

NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT O.P. 65.37

IN THE INTEREST OF: B.W., A MINOR	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
	:	PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
APPEAL OF: N.W., MOTHER	:	
	:	
	:	
	:	
	:	
	:	No. 315 WDA 2026

Appeal from the Order Entered January 30, 2026
In the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County
Orphans' Court at No: CP-02-AP-0000063-2025

BEFORE: STABILE, J., DUBOW, J., and STEVENS, P.J.E.*

MEMORANDUM BY STABILE, J.:

FILED: August 26, 2026

N.W. ("Mother") appeals from the January 30, 2026 order which granted the petition of the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families ("CYF") and involuntarily terminated her parental rights to her son, B.W., born in August of 2019.¹ After careful review, we affirm.

We gather the relevant factual and procedural history of this matter largely from the relevant orders entered in B.W.'s underlying dependency case, which CYF introduced into evidence during the termination proceeding, and the orphans' court admitted without objection. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 53;

* Former Justice specially assigned to the Superior Court.

¹ B.W.'s biological father is unknown. By the same order that terminated Mother's parental rights, the orphans' court involuntarily terminated the parental rights of B.W.'s unknown father. No unknown father has come forward, appealed this termination order, or participated in this appeal.

see also CYF Exhibit 3. On June 1, 2022, CYF received a report alleging that Mother was breastfeeding B.W. while actively using cocaine. When a CYF caseworker went to investigate the report that same day, Mother admitted to cocaine use. B.W., then age two, was subsequently examined at a local hospital and his urine tested positive for cocaine. Thereafter, CYF sought emergency protective custody of B.W., which the juvenile court granted. CYF placed B.W. with R.W. ("Maternal Uncle") and his paramour, S.C. (collectively, "Foster Parents"). The court confirmed this placement at a shelter care hearing on June 3, 2022. B.W. remained placed with Foster Parents, who are a pre-adoptive resource, at the time of the subject hearing.

On June 28, 2022, the juvenile court adjudicated B.W. dependent and established his permanency goal as reunification. In furtherance of this goal, the court ordered Mother to, *inter alia*, participate in: (1) drug and alcohol treatment and follow any continuing recommendations; (2) random drug screens; (3) visitation with B.W. In February of 2024, the court ordered Mother to complete a psychological evaluation and comply with any recommendations. From September of 2022, through November of 2025, the court held permanency review hearings every three to four months.

With respect to Mother's substance abuse, she acknowledged that she has struggled with cocaine use for the last nineteen years. **See** CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 5/9/24, at 6. Throughout B.W.'s dependency, Mother attended several drug and alcohol treatment programs.

As best we can discern, Mother engaged in treatment from June through August of 2022; November of 2022 through August of 2024; and March through approximately July of 2025. Despite treatment, Mother admitted to relapses in September of 2022, and January of 2024, the latter of which involved heroin use. **See id.** at 5. During the permanency review period between March and June of 2024, CYF observed Mother's behavior and reported concerns that she had an additional relapse. Further, Mother did not consistently attend the court-ordered random drug screens.

In the spring of 2024, Mother participated in a psychological evaluation with Terry O'Hara, Ph.D., a licensed forensic psychologist.² **See** CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 5/9/24. Dr. O'Hara diagnosed Mother with "opioid use disorder, moderate, on maintenance therapy[,] "stimulant use disorder, moderate[,] " and "unspecified depressive disorder." **Id.** at 10 (capitalization omitted). Dr. O'Hara recommended that Mother consistently attend drug screens, enroll in a dual diagnosis treatment program, and attend a follow up evaluation in six months.³ Mother did enroll and attend dual

² Dr. O'Hara also performed psychological interactional evaluations of B.W. and Mother and separate evaluations of B.W. and Foster Parents in the spring of 2024 and the fall of 2025. **See generally** CYF Exhibit 2. Thereafter, Dr. O'Hara authored corresponding reports on May 9, 2024, and January 15, 2026. **See id.**

³ Although not explicitly defined in the record, we discern that dual diagnosis treatment is a combination of both drug and alcohol and mental health treatments. **See generally** CYF Exhibit 2.

diagnosis treatment, but she stopped attending in the summer of 2025. Further, Mother failed to attend with re-evaluation with Dr. O'Hara on three separate occasions and it was never completed. **See** CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 1/15/26.

Initially, the court granted Mother liberal visitation with B.W., which was supervised by Maternal Uncle as he and Mother arranged. A few months later, the parties agreed to allow Mother unsupervised visitation until her relapse in September of 2022. Visitation then reverted to supervised by Maternal Uncle. Mother again progressed to unsupervised visitation around October or November of 2023, and the juvenile court granted her unsupervised overnight visits with B.W. However, on January 4, 2024, the court ordered that visits be supervised by CYF due to Mother's relapse at that time. Visits remained supervised through the time of the subject hearing.

It is important to note that, upon his removal from Mother's care, the hospital had concerns that B.W. had "global delays" along with sight and hearing issues and recommended further evaluation. Shelter Care Order, 6/3/22. Foster Parents enrolled B.W. in preschool and ensured that he received speech and occupational therapies. These interventions resolved any issues and B.W. entered kindergarten developmentally on track. **See** CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 5/9/24, at 3.

On May 16, 2025, CYF filed petitions to involuntarily terminate Mother's parental rights to B.W. pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(2), (5), (8), and

(b). At the final permanency review hearing in November of 2025, the court characterized Mother's progress in alleviating the circumstances which led to B.W.'s placement as minimal. On January 23, 2026, the orphans' court held an evidentiary hearing. At this time, B.W. was approximately six years old and in first grade. B.W.'s best and legal interests were represented by an attorney from KidsVoice.⁴

In support of its termination petition, CYF presented the testimony of the following witnesses: Dr. O'Hara; Renee Taddy, the family's current CYF caseworker; Joseph Thieret, the family's former CYF caseworker; Rachel Poole, laboratory technician from the Allegheny County Health Department ("ACHD"); and Rachel Wagner, program director of POWER, one of Mother's drug and alcohol treatment providers. Mother testified on her own behalf. CYF also proffered multiple documentary exhibits, including the dependency court orders, the psychological evaluation reports, and a log of Mother's

⁴ The orphans' court appointed KidsVoice, B.W.'s guardian *ad litem* ("GAL") from the underlying dependency proceedings, as his legal counsel for the termination proceedings. **See** Order Appointing Legal Counsel for a Child in A TPR Proceeding, 7/28/25. In this order, the orphans' court found that "no conflict exists that would prevent KidsVoice from accepting this appointment." **Id.** Accordingly, the requirements of 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2313(a) are met. **See In re K.M.G.**, 240 A.3d 1218, 1236, 1238 (Pa. 2020) (holding appellate courts should engage in "limited *sua sponte* review" concerning a child's statutory right to counsel in the termination context and mandating the orphans' court issue a separate order appointing counsel to represent the legal interests of a child involved in an involuntary termination matter and, if the appointed counsel also serves as GAL, to determine "prior to appointment" whether the child's dual interests did not conflict).

attendance at drug screens, which the court admitted without objection. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 15, 30, 53.

By order dated and entered on January 30, 2026, the orphans' court involuntarily terminated Mother's parental rights to B.W. pursuant to Section 2511(a)(2), (5), (8), and (b). On February 24, 2026, Mother timely filed a notice of appeal and a contemporaneous concise statement of errors complained of on appeal pursuant to Pa.R.A.P. 1925(a)(2)(i) and (b). The orphans' court authored a Rule 1925(a) opinion.

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

1. Did the [orphans'] court abuse its discretion and/or err as a matter of law in granting the petition to involuntarily terminate Mother's parental rights pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.[A.] § 2511(a)(2), (5), and (8)?
2. Did the [orphans'] court abuse its discretion and/or err as a matter of law in concluding that CYF met its burden of proving clear and convincing evidence that termination of Mother's parental rights would best serve the needs and welfare of [B.W.] pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.[A.] § 2511(b)?

Mother's Brief at 6.⁵

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

⁵ KidsVoice filed a participant's brief advocating for this Court to affirm the subject order.

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 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. ***See 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 B.L.W.***, 843 A.2d 380, 384 (Pa. Super. 2004) (*en banc*).

For the reasons discussed *infra*, we conclude that the certified record supports the termination order pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(2) and (b), which provide as follows:⁶

(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:

. . .

(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.

⁶ Given our disposition relative to Section 2511(a)(2), we need not review and make no conclusions as to the orphans' court's findings with respect to Section 2511(a)(5) and (8). **See *B.L.W.***, 843 A.2d at 384.

23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(2), (b).

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). The grounds for termination under Section 2511(a)(2) due to parental incapacity are not limited to affirmative misconduct; those grounds may include acts of refusal and incapacity to perform parental duties. ***See In re S.C.***, 247 A.3d 1097, 1104 (Pa. Super. 2021), *abrogated on other grounds by Interest of K.T.*, 296 A.3d 1085, 1110 n.23 (Pa. 2023).

We have long recognized that a parent is required to make diligent efforts towards the reasonably prompt assumption of full parental responsibilities. ***See In re Adoption of M.A.B.***, 166 A.3d 434, 443 (Pa. Super. 2017) (citation omitted). Further, when “a parent has demonstrated a continued inability to conduct his ... life in a fashion that would provide a safe environment for a child, whether that child is living with the parent or not, and the behavior of the parent is irremediable as supported by clear and competent evidence, the termination of parental rights is justified” pursuant to Section 2511(a)(2). ***In re Z.P.***, 994 A.2d 1108, 1118 (Pa. Super. 2010).

If the orphans' court concludes that adequate grounds for termination exist pursuant to Section 2511(a), the court then turns to Section 2511(b), which requires that it "give 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 directed that a Section 2511(b) inquiry must include consideration for the bond between the parent and the child. **See In re E.M.**, 620 A.2d 481, 485 (Pa. 1993). With respect to the bond analysis, we have explained:

The orphans' court must determine whether the parent and child share an emotional bond and assess whether the bond is necessary and beneficial to the child, such that maintaining the bond serves the child's developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare. If a bond exists, the court must ascertain the effect upon the child of severing the bond. Because the severing of any parent-child bond may be emotionally painful for a child, the orphans' court cannot preclude termination based solely on evidence of an adverse or detrimental impact to the child. Instead, focusing upon the child's development, and mental and emotional health, the orphans' court should assess whether severing the bond is the kind of loss that would predictably cause extreme emotional consequences or significant, irreparable harm to the child.

In re Adopt. of G.W., 342 A.3d 68, 90 (Pa. Super. 2025) (*en banc*) (internal citations and quotation marks omitted). 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).

Moreover, in considering the affection which a child may have for his or her natural parents, this Court has stated the following:

[C]oncluding a child has a beneficial bond with a parent simply because the child harbors affection for the parent is not only dangerous, it is logically unsound. If a child's feelings were the dispositive factor in the bonding analysis, the analysis would be reduced to an exercise in semantics as it is the rare child who, after being subject to neglect and abuse, is able to sift through the emotional wreckage and completely disavow a parent. . . . Nor are we of the opinion that the biological connection between [the parent] and the children is sufficient in [and] of itself, or when considered in connection with a child's feeling toward a parent, to establish a *de facto* beneficial bond exists. The psychological aspect of parenthood is more important in terms of the development of the child and its mental and emotional health than the coincidence of biological or natural parenthood.

In re K.K.R.-S., 958 A.2d 529, 535 (Pa. Super. 2008) (internal citations and quotation marks omitted).

Nevertheless, the Section 2511(b) analysis does not end with the evaluation of the parent-child bond. ***See G.W.***, 342 A.3d at 91. The orphans' court must also consider:

the child's need for permanency and length of time in foster care . . . ; whether the child is in a pre[-]adoptive home and bonded with foster parents; and whether the foster home meets the child's developmental, physical, and emotional needs, including intangible needs of love, comfort, security, safety, and stability.

Id. These considerations are all of "primary importance in the Section 2511(b) analysis" and "may contribute equally to the determination of a child's specific developmental, physical, and emotional needs and welfare." ***K.T.***, 296 A.3d at 1109. Indeed, the orphans' court's discretion includes placing "appropriate weight on each factor present in the record" when conducting "a full [Section 2511](b) analysis focused upon the child." ***Id.*** at 1113. 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.

Regarding Section 2511(a)(2), Mother asserts that the orphans’ court abused its discretion because she “achieved sobriety and proved it through urine screens.” Mother’s Brief at 23. Thus, Mother contends that her parental incapacity with respect to substance abuse was remedied. ***See id.*** at 21-22. Mother further argues that she was able to provide essential parental care, control, or subsistence to B.W. ***See id.*** We disagree.

The orphans’ court explained:

Mother’s substance abuse concerns have been the greatest concern in this case. . . . Mother failed to appear for 104 out of the 143 random drug screens called in for her. In November of 2025, she was ordered to submit a drug screen after a permanency review hearing and refused. While Mother meaningfully engaged in substance abuse treatment in 2022 and 2023, she has been unable to sustain recovery on a long-term basis. Her failure to comply with screens is concerning and indicative to this [c]ourt that she is still battling substance abuse issues. For these reasons, the [c]ourt found that she did not complete the goal of addressing her substance abuse concerns.

Orphans’ Court Opinion, 3/26/26, at 7-8 (unpaginated). As such, the court concluded that Mother had a parental incapacity due to her substance abuse, which had not and could not be remedied. ***See id.*** at 8-9 (unpaginated).

The orphans’ court’s findings are supported by the record. The evidence produced by CYF demonstrates that Mother had a repeated and continued incapacity to parent B.W. as a result of her unresolved substance abuse. Mother reported that she used illicit substances throughout her pregnancy

with B.W. **See** Shelter Care Order, 6/3/22, at 2. Mother had been attending drug and alcohol treatment since B.W.'s birth and claimed to have been clean for over two years when CYF became involved in June of 2022. **See id.; see also** N.T., 1/23/26, at 77-78. Mother characterized this relapse as "a one[-]time incident." Shelter Care Order, 6/3/22, at 2.

Mother has a lengthy, continuous history of entering and exiting drug and alcohol treatment throughout B.W.'s dependency with repeated relapses. Ms. Wagner, program director at POWER, testified that Mother began attending intensive outpatient drug and alcohol treatment at their program around the time of B.W.'s adjudication in June of 2022. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 6. Ms. Wagner explained that Mother was diagnosed with "cocaine use disorder, severe." **Id.** at 7. Mother reported that she stopped attending POWER in August of 2022 and admitted to a relapse the following month in September of 2022. **See** Permanency Review Order, 9/22/22, at 1. Ms. Wagner confirmed that Mother did not successfully complete treatment at that time and "left based on her choice." N.T., 1/23/26, at 6.

Ms. Wagner testified that Mother was admitted into their inpatient program, POWER Restore, in November of 2022, and she successfully completed that program in January of 2023. **See id.** at 8. Ms. Wagner explained that Mother was then "stepped down to our halfway house." **Id.** However, Ms. Wagner stated that Mother was discharged in April of 2023. **See id.** The record indicates that this discharge was due to an altercation

Mother had with another resident. **See** Permanency Review Order, 6/1/23, at 2. Thereafter, Ms. Wagner testified that Mother participated in outpatient treatment with POWER's New Day program but was unsuccessfully discharged in July of 2023 due to her failure to attend. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 8-10. The record indicates that Mother simultaneously attended the outpatient program at Perinatal Hope and began medication-assisted treatment for her substance abuse in the summer of 2023. **See** Permanency Review Order, 6/1/23, at 2; **see also** Permanency Review Order, 8/24/23.

Despite these treatments, CYF became aware that Mother relapsed in January of 2024. **See** Permanency Review Order, 2/8/24, at 2. Around this time, Mother completed a weeklong inpatient detoxification program at Pyramid. **See id.** Mother denied that she attended this program due to a relapse and "testified that she sought inpatient treatment at the recommendation" of Perinatal Hope. **Id.** However, Mother admitted to Dr. O'Hara that she "just used heroin one time in January" of 2024, which precipitated her inpatient stay. CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 5/9/24, at 5. Mother also reported to Dr. O'Hara that she had been using cocaine for approximately twenty years, beginning in 2005. **See id.** at 6.

By June of 2024, Mother was attending a dual diagnosis program at Perinatal Addiction Center. **See** Permanency Review Order, 6/6/24, at 2. However, she stopped attending around August of 2024. **See** Permanency

Review Order, 9/12/24, at 2. By March of 2025, Mother had re-engaged in a dual diagnosis program; this time at Jade Wellness, who recommended that she receive inpatient treatment. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 67; **see also** Permanency Review Order, 3/6/25, at 2. There is no indication that Mother complied with that recommendation. Further, by July of 2025, Mother had ceased treatment again. **See** Permanency Review Order, 7/22/25, at 2 (“Mother is to re-engage with dual diagnosis treatment[.]”). The record reveals that Mother never re-enrolled in treatment. **See** Permanency Review Order, 11/18/25, at 3. Therefore, the record indicates that Mother had not attended any treatment in six months at the time of the termination hearing. **See id.**; **see also** Permanency Review Order, 7/22/25, at 2. Indeed, CYF caseworker Mr. Thieret testified that CYF did not have verifying documentation for any treatments that Mother attended since November of 2024. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 54.

With respect to the court-ordered random drug screens, Ms. Poole, laboratory technician with the ACHD, testified that from June of 2022, through January of 2026, Mother attended 39 of 143 screens. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 13. Ms. Poole stated that Mother failed to appear for 104 screens. **See id.** The drug screening log presented by CYF shows that Mother would go months at a time without testing. **See** CYF Exhibit 1. The last screen that Mother attended was in September of 2025, which was four months prior to the termination hearing. **See id.** at 1. Further, the current CYF caseworker, Ms.

Taddy, testified that Mother “declined” the screen that the court ordered after the permanency review hearing in November of 2025, even after the court “informed her that it would be considered a positive.” N.T., 1/23/26, at 72.

Based upon the foregoing, this record amply supports the orphans’ court’s finding that Mother’s repeated and continued incapacity resulting from her substance abuse has caused B.W. to be without essential parental care, control, or subsistence necessary for his physical or mental well-being. **See A.H.**, 247 A.3d at 443; 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(2). Further, the record confirms that the condition and cause of Mother’s incapacity, her long-standing substance abuse, cannot or will not be remedied as she has been addicted to illicit substances for almost twenty years and has not achieved sobriety, namely in the three years with CYF assistance. **See id.** Therefore, we discern no abuse of discretion by the orphans’ court in finding that terminating Mother’s parental rights pursuant to Section 2511(a)(2) was warranted.

Turning to Mother’s challenge to Section 2511(b), she argues that the orphans’ court committed an error of law by proceeding to an analysis of the subsection inasmuch as there was insufficient evidence to support termination under Section 2511(a). **See** Mother’s Brief at 25. Alternatively, Mother contends that the orphans’ court abused its discretion in finding that CYF met its evidentiary burden because Dr. O’Hara’s evaluations proved that her bond with B.W. was necessary and beneficial, which should have precluded

termination. ***See id.*** at 25-26. Mother highlights her love for B.W. ***See id.*** at 26. She further asserts that B.W. “clearly values his relationship with Mother” and argues that he would “suffer detriment” from severing their bond. ***Id.*** We are not persuaded by Mother’s arguments.

Regarding Section 2511(b), the orphans’ court explained:

First, the [c]ourt examined the nature of the bond between [] Mother and [B.W.] and the effect that severing the bond would have on [B.W.] Additionally, the [c]ourt also considered the safety needs of [B.W.], and the relationship that he shared with Foster Parents.

With respect to the bond, it is clear . . . that a bond exists between Mother and [B.W.] . . . Mother’s consistency with visitation allowed her to develop a relationship with [B.W.] He enjoys visits with her and appears to be comfortable in her presence. However, [B.W.] also shares a strong bond with his Foster Parents. He has been in their care since June of 2022. They are meeting all of [his] daily needs and are a pre-adoptive resource. Dr. O’Hara opined that [B.W.] is currently experiencing safety, security[,] and stability in his foster home and that he would be significantly concerned if [B.W.] were removed from their care. It was Dr. O’Hara’s opinion that [B.W.] could experience some emotional distress if [he] weren’t permitted to see [] Mother again. However, [Dr. O’Hara] believed that [B.W.’s] relationship with [] Foster Parents was strong and significant enough that [B.W.] could tolerate any distress caused by the cessation of the relationship with Mother. For those reasons, the [c]ourt found that . . . [B.W.] would not suffer extreme emotional distress if Mother’s parental rights were terminated.

Safety is also a significant concern when a parent suffers from substance abuse [] issues. . . . There would be no way to assure the safety of [B.W.] unless Mother demonstrated long-term compliance with dual diagnosis treatment. The [c]ourt does not believe that Mother could provide the safety and stability that [B.W.] requires.

Orphans' Court Opinion, 3/26/26, at 8-9 (unpaginated). We discern no error or abuse of discretion.

Preliminarily, Mother's argument that the court erred by proceeding to analyze Section 2511(b) fails because we have already determined that termination of her parental rights was warranted under Section 2511(a)(2). **See T.S.M.**, 71 A.3d at 267. Further, our review of the record confirms that the orphans' court's findings are well-supported by the evidence.

The dependency court orders verify that, overall, Mother consistently attended her offered visitation. **See generally** CYF Exhibit 3. Mr. Thieret testified that Mother has consistently attended visitation since CYF began supervising in January of 2024. **See** N.T., 1/23/26, at 56. He stated that CYF did not have any "major safety concerns" regarding the visits. **Id.**

CYF does not dispute that B.W. shared some type of bond with Mother. Indeed, Dr. O'Hara testified that there was a bond between B.W. and Mother. **See id.** at 25-26. Ms. Taddy and Dr. O'Hara testified that B.W. was "excited" to see Mother at visitations and their interactions were "positive." **Id.** at 20, 25, 72-73. With respect to Foster Parents, Dr. O'Hara opined that B.W. was bonded to them as well. **See id.** at 25-26.

The record, however, confirms the orphans' court's finding that the bond B.W. shares with Mother is not a necessary and beneficial parental bond. Dr. O'Hara testified that he believed there would be a "detriment" to B.W. if all contact with Mother ceased. N.T., 1/23/26, at 28. Nevertheless, Dr. O'Hara

explained that the foundation of safety and security that B.W. enjoys with Foster Parents would help him “tolerate distress[.]” ***Id.*** at 28-29. Thus, the record establishes that B.W. would not suffer extreme emotional consequences or significant, irreparable harm from the involuntary termination of Mother’s parental rights. ***See G.W.***, 342 A.3d at 90.

In addition, we note that Dr. O’Hara’s first report opines that B.W. “clearly values his relationship” with Mother – language she mimics in her arguments regarding this issue. CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 5/9/24, at 13; ***see also*** Mother’s Brief at 26. Nevertheless, our case law is clear that a child’s affection for a parent is not a sufficient basis for an orphans’ court to find that a beneficial parental bond exists. ***See K.K.R.-S.***, 958 A.2d at 535. Relatedly, while Mother may profess to love B.W., this does not preclude termination of her parental rights. ***See Z.P.***, 994 A.2d at 1121 (“A parent’s own feelings of love and affection for a child, alone, do not prevent termination of parental rights.”).

Importantly, Dr. O’Hara determined that Mother was unable to provide for B.W.’s needs and welfare due to her ongoing substance abuse concerns. ***See*** CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 1/15/26, at 8. Dr. O’Hara continued:

[T]his examiner has observed [Foster Parents] exhibiting strong parenting skills to [B.W.] over time and [B.W.] has engaged very well with [Foster Parents]. This examiner does not have any concerns about [Foster Parents’] care of [B.W.] In this examiner’s opinion, [B.W.] is experiencing safety, security, and stability in the care of [Foster Parents].

Id. Dr. O'Hara testified that there would be "significant concern" if B.W. were removed from Foster Parents because of the "high level" of safety, security, and stability he experiences with them. N.T., 1/23/26, at 27.

With respect to B.W.'s need for permanency, Foster Parents reported that B.W. "struggled" after visitation with Mother. CYF Exhibit 2 (Psychological Evaluation Report), 1/15/26, at 3. Foster Parents stated that B.W. "doesn't know where he belongs" or "where he will be[,] " which is exacerbated by Mother "promising him that she was getting him back." **Id.** at 3-4. Therefore, it is clear that maintaining the bond between B.W. and Mother was negatively affecting B.W. **See id.**

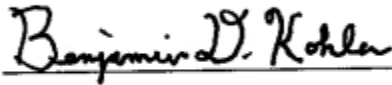
Indeed, the orphans' court was well within its discretion to appropriately weigh B.W.'s safety, security, and permanency against his bond with Mother and determine that those intangibles took priority. **See K.T.**, 296 A.3d at 1113; **see also M.E.**, 283 A.3d at 839. B.W.'s childhood is passing by, and the court was empowered to place primary importance on his need for permanency after being in placement for over three years. **See id.; see also T.S.M.**, 71 A.3d at 269 ("[C]ourts must keep the ticking clock of childhood ever in mind. Children are young for a scant number of years, and we have an obligation to see to their healthy development quickly.").

Based upon the evidence set forth above, we discern no error or abuse of discretion in the orphans' court's finding that CYF met its evidentiary burden pursuant to Section 2511(b). Thus, we affirm the order involuntarily

terminating Mother's parental rights to B.W. pursuant to 23 Pa.C.S.A. § 2511(a)(2) and (b).

Order affirmed.

Judgment Entered.

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

Benjamin D. Kohler, Esq.
Prothonotary

DATE: 8/26/2026