2025 IL App (5th) 250577-U

NO. 5-25-0577

IN THE

APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS

FIFTH DISTRICT

In re ISABELLA G., a Minor	)	Appeal from the
	)	Circuit Court of
(The People of the State of Illinois.	)	Madison County.
	)	
Petitioner-Appellee,	)	
	)	
v.	)	No. 23-JA-288
	)	
Ashley D.,	)	Honorable
	)	Janet R. Heflin,
Respondent-Appellant).	)	Judge, presiding.

JUSTICE McHANEY delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Boie and Bollinger concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held*: We grant appellate counsel's motion to withdraw and affirm the trial court's order terminating the respondent's parental rights where ample evidence supports the trial court's findings, where the respondent received effective assistance of counsel, and where any argument to the contrary would lack merit.

¶ 2 The respondent, Ashley D., appeals the trial court's order terminating her parental rights to her daughter, Isabella G. Her appointed counsel has filed a motion to withdraw pursuant to *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738 (1967). Counsel concludes that the evidence supports the trial court's findings, that Ashley received effective assistance during the trial court proceedings, and that any argument to the contrary would lack merit. Counsel notified Ashley of her *Anders* motion, and this court allowed her time to respond. Ashley responded by filing a series of documents

relating to her completion of some required service plan tasks. However, she has not filed a responsive pleading. Upon review, we agree with counsel's conclusions, grant her motion to withdraw, and affirm the order of the trial court.

¶ 3 I. BACKGROUND

¶ 4 This case began on December 29, 2023, when the State filed a juvenile petition naming both Ashley and Isabella's father, Christian G., as respondents.[1] The petition alleged that Isabella, born the previous day, was neglected due to her parents' failure to provide her with proper or necessary support, education, medical, or other remedial care necessary for her well-being (705 ILCS 405/2-3(1)(a) (West 2022)) and an environment injurious to her welfare (*id.* § 2-3(1)(b)). In support of both bases of neglect, the State alleged that Ashley tested positive for amphetamines, cannabinoids, and fentanyl at the time of Isabella's birth; that Ashley has a previous history of involvement with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), including an indicated finding for physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare due to alleged drug use; and that Ashley was previously found unfit without a subsequent finding of fitness. The State requested an order allowing DCFS to take custody of Isabella upon her release from the hospital, a shelter care hearing at the earliest available date after her release, and that Isabella be adjudicated a neglected minor and made a ward of the court. Although not mentioned in the petition, the adjudicatory report subsequently filed with the court indicated that Isabella experienced withdrawal symptoms prior to her release from the hospital.

¶ 5 On January 2, 2024, the court entered an order allowing DCFS to take Isabella into protective custody upon her release from the hospital pending the shelter care hearing. The court

[1]Christian subsequently signed an irrevocable consent to adoption allowing Isabella to be adopted by his parents. He is not a party to this appeal.

entered a temporary custody order after a shelter care hearing on January 18, 2024. Isabella was placed with her paternal grandmother, Melissa Gill.

¶ 6 On March 19, 2024, the matter came for an adjudicatory hearing, after which the court entered an adjudicatory order finding Isabella to be a neglected minor both because she suffered from a lack of support, education, or remedial care and because her environment was injurious to her welfare (*id.* § 2-3(1)(a), (b)). The court went on to hold the dispositional hearing immediately following the adjudication of neglect. The court then entered a dispositional order making Isabella a ward of the court.

¶ 7 On June 12, 2024, Caritas Family Solutions (Caritas), the DCFS-contracted agency providing services, filed a permanency hearing report. The report noted that Ashley's service plan required her to cooperate with the agency and her caseworker, complete an integrated assessment, complete a substance abuse assessment and engage in any recommended services, complete a mental health assessment and engage in any recommended services, engage in parenting classes, and obtain suitable housing. She was rated unsatisfactory on all of these goals other than the integrated assessment.

¶ 8 On June 27, 2024, the trial court entered the first permanency order in this case, finding that both Ashley and Christian failed to make reasonable efforts or reasonable and substantial progress. The permanency goal was return home within 12 months.

¶ 9 On September 30, 2024, Caritas filed a permanency hearing report with the court. Caritas recommended changing the permanency goal to substitute care pending termination of parental rights. In its October 2, 2024, permanency order, the trial court again found that both parents failed to make reasonable progress or reasonable and substantial efforts. However, contrary to the recommendation of Caritas, the goal remained return home within 12 months. On January 8, 2025,

the court entered a permanency order changing the goal to substitute care pending termination of parental rights, once again finding that neither of the parents made reasonable efforts or reasonable and substantial progress.

¶ 10 On February 28, 2025, the State filed a petition for termination of parental rights. It alleged that Ashley was unfit for (1) failure to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that led to Isabella's removal during the nine-month period between March 30, 2024, and December 30, 2024 (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(i) (West 2024)); (2) failure to make reasonable progress toward the return of the child during the same nine-month period (*id.* § 1(D)(m)(ii)); and (3) failure to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to Isabella's welfare (*id.* § 1(D)(b)).

¶ 11 The matter came for a hearing on the State's petition on July 8, 2025. At the unfitness portion of the hearing, the State called Haley Zirkelbach, who served as Isabella's foster care case manager from January 2024 until May 2025. Zirkelbach testified that Isabella came into care because she was substance-exposed at birth. Zirkelbach testified that between March 30, 2024, and December 30, 2024, Ashley's service plans required her to cooperate with her caseworker and the agency, obtain suitable housing, and engage in mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and domestic violence services. Ashley was also required to take parenting classes and complete random drug drops. Zirkelbach testified that she regularly tried to contact Ashley to set up meetings to review these requirements.

¶ 12 According to Zirkelbach, Ashley did not cooperate with the agency or her caseworker during the relevant time frame. She explained that Ashley's communication "was very sporadic," and that it was "difficult to reach her at times" because she had different phone numbers.

¶ 13 Zirkelbach testified that she provided Ashley with two referrals for mental health services during the relevant nine-month period. One referral was to Cornerstone; the other was to Chestnut

Mental Health Systems (Chestnut). However, Ashley did not engage in services with either provider.

¶ 14 Zirkelbach likewise provided Ashley with referrals to Cornerstone and Chestnut for substance abuse treatment, but Ashley did not engage in services with either provider during the relevant nine-month period. Zirkelbach also testified that Ashley failed to appear for seven scheduled drug tests and two scheduled hair follicle tests. Zirkelbach testified that Ashley was provided with a referral to Group Interventions for domestic violence classes, but she did not engage.

¶ 15 Zirkelbach testified that Ashley began taking parenting classes at Refuge but did not complete the program and was discharged due to lack of attendance. Asked if Ashley ever reengaged between March 30 and December 30 of 2024, Zirkelbach initially responded, "Yes. She did." She then clarified that Ashley reengaged "right around December or January," and she was not sure whether this occurred before December 30. Asked if Ashley made satisfactory progress "on the parenting aspect of her service plan," Zirkelbach replied, "No."

¶ 16 Zirkelbach testified that Ashley was never rated satisfactory on the obtaining suitable housing component of her service plan during the pertinent nine-month period. She explained that during part of this period, Ashley lived out of state with a friend. During another part of the nine-month period, she lived in "a shed-type building in a backyard that had no running water."

¶ 17 Finally, Zirkelbach testified that Ashley did not regularly attend visits with Isabella. Although Ashley visited with Isabella the day before the hearing, her last visit "had been several months" earlier. In addition, Zirkelbach noted that Isabella's foster mother indicated she had offered to arrange additional visits for Ashley, but Ashley had not taken her up on her offer. She explained that, according to the foster mother, each time they scheduled a visit, Ashley either

canceled or did not show. Asked about her observations of visits between Ashley and Isabella, Zirkelbach testified, "Now that she's at once a month, they go better. Before then, there was a lot of—it was more focused around Ashley and Christian rather than actually spending time with Isabella."[2]

¶ 18 On cross-examination, Zirkelbach testified that Ashley went through detox and remained sober from December 20, 2024, until a new caseworker was assigned in May 2025. She noted that according to the new caseworker, Ashley continued to maintain her sobriety after Zirkelbach left the case.

¶ 19 Zirkelbach acknowledged that Ashley successfully completed parenting classes after the new caseworker took over. She further acknowledged that Ashley enrolled in domestic violence classes at Oasis. She testified, however, that Oasis was not a provider used by DCFS. She explained that Oasis does not require participants to undergo an assessment, which is required by DCFS. In addition, Oasis offers a six-week group program, but parents referred for domestic violence counseling generally need more "in-depth counseling for it."

¶ 20 Zirkelbach acknowledged that Ashley had been rated as satisfactory on three of her service plan tasks after the nine-month period elapsed. She further acknowledged that the reason Isabella entered care was her substance exposure at birth, and she reiterated that Ashley had been clean and sober for seven months by the time of the hearing.

¶ 21 On redirect examination, Zirkelbach noted that Ashley was still rated as unsatisfactory on mental health services, domestic violence treatment, and obtaining suitable housing. Asked about Ashley's parenting skills, she testified, "While she's marked off as satisfactory, as completing the

[2]Initially, both parents were offered one-hour supervised visits with Isabella once a week. Visits were reduced to one hour each month in January 2025, after the permanency goal was changed.

course, since she hasn't done visits in so long, we wouldn't even be able to gauge her parenting at this time."

¶ 22 Ashley's sole witness was Morgan Cassady, who became her caseworker in May 2025. The State objected to Cassady's testimony on the basis that it would relate to matters outside the nine-month period alleged in the petition to terminate. The trial court allowed the testimony over the State's objection.

¶ 23 Cassady testified that she supervised the visit between Ashley and Isabella that took place the day before the hearing. She stated that Ashley's interactions with Isabella during the visit were appropriate and did not raise any concerns. Asked if there appeared to be a bond between Ashley and Isabella during this visit, Cassady replied, "I don't know if I could say there was a bond, but she did appear comfortable."

¶ 24 Cassady was aware that Ashley was attending domestic violence classes at Oasis. She testified, however, that the program was not approved by DCFS. She explained that this was because the program did not include an assessment and was only six weeks long, and the sessions were conducted virtually. She stated, "It's a great service, but it's something that most people join for some extra support." Cassady informed Ashley that Oasis was not a DCFS-approved program and provided her with referrals to Group Interventions.

¶ 25 In announcing its findings from the bench, the trial court stated, "The Court must follow the law. And the statute tells the Court that it must consider any nine-month period." The court found that the State had proven by clear and convincing evidence that between March 30, 2024, and December 30, 2024, Ashley did not complete any required services other than parenting classes. The court then commended Ashley for getting sober and addressed the evidence of her

progress after the nine-month period, stating, "While she is now engaged in her services, she still has several unsatisfactory services." The court concluded that Ashley was unfit.

¶ 26 After a recess, the court proceeded to the best interest portion of the hearing. Zirkelbach again testified for the State. She indicated that Isabella was placed with her paternal grandparents, Melissa and William Gill, where she had lived her entire life. The Gills' home met DCFS standards. Based upon her observations, Zirkelbach believed the Gills shared a bond with Isabella and that Isabella was comfortable and well cared for.

¶ 27 Zirkelbach testified that Isabella has special needs. Specifically, she suffers from epilepsy and has developmental delays. Zirkelbach noted that the Gills underwent specialized training to meet Isabella's needs. She further testified that they were willing to adopt Isabella.

¶ 28 A best interest report, previously filed on July 3, 2025, was entered into evidence. Much of the information in the report was covered in the testimony; however, the report provided some additional pertinent details. It indicated that Ashley's progress on her service plan over the preceding six months was rated as satisfactory for cooperation with her caseworker, substance abuse services, and parenting classes, but unsatisfactory for housing, domestic violence counseling, and mental health services. Although Ashley was rated satisfactory for substance abuse services, the report noted that she tested positive for THC at the four random drug drops she completed between January and March of 2025. She tested negative for all other substances. The report indicated that Ashley began parenting classes late in January 2025 and completed the program on May 19, 2025. She began substance abuse treatment in April 2025.

¶ 29 In announcing its ruling from the bench, the court stated that it found termination of parental rights was in Isabella's best interest and entered a termination order that day. It expressly found that the State proved all three grounds of unfitness alleged by clear and convincing evidence.

The court further found that it was in Isabella's best interest to terminate Ashley's parental rights based on the following findings: the foster parents wanted to adopt Isabella and signed permanency commitments, Isabella was strongly bonded to her foster family, and her needs were being met in the foster home.

¶ 30 On July 9, 2025, Ashley filed a *pro se* motion to reconsider, asserting that she had "taken meaningful steps to change [her] circumstances." On July 10, 2025, while that motion was pending, she filed a notice of appeal through counsel. The trial court denied Ashley's motion to reconsider on July 22, 2025, and subsequently appointed Donna Polinske to represent Ashley on appeal.

¶ 31 II. ANALYSIS

¶ 32 Before this court, Polinske filed a motion to withdraw as counsel. She concluded there were no meritorious arguments she could raise on Ashley's behalf. The issues she considered were (1) whether the trial court's finding of unfitness was supported by the evidence, (2) whether the trial court's best interest finding was supported by the evidence, and (3) whether Ashley received effective assistance of counsel. We consider the viability of one additional issue—whether the court erroneously failed to consider evidence after the nine-month period in determining whether Ashley failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to Isabella's welfare. After examining the record and considering all potential issues, we agree with Polinske that no meritorious argument exists.

¶ 33 A. Unfitness

¶ 34 Involuntary termination of parental rights involves a two-step process. First, the State must prove the respondent parent unfit by clear and convincing evidence. *In re Baby Boy*, 2025 IL App (4th) 241427, ¶ 62. If the trial court finds the parent unfit, the proceedings progress to the second

step, at which the State must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that termination of parental rights is in the best interest of the child. *Id.* ¶ 73.

¶ 35 We give great deference to the trial court's findings because the trial court had the opportunity to observe and evaluate the parties and hear their testimony. *In re Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d 1052, 1064 (2006). As such, we will not reverse a finding of unfitness unless it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *In re Baby Boy*, 2025 IL App (4th) 241427, ¶ 63. A decision is against the manifest weight of the evidence "if the opposite conclusion is apparent or when findings appear to be unreasonable, arbitrary, or not based on the evidence presented." *In re Za. G.*, 2023 IL App (5th) 220793, ¶ 31.

¶ 36 Here, the State alleged that Ashley was unfit on three statutory grounds: (1) failure to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that led to the child's removal during any nine-month period following adjudication of neglect (750 ILCS 50/1(D)(m)(i) (West 2024)); (2) failure to make reasonable progress toward the return of the child during any nine-month period following adjudication of neglect (*id.* § 1(D)(m)(ii)); and (3) failure to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to the child's welfare (*id.* § 1(D)(b)). Because a parent may be found unfit if the State proves any one of the statutory grounds for unfitness by clear and convincing evidence, we will affirm the trial court's decision if the evidence supports its finding with respect to any of these grounds. *In re Baby Boy*, 2025 IL App (4th) 241427, ¶¶ 63-64.

¶ 37 Failure to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions that brought the child into care and failure to make reasonable progress toward the return of the child are two distinct grounds for parental unfitness. *In re Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d at 1066. Courts assess a parent's reasonable efforts by a subjective standard based on the amount of effort that is reasonable for the particular parent. *Id.* at 1066-67. This requires the court to consider "whether the parent has made earnest

and conscientious strides toward correcting the conditions that led to the removal of the minor from the home." *In re P.S.*, 2021 IL App (5th) 210027, ¶ 34.

¶ 38 By contrast, we measure a parent's reasonable progress by an objective standard. *In re Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d at 1067. The benchmark for measuring reasonable progress is "compliance with the service plans and the court's directives, in light of the condition which gave rise to the removal of the child, and in light of other conditions which later became known and which would prevent the court from returning custody of the child to the parent." *In re C.N.*, 196 Ill. 2d 181, 216-17 (2001). "At a minimum, reasonable progress requires measurable or demonstrable movement toward the goal of reunification." *In re Daphnie E.*, 368 Ill. App. 3d at 1067. A parent has made reasonable progress when the trial court, "in the *near future*, will be able to order the child returned to parental custody." (Emphasis in original.) *In re L.L.S.*, 218 Ill. App. 3d 444, 461 (1991).

¶ 39 In this case, there is ample evidence to support the trial court's conclusion that Ashley made neither reasonable efforts nor reasonable progress during the nine-month period at issue. Zirkelbach testified that Ashley did not complete any required services during this period. The only service Ashley engaged with was parenting classes, but she was dropped from the program due to lack of attendance and did not complete the classes during the relevant period. We cannot find these efforts reasonable even under a subjective standard, and clearly the trial court could not return Isabella to Ashley's custody in the near future. As such, there is no basis on which to disturb the trial court's findings that Ashley failed to make both reasonable efforts and reasonable progress.

¶ 40 We turn our attention to the finding of unfitness based on failure to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to the welfare of the child. In considering whether

a parent is unfit on this ground, our "focus is on the parent's reasonable efforts more so than the parent's success." *In re Za. G.*, 2023 IL App (5th) 220793, ¶ 36. We must therefore take into account any circumstances that made it difficult for the parent to demonstrate the requisite reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility. *Id.*

¶ 41 Significantly, however, a parent cannot avoid a finding of unfitness by showing *some* interest, concern, or responsibility; rather, the question is whether the parent's interest, concern, or responsibility is *reasonable*. *In re M.I.*, 2016 IL 120232, ¶ 30. In addition, because the statutory language is disjunctive, any of the three elements may provide a basis for a finding of unfitness standing alone. *In re Za. G.*, 2023 IL App (5th) 220793, ¶ 36. That is, a parent may be found unfit for failing to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, a reasonable degree of concern, or a reasonable degree of responsibility. *Id.*

¶ 42 Here, the evidence established that Ashley missed several scheduled visits with Isabella and did not take advantage of the opportunity for extra visitation offered to her by the foster parents. This evidence, coupled with her failure to complete the services in her plan, was sufficient to support the trial court's finding. See *In re D.P.*, 2024 IL App (1st) 231530, ¶ 33 (quoting *In re Nicholas C.*, 2017 IL App (1st) 162101, ¶ 24). In conclusion, we find that the evidence supports the trial court's findings of unfitness on all three grounds, and we agree with counsel that there are no meritorious arguments to the contrary that can be raised on Ashley's behalf.

¶ 43 B. Best Interest

¶ 44 Once the trial court finds a parent unfit, the focus shifts to the child. *In re Baby Boy*, 2025 IL App (4th) 241427, ¶ 73. During the best interest phase, the parent's interest in maintaining a relationship with the child "must yield to the child's interest in a stable, loving home life." *In re D.T.*, 212 Ill. 2d 347, 364 (2004).

¶ 45 In deciding whether termination of parental rights is in the child's best interest, the trial court must consider the following statutory factors: (1) the child's physical safety and welfare; (2) the development of the child's identity; (3) the child's familial, cultural, and religious background and ties; (4) the child's sense of attachment; (5) the child's wishes; (6) the child's community ties; (7) the need for permanence and stability and the continuity of the child's relationships with parental figures, siblings, and other family members; (8) the uniqueness of each child and family; (9) the risks inherent in substitute care; and (10) the preferences of the individuals available to provide care. 705 ILCS 405/1-3(4.05) (West 2024). Although the court must consider all applicable statutory factors, it is not required to refer to each individual factor in rendering its decision. *In re Tajannah O.*, 2014 IL App (1st) 133119, ¶ 19. The court may also consider the likelihood of the child being adopted. *In re Za. G.*, 2023 IL App (4th) 220793, ¶ 54.

¶ 46 As with the trial court's unfitness finding, we review its best interest finding to determine whether it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *In re Baby Boy*, 2025 IL App (4th) 241427, ¶ 74. As stated previously, this occurs "if the opposite conclusion is apparent or when findings appear to be unreasonable, arbitrary, or not based on the evidence presented." *In re Za. G.*, 2023 IL App (5th) 220793, ¶ 31.

¶ 47 The evidence in this case established that Isabella was placed with relatives, and she had lived with her foster parents for her entire life. The foster parents were able to meet Isabella's basic needs as well as the special needs arising from her developmental delays and diagnosis of epilepsy. In addition, she had a close bond with her foster parents but did not have the same type of bond with Ashley. This evidence was more than adequate to support the trial court's finding that termination was in Isabella's best interests. We agree with counsel that any argument to the contrary would lack merit.

¶ 48 C. Effective Assistance of Counsel

¶ 49 Parents in termination proceedings have a right to effective assistance of counsel. *In re M.D.*, 2022 IL App (4th) 210288, ¶ 92 (citing *In re Br. M.*, 2021 IL 125969, ¶ 42); see also 705 ILCS 405/1-5(1) (West 2024). Although the source of this right to counsel is statutory rather than constitutional, the Illinois Supreme Court has held that the proper standard for evaluating claims of ineffective assistance of counsel in termination proceedings is the two-prong test set forth in *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668 (1984), used to evaluate such claims in criminal cases. *In re Br. M.*, 2021 IL 125969, ¶ 43. Under that test, the parent must demonstrate that (1) counsel's performance fell short of an objective standard of competence, and (2) the parent suffered prejudice as a result. *In re M.D.*, 2022 IL App (4th) 210288, ¶ 92. To demonstrate prejudice, the parent must establish a reasonable probability that but for counsel's errors, the result would have been different. *Id.* To prevail, a parent must satisfy both parts of the *Strickland* test. *In re Ca. B.*, 2019, IL App (1st) 181024, ¶ 42.

¶ 50 In this case, counsel concluded that Ashley cannot satisfy either prong of the *Strickland* test and asserts that she was unable to identify any area in which trial counsel's performance fell below an objective standard of competence. Regarding the prejudice prong, she notes that, "based on the record, it is difficult to see how the results of the proceedings would have been different, regardless of counsel's performance." We agree with counsel's conclusion that any claim that Ashley received ineffective assistance of counsel would lack merit.

¶ 51 D. Evidence After December 30, 2024

¶ 52 Finally, although not addressed by Polinske, we will also consider whether the court erroneously limited its consideration of Ashley's interest, concern, or responsibility for the child's welfare to the nine months between March 30, 2024, and December 30, 2024. While this question

is arguably implicated by the circumstances of this case, we conclude there are no meritorious arguments counsel could raise.

¶ 53 Unlike failure to make reasonable efforts and failure to make reasonable progress, failure to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility for the child's welfare is not limited to a specific time period. *In re D.P.*, 2024 IL App (1st) 231530, ¶ 33; see also 750 ILCS 50/1(D)(b) (West 2024). Thus, it would be error to exclude evidence concerning Ashley's interest, concern, and responsibility for Isabella's welfare after December 30, 2024, as the State asked the trial court to do.

¶ 54 Although the trial court overruled the State's objection and allowed Ashley to present evidence concerning her efforts after the nine-month period ended, it is not entirely clear on the record before us whether the court considered that evidence in concluding that Ashley failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility. As discussed previously, the court noted that it was bound to follow the law and explained that the law required consideration of the nine-month period identified by the State. While this is true for failure to make reasonable efforts and progress, it is not true for failure to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to the child's welfare. *In re D.P.*, 2024 IL App (1st) 231530, ¶ 33; *In re Alexander R.*, 377 Ill. App. 3d 553, 556 (2007).

¶ 55 Nevertheless, we do not believe there is any meritorious argument counsel could make concerning this issue for three reasons. First, trial courts are presumed to know and correctly follow the law. *In re Alexander R.*, 377 Ill. App. 3d at 556-57. As such, we must presume that the trial court properly considered all evidence before it in finding that Ashley failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility as to Isabella's welfare.

¶ 56 Second, consideration of the evidence presented concerning Ashley's interest, concern, or responsibility after the nine-month period supports the court's finding. Although Zirkelbach testified that Ashley's visits with Isabella went better after the permanency goal was changed and the evidence showed she was making more progress on her service plan tasks, there was still ample evidence that Ashley missed scheduled visits with Isabella, failed to take the opportunity for extra visits offered by the foster mother, and did not complete all the required services in her plan. This evidence is more than sufficient to support the court's finding that Ashley failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern, or responsibility for Isabella's welfare.

¶ 57 Third, a finding of unfitness may be based on any one statutory ground. *In re Baby Boy*, 2025 IL App (4th) 241427, ¶ 63. We have already concluded that the evidence supports the court's findings of unfitness for failure to make both reasonable efforts and reasonable progress. We must affirm the trial court's decision on that basis alone. *Id.* ¶ 64. For these reasons, we agree with Polinske that there are no meritorious arguments that can be raised on Ashley's behalf.

¶ 58 III. CONCLUSION

¶ 59 For the foregoing reasons, we grant counsel's motion to withdraw and affirm the order of the trial court terminating Ashley's parental rights.

¶ 60 Motion granted; order affirmed.