-38. Ms. Watts also testified that Mother had largely completed several of these programs and provided certificates to CUA/DHS. **See id.** at 34-38. Mother similarly testified that she had completed all of the inpatient and outpatient programs in which she enrolled. **See id.** at 83-85. Despite having finished

multiple rounds of treatment, however, Mother also testified that she was still in “active addiction” at the time of the termination hearing. ***Id.*** at 82. To the extent that Mother has characterized this as “hearsay,” we readily conclude that their averments were based upon the direct experiences and observations of the parties. ***See Child M.***, 681 at 800.

The third and final aspect of Mother’s hearsay arguments concern the testimony regarding her history of drug screens. ***See*** Mother’s Brief at 28. Specifically, Ms. Watts testified that Mother was referred for random drug screens “[t]hree times between every court hearing” during the course of Child’s dependency proceedings.¹² N.T., 11/20/25, at 41. Mother confirmed that she has participated in random drug screens and further testified that she has tested both “positive” and “negative” at various points. ***See id.*** at 86-87. Mother also conceded that she would test positive for PCP if she had been screened on the day of the termination hearing. ***See id.*** at 86. To the extent Mother has sought to characterize this testimony as hearsay, it is clear that both Ms. Watts and Mother were testifying based upon firsthand knowledge. Thus, we observe no error. ***See Child M.***, 681 A.2d at 800.

¹² It does not appear that Mother entered a contemporaneous objection to this particular testimony raising hearsay. ***See*** N.T., 11/20/25, at 41. We note, however, that Mother’s counsel entered a number of standing objections regarding various theories of hearsay, which were accepted by the trial court. ***See id.*** at 25-26. Thus, we deem this part of her argument to be preserved.

Based upon the foregoing, we discern no abuse of discretion, error of law, or merit in Mother's arguments pertaining to alleged hearsay in the testimonies of Ms. Watts and Mother. Thus, no relief is due.

Next, we turn to collectively address Mother's fourth and fifth claims for relief, which challenges the trial court's findings pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.A § 2511(a) and (b). Our standard of review in this context is well-established:

In cases concerning the involuntary termination of parental rights, appellate review is limited to a determination of whether the decree of the termination court is supported by competent evidence. When applying this standard, the appellate court must accept the trial court's findings of fact and credibility determinations if they are supported by the record. Where the trial court's factual findings are supported by the evidence, an appellate court may not disturb the trial court's ruling unless it has discerned an error of law or abuse of discretion.

An abuse of discretion does not result merely because the reviewing court might have reached a different conclusion or the facts could support an opposite result. Instead, an appellate court may reverse for an abuse of discretion only upon demonstration of manifest unreasonableness, partiality, prejudice, bias, or ill-will. This standard of review reflects the deference we pay to trial courts, who often observe the parties first-hand across multiple hearings.

In considering a petition to terminate parental rights, a trial court must balance the parent's fundamental right to make decisions concerning the care, custody, and control of his or her child with the child's essential needs for a parent's care, protection, and support. Termination of parental rights has significant and permanent consequences for both the parent and child. As such, the law of this Commonwealth requires the moving party to establish the statutory grounds by clear and convincing evidence, which is evidence that is so clear, direct, weighty, and convincing as to enable a trier of fact to come to a clear conviction, without hesitation, of the truth of the precise facts in issue.

Interest of M.E., 283 A.3d 820, 829-30 (Pa.Super. 2022) (cleaned up).

The involuntary termination of parental rights is governed by Section 2511 of the Act, which calls for a bifurcated analysis that first focuses upon the “eleven enumerated grounds” of parental conduct that may warrant termination. ***Id.*** at 830; ***see also*** 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(1)-(11). If the orphans’ court determines the petitioner has established grounds for termination under one of these subsections by “clear and convincing evidence,” the court then assesses the petition pursuant to Section 2511(b), which focuses upon the child’s developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare. ***In re T.S.M.***, 620 Pa. 602, 628-29, 71 A.3d 251, 267 (2013). It is well-established that this Court need only agree with the court’s determination as to any one subsection of Section 2511(a), in addition to Section 2511(b), in order to affirm. ***See In re B.L.W.***, 843 A.2d 380, 384 (Pa.Super. 2004) (*en banc*).

We will focus our analysis in this case upon the provisions of Section 2511(a)(2) and (b), which provide as follows:¹³

(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:

. . . .

¹³ By analyzing Section 2511(a)(2), we render no conclusions as to the validity of the orphans’ court’s findings under Section 2511(a)(5) or (8). ***See In re K.R.***, 200 A.3d 969, 979 (Pa.Super. 2018) (*en banc*) (observing this Court may proceed to a review of one subsection of Section 2511(a) “[w]ithout considering the orphans’ court’s determinations” under any other subsection).

(2) The repeated and continued incapacity, abuse, neglect or refusal of the parent has caused the child to be without essential parental care, control or subsistence necessary for his physical or mental well-being and the conditions and causes of the incapacity, abuse, neglect or refusal cannot or will not be remedied by the parent.

. . . .

(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.A. § 2511(a)(2), (b).

As noted above, we must first address the sufficiency of the trial court's findings pursuant to Section 2511(a)(2). **See M.E.**, 283 A.3d at 830. In order to satisfy Section 2511(a)(2), the petitioning party must establish: "(1) repeated and continued incapacity, abuse, neglect or refusal; (2) that such incapacity, abuse, neglect or refusal caused the child to be without essential parental care, control or subsistence; and (3) that the causes of the incapacity, abuse, neglect or refusal cannot or will not be remedied." **In re Adoption of A.H.**, 247 A.3d 439, 443 (Pa.Super. 2021). Grounds for termination pursuant to Section 2511(a)(2) "are not limited to affirmative misconduct, but concern parental incapacity that cannot be remedied." **Id.** (citing **In re Z.P.**, 994 A.2d 1108, 1117 (Pa.Super. 2010)). In sum,

“[p]arents are required to make diligent efforts toward the reasonably prompt assumption of full parental duties.” **A.H.**, 247 A.3d at 443.

In its on-the-record discussion, the trial court found that Mother’s ongoing struggles with substance abuse and addiction to PCP constituted a “parental incapacity” that had caused Child to be without “parental care, control or subsistence” pursuant to Section 2511(a)(2). N.T., 12/4/25, at 8-9. The trial court also concluded that Mother “has not been able to overcome the incapacity of the drug and alcohol issue” during the course of the subject proceedings. **Id.** at 9. In particular, the trial court emphasized Mother’s failure to consistently produce clean drug screens or successfully complete substance abuse treatment during the course of Child’s dependency proceedings. **See id.** at 7. In rendering these findings, the trial court specifically relied upon and credited the testimonies of Mother and Ms. Watts concerning Mother’s substance abuse. **See id.** at 8-9.

Our review reveals that there is adequate evidentiary support for the trial court’s conclusions. As detailed above, the testimonies of Ms. Watts and Mother and the admitted records from Child’s dependency proceedings indicate that Mother suffers from a repeated and continued parental incapacity, namely, substance abuse and an ongoing addiction to PCP. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 20-38, 80-86; DHS Exhibit 1 at 23-38. Furthermore, there is no dispute that Mother’s substance abuse issues precipitated Child’s removal from her care, which has caused Child to be without essential parental

care, control and subsistence for approximately two and one-half years. **See id.** Finally, it is also evident that Mother's incapacity cannot, or will not, be remedied. The testimony of Ms. Watts and Mother indicated that Mother completed numerous rounds of inpatient and outpatient treatment between June 2023 and November 2025. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 32-38, 82-86. Despite these efforts, however, Mother remained an "active" addict who was still abusing PCP at the time of termination hearing. **See id.** at 82. Based upon the foregoing, we observe no abuse of discretion in the trial court's findings with respect to Section 2511(a)(2). Thus, no relief is due.

Since the orphans' court correctly concluded that adequate grounds for termination existed pursuant to at least one subsection of Section 2511(a), we now turn to a review of the court's findings pursuant to Section 2511(b), which gives "primary consideration to the developmental, physical and emotional needs and welfare of the child." 23 Pa.C.S. § 2511(b); **see also T.S.M.**, 71 A.3d at 267. We remain mindful that "the determination of the child's particular developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare must be made on a case-by-case basis," with an eye towards "each child's specific needs." **Interest of K.T.**, 296 A.3d 1085, 1105-06 (Pa. 2023). This inquiry is neither formulaic, nor mechanical. **See id.**

Our review must include consideration of the bond between the parent and the child. **See In re E.M.**, 533 Pa. 115, 122-23, 620 A.2d 481, 485 (1993). Our Supreme Court has explained, however, that "only a necessary

and beneficial” parental bond should be maintained. **K.T.**, 296 A.3d at 1009. A bond is considered to be “necessary and beneficial” if its severance would cause extreme emotional consequences or significant, irreparable harm. **Id.** at 1109-10. The extent of the “bond-effect analysis necessarily depends on the circumstances of the particular case.” **In re Adoption of J.M.**, 991 A.2d 321, 324 (Pa.Super. 2010) (cleaned up). Therefore, it is “within the discretion of the orphans’ court to prioritize the safety and security” of children “over their bonds with their parents. **M.E.**, 283 A.3d at 839 (cleaned up). Courts should also consider “whether the children are in a pre-adoptive home and whether they have a bond with their foster parents.” **K.T.**, 296 A.3d at 1106. Finally, we note that a child’s “emotional needs and welfare include intangibles, such as love, comfort, security, and stability.” **Id.**

The trial court concluded that termination of Mother’s rights was also warranted pursuant to Section 2511(b) based largely upon Child’s need for stability and permanency. **See** N.T., 12/4/25, at 12 (“A child cannot wait for a parent.”). The court found that any bond between Mother and Child was not “parental” in nature, while finding that Child shared a close, parental bond with Foster Parents. **Id.** at 7, 15. Overall, the trial court reasoned that Child “needs permanency” and was “bonded” with Foster Parents, who meet her “developmental, physical, and emotional needs.” **Id.** at 15.

The certified record adequately supports the trial court’s findings. Specifically, Ms. Watts testified that while Mother and Child share some

manner of bond, it was not a “parental bond.”¹⁴ N.T., 11/20/25, at 72. In contrast, Ms. Watts explained that Child shares a “close” and “parental” bond with Foster Parents and, in particular, Maternal Cousin. ***Id.*** at 61. Thus, Ms. Watts opined that Child would not suffer “irreparable harm” if Mother’s parental rights to Child were involuntarily terminated.¹⁵ ***See id.*** at 49. Ms. Watts’s testimony further emphasized that Foster Parents have consistently cared for Child since she was only three weeks old. ***See id.*** at 60. To that end, Ms. Watts reported that Child is much more “comfortable” and “verbal” while interacting with Maternal Cousin as opposed to Mother. ***Id.*** at 62. Overall, Ms. Watts opined termination of Mother’s parental rights to free Child for adoption offered Child the best opportunity for “permanency.” ***Id.*** at 64. Since its findings are supported by sufficient evidence, we find no abuse of discretion with respect to the trial court’s Section 2511(b) findings.

¹⁴ To the extent Mother claims the trial court erred in failing to order a formal bonding analysis for a qualified expert, we note that, “[w]hen conducting a bonding analysis, the court is **not** required to use expert testimony.” ***In re Z.P.***, 994 A.2d 1108, 1121 (Pa.Super. 2010) (emphasis added). Moreover, “[s]ocial workers and caseworkers can offer evaluations as well.” ***Id.***

¹⁵ We recognize that Ms. Watts testified at various junctures that part of her findings were based upon her belief that Maternal Cousin would permit ongoing contact amongst Child, her siblings, and Mother. Critically, however, the trial court never ratified those averments by adopting them in its on-the-record findings. ***See generally*** N.T., 12/4/25, at 4-19. As such, we need not address the aspect of Mother’s arguments claiming that the trial court based the termination of Mother’s parental rights upon future potential contact between Child, her siblings, and/or Mother.

Mother also argues that the trial court erroneously precluded her from adducing testimony from Child's seventeen-year-old sibling, D.M., and Child's maternal grandmother, P.C. ("Maternal Grandmother"). **See** Mother's Brief at 32-35. She maintains that "the trial court arbitrarily and improperly excluded relevant evidence . . . about sibling contact, the impact on Child of losing her relationships with [Maternal Grandmother and D.M.], and a plan for continued supervised contact between Mother and Child." **Id.** at 34. We disagree.

Mother claims that she attempted to adduce this testimony for consideration in the context of Section 2511(b). **See** Mother's Brief at 32-35; N.T., 11/20/25, at 115. Concomitantly, however, Mother's own arguments indicate that she attempted to call Maternal Grandmother and D.M. for the purpose of addressing the allegations and arguments presented in her petition seeking a permanency goal change from reunification to PLC. **See** Mother's Brief at 15-19; N.T., 11/20/25, at 114, 120-21. During the hearing, the trial court declined to allow Mother to present this evidence in the context of termination because Mother's request for PLC was not "relevant" to the distinct inquiry of whether termination of parental rights is warranted. **Id.** at 114-23. We find no error of law with respect to the trial court's reasoning on this point. **See Interest of S.S.**, 252 A.3d 681, 688 (Pa.Super. 2021) ("Termination proceedings often occur simultaneously with dependency proceedings, but these two types of proceedings remain distinct, with their own docket numbers, records, and divisions within the Court of Common Pleas.").

To the extent Mother maintains the trial court denied her an opportunity to place evidence on the termination record that Child's sibling relationships were an important consideration, any such excluded evidence was harmlessly cumulative. **See Blumer**, 20 A.3d at 1232. Specifically, Maternal Cousin testified extensively regarding the importance of Child's extended family relationships. **See** N.T., 11/20/25, at 90-92. Furthermore, the trial court subsequently credited this position, thereby evincing its consideration of Child's sibling relationships. **See** N.T., 12/4/25, at 16 ("Separation of siblings is but one factor to be considered[.]"). Consequently, no relief is due with respect to this evidentiary aspect of Mother's claims.

Mother's sixth claim for relief alleges that the trial court's termination decree was "unconstitutional" and violated her right to "care, custody, and control" under the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and Article 1, Section 1 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. Mother's Brief at 55-56. Mother argues that the termination of parental rights under Pennsylvania law cannot survive "strict scrutiny" without requiring that trial courts consider "less restrictive alternatives" to adoption in terminating an individual's parental rights. **Id.** at 57. Applying this proposed constitutional rubric to the instant case, Mother maintains that it was inappropriate to terminate Mother's parental rights without requiring DHS to demonstrate that a less restrictive alternative to adoption, PLC, was not a viable option. **See id.** at 58.

Mother raised and preserved this claim in her letter brief. **See** Letter Brief, 11/24/25, at 13. This filing also speaks to the significant scope of her argument. To be clear, Mother is not merely challenging the constitutionality of the single termination decree here but an entire legal hierarchy, as follows:

To the extent that the Juvenile Act or Adoption Act . . . creates a permanency hierarchy that preferences adoption to other permanency goals such as PLC, the law is unconstitutional and cannot survive the strict scrutiny that it must undergo due to the fundamental nature of the liberty interests at stake.

Id. Viewed in conjunction with the arguments in Mother’s brief, it is clear that she is making a generally applicable constitutional argument that termination of parental rights “without consideration of less restrictive alternatives does not survive strict scrutiny.” Mother’s Brief at 57. As such, we readily discern that Mother has facially challenged the constitutionality of significant portions of the Adoption Act including, *inter alia*, Section 2511.¹⁶

In raising a facial constitutional challenge of this nature concerning Pennsylvania statutes, Mother “had an obligation to provide notice of this claim to the Attorney General or the claim is waived.” **See *In re Adoption of J.M.B.***, 308 A.3d 1262, 1276 n.3 (Pa.Super. 2024) (citing Pa.R.C.P. 235; Pa.R.A.P. 521(a)); **see also *Potts v. Step By Step, Inc.***, 26 A.3d 1115,

¹⁶ Our Supreme Court has explained: “A statute is facially unconstitutional only where there are no circumstances under which the statute would be valid.” ***Germantown Cab Co. v. Philadelphia Parking Authority***, 651 Pa. 604, 622-23, 206 A.3d 1030, 1041 (Pa. 2019). “In determining whether a statute is facially invalid, courts do not look beyond the statute’s explicit requirements or speculate about hypothetical or imaginary cases.” **Id.**

1123 (Pa.Super. 2011) ("Rule 235 notice is required only where the challenge is that a statute is unconstitutional on its face"). Where a party fails to provide notice to the Attorney General in accordance with these requirements, their constitutional claims are deemed to be waived. **See Fotopoulos v. Fotopoulos**, 185 A.3d 1047, 1055 (Pa.Super. 2018).

Our review of the certified record indicates that Mother failed to provide notice, or file proof of service of notice, in either this Court or the trial court. Therefore, Mother has waived her constitutional arguments. **See Potts**, 26 A.3d at 1122-23; **In re Adoption of K.E.G.**, 307 A.3d 647, at *5-*6 (Pa.Super. 2023) (unpublished memorandum).¹⁷ Thus, no relief is due with respect to Mother's sixth claim for relief.

Based upon the foregoing, we observe no abuse of discretion or error of law with respect to the termination decree. Thus, we affirm.

The remainder of Mother's arguments pertain to the order that changed Child's permanency goal from reunification to adoption. Since we have affirmed the trial court's decree involuntarily terminating Mother's parental rights, these issues are moot. **See Interest of A.R.**, 311 A.3d 1105, 1114 (Pa.Super. 2023) ("The effect of our decision to affirm the [trial] court's termination decree necessarily renders moot the [trial] court's decision to change Child's goal to adoption.") (quoting **In re Adoption of A.H.**, 247 A.3d

¹⁷ Unpublished, non-precedential memoranda may still be cited for their persuasive value. **See** Pa.R.A.P. 126(b)(1)-(2).

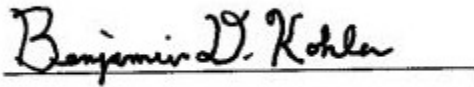
439, 446 (Pa.Super. 2021)). Accordingly, we also affirm the goal change order. **See A.R.**, 311 A.3d at 1114; **A.H.**, 247 A.3d at 446.

Decree affirmed. Order affirmed.

P.J. Lazarus joins.

Judge Sullivan concurs in the result.

Judgment Entered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Benjamin D. Kohler", is written over a horizontal line.

Benjamin D. Kohler, Esq.
Prothonotary

Date: 8/28/2026