NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT O.P. 65.37

IN RE: ADOPTION OF: Z.N.L., A MINOR	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
APPEAL OF: J.M.H., MOTHER	:	No. 1970 EDA 2026

Appeal from the Decree Entered May 27, 2026
In the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County
Orphans' Court at No: 2025-A0088

BEFORE: OLSON, J., STABILE, J., and KUNSELMAN, J.

MEMORANDUM BY STABILE, J.: **FILED NOVEMBER 19, 2026**

J.M.H. ("Mother") appeals from the May 27, 2026 decree involuntarily terminating her parental rights to her son, Z.N.L. ("Child"), born in March 2022.[1] After careful review, we affirm.

A prior panel of this Court summarized the factual and procedural history of this case, as follows:

> Mother and Child came to the attention of the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth ("OCY" [or "the Agency"]) in 2022 due to concerns related to homelessness and inadequate parenting. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 69. At the time, Mother and Father were both minors. OCY obtained custody of Mother in October 2022, and Child was placed with [] Father's guardian under a safety plan. ***See id.*** OCY obtained custody of Child in March 2023, and the juvenile court adjudicated Child dependent

[1] By decree entered on December 2, 2025, the orphans' court involuntarily terminated the parental rights of Child's father, N.P.L. ("Father"). Father did not file an appeal or participate in the instant appeal.

the same month. ***See id.*** at 71-72; ***see also*** OCY Exhibit 3. OCY placed Child and Mother together in a mother-baby program.[2] ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 72.

Child remained placed with Mother in the aforementioned program until September 2023, when Mother absconded with him. ***See id.*** The following month, Mother and Child were located and placed together in a temporary foster home. ***See id.*** at 72-73. Mother again absconded two weeks later, this time without Child. ***See id.*** at 73. Ultimately, Mother and Child were placed together again in a foster home in April 2024. ***See id.*** at 73-74.

In August 2024, Mother transitioned to an independent living apartment with Child, still under supervision of OCY, at which time the juvenile court returned physical and legal custody of Child to Mother. ***See id.*** at 74; ***see also*** OCY Exhibit 3. Thereafter, OCY observed, *inter alia*, concerns related to Mother's finances, Mother's substance abuse, and domestic violence involving Mother and her boyfriend. ***See*** [N.T., 12/2/25,] at 75. Additionally, OCY received reports alleging substance abuse by Mother and that Child was left home alone while Mother went to work. ***See id.*** at 76, 79, 97. OCY ultimately obtained emergency protective custody of Child on January 8, 2025, and returned Child to foster care, where he remained at the time of the subject proceedings. ***See id.*** at 98-100, 104-06. [Mother declined supervised visitation with Child and moved to Florida on February 18, 2025, where she was residing at the time of the subject hearing.]

The juvenile court recognized Child's permanency goal as reunification with a concurrent goal of adoption. ***See*** OCY Exhibit 3. In furtherance thereof, OCY maintained a family service plan with objectives focused on, *inter alia*, housing, substance abuse, and parenting. ***See*** OCY Exhibit 4; ***see also*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 76. At a permanency review hearing in April 202[5], which Mother failed to attend, the court found that Mother had no compliance with the permanency plan and no progress toward alleviating the circumstances which necessitated Child's original placement. ***See*** OCY Exhibit 3. Thereafter, in May 2025, at the request of Child's

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[2] The record reveals that Mother fled a prior mother-baby placement in January 2023, before the Agency obtained custody of Child. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 71.

guardian *ad litem* ("GAL"), the court suspended communication between Child and Mother.[3] ***See id.***

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[3] As best we can discern, in approximately March 2025, after she relocated to Florida, Mother requested that the Agency provide her with pictures of Child and visitation. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 106. Then, in about May 2025, Mother requested the Agency to facilitate telephone and/or FaceTime communication between her and Child. ***See*** OCY Exhibit 9; ***see also*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 107. The GAL opposed Mother's request and filed an emergency petition requesting that Mother's communication with Child be suspended, which the court granted by interim order on May 6, 2025. ***See*** OCY Exhibit 3, Temporary Order, 5/6/25. Specifically, the interim order provided, as follows:

> 1. Pending further order of court, communication between Mother and [] Child is SUSPENDED.[1]
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> 2. A status hearing to address visitation and/or communication between Mother and [] Child shall be scheduled by chambers as soon as practicable.
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> 3. The court shall schedule a conference call with counsel prior to the next hearing if so requested by Mother's counsel.
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> [1] The court has been advised on the record that a goal change to adoption will be requested, but the current goal remains reunification. Accordingly, the standard to deny or reduce parental visitation is whether the failure to do so would be a "grave threat" to the child. ***Interest of C.B.***, 861 A.2d 287 (Pa. Super. 2004). The court has been unable to reach a conclusion whether a "grave threat" exists because Mother failed to attend the most-recent April 3, 2025 permanency review hearing and has not cooperated with [OCY] (including by failing to provide a current address). The court further understands that Mother lives out-of-state and her recent contacts with Child have been minimal. At the April 3, 2025 hearing, with respect to the permanency plan, the court concluded that Mother is in "no compliance" and has made "no progress." The court has concluded that given the totality of the circumstances here, and based on the GAL's averments, a suspension of contact until a status hearing can be scheduled is warranted.

(Footnote Continued Next Page)

> On July 2, 2025, OCY filed a petition to involuntarily terminate Mother's parental rights to Child, then less than three-and-one-half years old, pursuant to [23 Pa.C.S.A. §] (a)(1), (2), (5), and (b). The [o]rphans' [c]ourt appointed Janine D'Aniello Martin, Esquire ("Attorney Martin"), of the Montgomery County Advocacy Project ("MCAP"), Child's GAL in the parallel dependency proceedings, "as counsel to represent the legal interests" of Child on July 15, 2025. Order, 7/15/25. The order did not include any conflict determination. ***See id.***
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> On December 2, 2025, the court conducted an evidentiary hearing, at which time Child was then more than three and one-half years old. . . .
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> . . . Mother was represented by counsel and participated via Zoom. OCY presented the testimony of its caseworkers, Anastasia Devlin Anderson and Jamie Lowery, as well as numerous pieces of documentary evidence, including Child's dependency records. Mother did not testify or present any evidence.[4]

In re Adoption of Z.N.L., 362 A.3d 734, at *1-*2 (Pa. Super. 2026) (unpublished memorandum) (footnotes omitted).

By decree dated and entered on December 2, 2025, the orphans' court involuntarily terminated Mother's parental rights to Child pursuant to Section 2511(a)(1), (2), (5), and (b), which Mother timely appealed. This Court vacated the decree and remanded the case to the orphans' court to make an independent determination whether Child's GAL could represent his legal and

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OCY Exhibit 3, Temporary Order, 5/6/25 (cleaned up). The record is silent as to any efforts by Mother to restore communication with Child.

[4] We observe that the court additionally conducted a permanency review at this time, which it heard first. ***See generally*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 6-62. While Mother ceased participation shortly after the commencement of testimony with respect to the termination of her parental rights, which we address *infra*, she did testify as to the permanency review portion of the hearing.

best interests without conflict. ***See id.*** at *4-5. Upon remand, the court found that there was no conflict between Child's dual interests. As such, the court re-entered the decree involuntarily terminating Mother's parental rights on May 27, 2026.

On June 23, 2026, Mother timely filed a notice of appeal, along with a concise statement of errors complained of on appeal pursuant to Pa.R.A.P. 1925(a)(2)(i) and (b). The orphans' court filed a letter in lieu of a Rule 1925(a) opinion, which referred to its reasoning placed on the record at the conclusion of the December 2, 2025 evidentiary hearing. ***See*** Letter, 7/17/26 (citing N.T., 12/2/25, at 118-25).

On appeal, Mother raises the following issues for our review:

> A. Did the [orphans'] court commit an error of law and/or abuse its discretion when it held that [OCY] had proven by "clear and convincing evidence" that [Mother's] parental rights should be terminated pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.[A. § 2511(a)(1), (2) and (5),] where [M]other had made, and was making, substantial progress on her Family Services Plan(s) goals as proven by the testimony and evidence produced at the hearing[?]
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> B. Did the [orphans'] court commit an[] error of law and/or abuse its discretion when it terminated [Mother's] parental rights pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.[A § 2511(b)] on the basis that the developmental, physical, emotional needs and welfare of the child was best served by termination of [M]other's rights where she had made, and was making, substantial progress on the Family Services Plan(s)[?]
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> C[.] Did the [orphans'] court commit an[] error of law and/or abuse its discretion when it terminated [Mother's] rights when family findings were not completed pursuant to 67 Pa.C.S.[A. §] 7503 and which affected necessary services being provided to [Mother] pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S.[A. §] 6351[?]

Mother's Brief at 6-7.[5]

> Our standard of review in this context is well-established:
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> 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.
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> 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.
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> 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 hesitance, of the truth of the precise facts in issue.

Interest of M.E., 283 A.3d 820, 829-30 (Pa. Super. 2022) (internal citations and quotation marks omitted).

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[5] Attorney Martin filed a brief advocating for this Court to affirm the subject decree.

The involuntary termination of parental rights is governed by Section 2511 of the Adoption 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.***, 71 A.3d 251, 267 (Pa. 2013); ***see also*** 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(b). This Court need only agree with the orphans' court's determination as to any one subsection of Section 2511(a), in addition to Section 2511(b), in order to affirm termination. ***See In re K.R.***, 200 A.3d 969, 979 (Pa. Super. 2018) (*en banc*) (citing ***In re B.L.W.***, 843 A.2d 380, 384 (Pa. Super. 2004) (*en banc*)).

In her first and second issues, Mother challenges the sufficiency of the evidence with respect to Section 2511(a) and (b). Preliminarily, however, we note that Mother fails to support her arguments with pertinent legal authority. Aside from some general legal tenets related to the standard of review, Mother does not set forth any relevant law in connection with her claims. ***See*** Mother's Brief at 10-16. Her argument is devoid of any of the applicable statutory language with respect to Section 2511(a). ***See id.*** Moreover, she wholly fails to advance any relevant caselaw with regard to either subsection

2511(a)(1) or (b). ***See id.*** It is well-established that "[w]e need not reach the merits of [an] issue because the argument section of [an appellant's] brief merely consists of general statements unsupported by any discussion or analysis of relevant legal authority." ***Coulter v. Ramsden***, 94 A.3d 1080, 1088 (Pa. Super. 2014) (citing Pa.R.A.P. 2119(a)). Indeed,

> [t]he Rules of Appellate Procedure state unequivocally that each question an appellant raises is to be supported by discussion and analysis of pertinent authority. Appellate arguments which fail to adhere to these rules may be considered waived, and arguments which are not appropriately developed are waived. Arguments not appropriately developed include those where the party has failed to cite any authority in support of a contention. This Court will not act as counsel and will not develop arguments on behalf of an appellant. Moreover, we observe that the Commonwealth Court, our sister appellate court, has aptly noted that "[m]ere issue spotting without analysis or legal citation to support an assertion precludes our appellate review of [a] matter." ***Boniella v. Commonwealth***, 958 A.2d 1069, 1073 n.8 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2008) (quoting ***Commonwealth v. Spontarelli***, 791 A.2d 1254, 1259 n.11 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2002)).

Id. at 1088-89 (some internal citations omitted and formatting altered). Accordingly, we conclude that Mother waived any arguments related to Section 2511(a) and (b), and we could therefore affirm under any of those subsections granted by the court. ***See id.***

Assuming, *arguendo*, that Mother did not waive her first and second claims, we would conclude that they are without merit. We analyze the decree

involuntarily terminating Mother's parental rights to Child pursuant to Section 2511(a)(1) and (b),[6] which provide as follows:

> **(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.
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> . . .
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> **(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)(1), (b).

It is well-settled that in order to establish grounds for termination pursuant to Section 2511(a)(1), "[a] petitioner . . . must demonstrate by competent, clear and convincing evidence, the parent by conduct continuing

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[6] Given our disposition relative to Section 2511(a)(1), we need not review and make no conclusions as to the orphans' court's findings with respect to Section 2511(a)(2), and (5). ***See K.R.***, 200 A.3d at 979 (observing that this Court may review one subsection of Section 2511(a) "[w]ithout considering the orphans' court's determinations" under any other subsection).

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." ***In re Adoption of C.M.***, 255 A.3d 343, 363-64 (Pa. 2021) (citation, internal quotation marks, brackets, and footnote omitted). While undefined,

> our courts long have interpreted parental duties in relation to the needs of a child, such as love, protection, guidance and support. Parental duties are carried out through affirmative actions that develop and maintain the parent-child relationship. The roster of such positive actions undoubtedly includes communication and association. The performance of parental duties requires that a parent exert himself to take and maintain a place of importance in the child's life.

In re Adoption of L.A.K., 265 A.3d 580, 592 (Pa. 2021) (internal citations and quotation marks omitted). Furthermore, "[f]ortitude is required, as a parent must act with 'reasonable firmness' to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of preserving a parent-child relationship and may not wait for a more suitable time to perform parental responsibilities." ***Id.*** (citation omitted).

Despite the focus on the six months prior to the filing of the petition, trial courts should "consider the whole history of a given case" and avoid applying the statutory six-month requirement "mechanically." ***C.M.***, 255 A.3d at 364 (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). Thus, "even where the evidence clearly establishes [that] a parent has failed to perform affirmative parental duties for a period in excess of six months as required by Section 2511(a)(1), the court must examine the individual circumstances and

any explanation offered by the parent to determine if that evidence, in light of the totality of circumstances, clearly warrants permitting the involuntary termination of parental rights." ***L.A.K.***, 265 A.3d at 593 (citation and internal quotation marks omitted). The totality of the circumstances includes consideration of the following: "(1) the parent's explanation for his or her conduct; (2) the post-abandonment contact between the parent and child, if any, including any efforts made by the parent to reestablish contact with the child; and (3) the effect that termination of parental rights would have on the child pursuant to Section 2511(b)." ***Id.***

In her first issue, Mother assails the orphans' court's conclusion that the Agency established the statutory grounds to terminate her parental rights to Child. ***See*** Mother's Brief at 10-14. She claims that she made "substantial progress" with respect to her permanency goals. ***Id.*** at 10-11, 14. For the reasons that follow, we conclude that Mother is not entitled to relief.

The orphans' court reasoned as follows with respect to Section 2511(a)(1):

> [The Agency] filed a petition for involuntary termination of parental rights in July of 2025, and if we look six months preceding, we note that [M]other basically left [C]hild. She went to [] Florida. She had no contact with him for a period of time[] and then wanted some contact. When that contact was denied, [she] made no effort to try to reestablish that contact.

N.T., 12/2/25, at 122. This is supported by the certified record.

The record reveals that throughout the dependency proceedings Mother absconded on multiple occasions, often leaving Child behind. ***See id.*** at 71-

73. As indicated, Mother fled an initial mother-baby placement in January 2023, before Child could even be placed with her. ***See id.*** at 71. After placement in another mother-baby program in March 2023, she then fled with Child in approximately September 2023 for "about a month." ***Id.*** at 72. Two weeks after their return and placement in temporary foster care in October 2023, Mother again ran away, this time without Child, for a "little over a month." ***Id.*** at 72-73.

Following Mother's return to care and placement in foster care together with Child in April 2024, the court returned legal and physical custody of Child to Mother in August 2024. ***See id.*** at 74; ***see also*** OCY Exhibit 3, Dispositional Order, 8/2/24. At that time, they transitioned to independent living. ***See*** OCY Exhibit 3, Dispositional Order, 8/2/24. Child, however, remained dependent. ***See id.*** As such, Ms. Devlin-Anderson and Ms. Lowery conducted monthly visits to Mother's home on behalf of the Agency. N.T., 12/2/25, at 75, 98; ***see also*** OCY Exhibits 8 & 9. Ms. Devlin-Anderson testified that Child was often unaccounted for and not in Mother's care during her visits from August 2024 through November 2024, when her involvement with the case ended. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 68, 75, 81 ("[T]here were times where I would go to the home and [Child] just wasn't there, different stories for where he was at that time, usually off with someone else depending on when.").

Subsequently, Ms. Lowery indicated that the Agency received a report on December 19, 2024, alleging that "[Mother] was leaving [Child] alone in

the home from 4 p.m. to 3 a.m. while she went to work." ***Id.*** at 97. Contemporaneously, in connection with her attempts to visit the home, Ms. Lowery testified that she learned that Child was in the care of his paternal grandmother, A.D. ("Paternal Grandmother"), for whom Mother could not provide a name or address and whom the Agency ultimately deemed inappropriate. ***See id.*** at 98-99. Specifically, Ms. Lowery explained that Paternal Grandmother "has a history with [the Agency]. She did not have [custody of] her own children, and she also had previous drug and alcohol issues." ***Id.*** at 99. Therefore, at the request of the Agency, Paternal Grandmother returned Child to Mother. ***See id.*** Shortly thereafter, Ms. Lowery discovered that Child was again being cared for by Paternal Grandmother, after first being placed with another paternal relative. ***See id.*** On this topic, Ms. Lowery testified, as follows:

> Q. Did it appear to you that even though [Mother] had custody that [Child] was not actually staying with her?
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> A. Correct.

Id. at 100. As a result, the Agency obtained emergency protective custody of Child on January 8, 2025. ***See id.*** at 99-100, 106.

Ms. Lowery recounted that, initially, Mother did not communicate with the Agency following Child's removal. ***See id.*** at 101. Similarly, Mother did not participate in the shelter care and dispositional hearings in January 2025. ***See id.*** at 104; ***see also*** OCY Exhibit 3, Shelter Care Order, 1/10/25 & Dispositional Order, 1/29/25. Ms. Lowery testified that the Agency scheduled

supervised visitation and engaged a visitation service, but Mother did not respond and eventually indicated that she was "not interested" in visits with Child. N.T., 12/2/25, at 101. She failed to maintain any contact with Child. ***See id.*** at 106. Mother ultimately absconded again, relocating to Florida on February 18, 2025, where she remained at the time of the subject hearing. ***See id.*** at 102.

Ms. Lowery described Mother's communication with the Agency after her move as "sporadic." ***Id.*** at 102. Further, Mother's lack of contact with Child and lack of participation in the relevant court proceedings persisted. ***See id.*** at 103. Significantly, Mother failed to appear at the permanency review hearing in April 2025. ***See id.*** at 104; ***see also*** OCY Exhibit 3, Permanency Review Order, 4/3/25. The court noted Mother's lack of recent contact with the Agency and that her whereabouts at that time were "unknown." OCY Exhibit 3, Permanency Review Order, 4/3/25, at 2. Following Mother's request for communication with Child, which caused the GAL to file an emergency petition as described above, the court ultimately suspended communication between Mother and Child in May 2025. ***See*** OCY Exhibit 3, Temporary Order, 5/6/25; OCY Exhibit 9; ***see also*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 107. The record is devoid of any request by Mother for reinstatement of contact with Child. As such, the court never lifted its no-contact restriction.

Moreover, although the orphans' court permitted Mother to participate virtually via Zoom in the subject hearing, she logged off shortly after the

Agency commenced its case-in-chief with respect to the termination of parental rights. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 70. We note the following exchange between Mother and the court at the conclusion of the permanency review and prior to the start of the testimony with respect to termination of parental rights:

> . . .
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> THE COURT: This is an all-day hearing. So, you can leave, but I need to know when you're leaving so the record can reflect that. You are obviously permitted to stay. This is your day in court. I can't stop you from leaving, but I'm just telling you this was scheduled for a full day. So, if you do leave, you just need to let us know; okay?
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> [MOTHER]: I was unaware that this was a full-day hearing because I have things to do today, so.
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> THE COURT: This was scheduled at 9:30 a.m. with no end date. That's what the hearing notice says. I'm not sure why you didn't know it was a full day, but I can't stop you from leaving. I'm just telling you that we will proceed forward whether you're here or not. So, it's your decision whether or not you choose to participate or you can choose to leave. I just need to know when you're leaving so that the record can reflect when you leave if you choose to do so.

Id. at 67-68 (cleaned up). Upon not seeing Mother shortly thereafter, the court stated:

> THE COURT: [Mother], I need to see you please on the camera. I need to see your full face. This is a court proceeding. I can't see you. Thank you. Did she log off?
>
> THE COURT CLERK: Yes.
>
> . . .

Id. at 70. Mother did not return. ***See generally id.*** at 70-128.

Based upon the foregoing, for a period far in excess of the statutory six-month period immediately preceding the filing of the involuntary termination petition, the record is clear that Mother evidenced a settled purpose of relinquishing her parental claim to Child and/or refused or failed to perform her parental duties. As such, if this issue were not waived, we would discern no abuse of discretion with respect to the termination of Mother's parental rights pursuant to Section 2511(a)(1),. ***See C.M.***, 255 A.3d at 358.

In her second issue, Mother argues that the orphans' court abused its discretion by finding that the Agency met its evidentiary burden as to Section 2511(b), which gives "primary consideration to the developmental, physical and emotional needs and welfare of the child." 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(b); ***see also T.S.M.***, 71 A.3d at 267. Our Supreme Court has generally outlined this inquiry, as follows:

> [C]ourts should consider the matter from the child's perspective, placing her developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare above concerns for the parent.
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> Accordingly, the determination of the child's particular developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare must be made on a case-by-case basis. We have observed the law regarding termination of parental rights should not be applied mechanically but instead always with an eye to the best interests and the needs and welfare of the particular children involved. Thus, the court must determine each child's specific needs.
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> Moreover, the child's emotional needs and welfare include intangibles such as love, comfort, security, and stability. As further guidance, we have identified factors, *i.e.*, specific needs and aspects of the child's welfare, that trial courts must always consider. The courts must consider whether the children are in a pre-adoptive home and whether they have a bond with their foster

> parents. And, if the child has any bond with the biological parent, the court must conduct an analysis of that bond, which is not always an easy task.

Interest of K.T., 296 A.3d 1085, 1105-06 (Pa. 2023) (cleaned up).

It is well-established that, when evaluating the absence or existence of a parental bond in the termination context, "the court is not required to use expert testimony. Social workers and caseworkers can offer evaluations as well." ***In re Adoption of C.P.D.***, 324 A.3d 11, 27 (Pa. Super. 2024) (citing ***In re Z.P.***, 994 A.2d 1108, 1121 (Pa. Super. 2010)). Further, "[i]n cases where there is no evidence of any bond between the parent and child, it is reasonable to infer that no bond exists. The extent of any bond analysis, therefore, necessarily depends on the circumstances of the particular case." ***In re K.Z.S.***, 946 A.2d 753, 762-63 (Pa. Super. 2008) (citation omitted). However, our Supreme Court has concluded that "only a necessary and beneficial" parental bond should be maintained. ***K.T.***, 296 A.3d at 1109. 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. Furthermore, "bond, plus permanency, stability and all 'intangible' factors may contribute equally to the determination of a child's specific developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare, and thus are all of 'primary' importance in the Section 2511(b) analysis." ***K.T.***, 296 A.3d at 1109.

Specifically, Mother argues that the court failed to properly consider the bond between her and Child. ***See*** Mother's Brief at 15. We must disagree.

In determining that termination of Mother's parental rights served Child's developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare pursuant to Section 2511(b), the orphans' court highlighted Child's need for stability and permanency. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 119-20. The court further noted Child's bond with his foster parents. ***See id.*** at 120. We discern no abuse of discretion.

Instantly, our review of the record reveals that there is no evidence of the existence of a parent-child bond between Mother and three-year-old Child. Therefore, the court did not abuse its discretion in inferring that no bond existed between them. ***See K.Z.S.***, 946 A.2d at 762-63. Indeed, as noted *supra*, Mother had not had contact with Child since he was removed from her on January 8, 2025. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 106-07; OCY Exhibit 3, Order, 5/6/25.

In contrast, the record evinces that a bond exists between Child and his foster parents, where he had been consistently placed for almost a year, after having previously been placed in their home for approximately six months. ***See*** N.T., 12/2/25, at 9-10. Ms. Lowery described the relationship as "very loving, caring" and stated that Child is "happy [and] engag[ed] with [his foster parents.]" ***Id.*** at 30-31, 104-05. She additionally testified that the foster

parents ensure that Child participates in speech therapy, and "they work very closely with [his] daycare as far as any behavioral issues." ***Id.***

Thus, the record amply demonstrates that Mother and Child do not share any bond, let alone a necessary and beneficial one. ***See K.T.***, 296 A.3d at 1109-10, 1113. Based upon our review of the record, if Mother had not waived this issue, we would discern no abuse of discretion in the court's conclusion that Child's developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare will be served by the termination of Mother's parental rights pursuant to Section 2511(b).

Finally, with respect to Mother's third issue, Mother assails the court's finding that the Agency met its obligation with respect to family findings in connection with the contemporaneous permanency review. ***See*** Mother's Brief at 16-19. We conclude that this issue is not properly before this Court as Mother's appeal lies solely from the termination decree, and not from the permanency review order of the same date. ***See Interest of S.S.***, 252 A.3d 681, 688 (Pa. Super. 2021) (recognizing that dependency proceedings and termination proceedings are two separate, distinct proceedings "with their own docket numbers, records, and divisions within the Court of Common Pleas."). Thus, as a matter of justiciability, we cannot address Mother's third claim for relief.

For the foregoing reasons, we affirm the decree involuntarily terminating Mother's parental rights.

Decree affirmed.

Judgment Entered.

Benjamin D. Kohler

Benjamin D. Kohler, Esq.
Prothonotary

Date: 11/19/2026