

Guardian ad Litem Report to the Court – Best Interest

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CASE NUMBER(S)

2020 JA 64

TEMPORARY CUSTODY DATE

05/28/2020

ADJUDICATION DATE

10/13/2020

DISPOSITION DATE

11/20/2020

LAST PRH DATE

02/22/2021

DATE OF GOAL CHANGE

02/22/2021

HEARING DATE

07/19/2021

TYPE OF HEARING

Termination of Parents Rights / Best Interest

Children**HOW MANY CHILDREN IN THIS REPORT?**

1

Child 1**NAME**

Amy Freeman

DATE OF BIRTH

03/23/2020

AGE

15 months

Interviewed for this Reporting Period

Name	Title
Jennifer D.	Foster Mother

Reports and Materials Reviewed

Date	Title
02/23/2021	Family Service Plan

Dates of Child Visits

Name	Dates of visits since last court hearing	In-Person Or Virtual
Amy Freeman	08/03/2020, 09/27/2020, 11/17/2020, 12/20/2020, 02/03/2021, 03/10/2021, 04/06/2021	In-Person
Amy Freeman	10/19/2020, 01/17/2021, 05/08/2021, 06/09/2021	Virtual

WERE THERE ANY MONTHS WHERE THE CHILD WAS NOT VISITED EITHER IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL?

No

ICWA

No

Case History

Amy was born at 29 weeks gestation on March 20, 2020. Both she and her mother, Mary Freeman, tested negative for substances, but because she wasn't able to gain weight, she wasn't released from the hospital until May 26, 2020. There is an older sibling who is currently in care under case number 18JA47 who was born substance exposed and Mother tested positive for substances during its intact case. Neither Mother, Ms. Freeman, nor Doug Freeman, Legal Father, complied with the recommended services in the service plan or participated in substance abuse services. Amy was removed because the conditions of the service plan have not been completed by either parent for her sibling's case.

Child 1

PHYSICAL SAFETY AND WELFARE

Amy lives with Jennifer D., Foster Mother in Geneva. She resides with Jennifer and Jennifer's two biological sons, ages nine and seven. Amy sleeps in a crib in her own room. Amy enjoys age-appropriate toys. There are safety gates that do not allow her to roam out of the family living areas or to go upstairs. The kitchen cabinet that contains cleaning supplies is locked. The other kitchen cabinets are open, and Amy enjoys playing with the pots, pans, and plastic bowls. The home does have a pool that is fenced with a self-closing and locking gate. The sliding glass door that leads to the backyard has an alarm that sounds when the door is opened. Amy enjoys eating all kinds of foods. She eats three meals and two snacks daily. She has always been observed dressed appropriately for weather and has clothes for every season in advance. She has many pairs of shoes and has just started walking. CASA/GAL has observed the home to be well maintained, clean, comfortable and without apparent safety issues.

DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY

Amy has lived with her foster family since being discharged from the hospital after she was born. She has been introduced to extended family and friends and attends daycare a couple of days a week. She is able to adapt to others and is not afraid of meeting new people. Amy is meeting all developmental milestones for her age, therefore did not qualify for Early Intervention. She is content with most anyone that she meets but will crawl quickly to foster brothers when she sees them. CASA/GAL has watched her grow and develop like a typical one year old.

Amy has a strong attachment to her foster family. She looks for Jennifer D. and readily responds to her foster siblings, both of whom enjoy pushing her on the swing outside, reading to her, and chasing her around. CASA/GAL has observed that Amy is not currently saying any words but will make sounds to communicate her needs.

Jennifer D. has stated that she would be willing to maintain contact with Mr. and Ms. Freeman as long as the contact is appropriate. She has not met any extended biological family but would be willing to meet them to see if contact is beneficial and appropriate. Jennifer D. has requested visits with Amy's sibling, but due to restrictions at his placement, this has not been an option.

FAMILIAL, CULTURE AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Amy is bi-racial, and Jennifer D. is fostering her cultural background through books, dolls, music, and friends.

Amy does have a sibling that she has not met yet due to COVID restrictions at his current placement.

SENSE OF ATTACHMENT

Amy is very attached to the foster family and their extended family. She responds to Jennifer D. as “mama” and loves to be held by and to play with her foster siblings. She is part of the family and is included in all sporting events and extended family gatherings. CASA/GAL has observed a special attachment with foster parent’s father, whom Amy calls “Da”.

Amy is included in all family photographs which CASA/GAL has observed to be displayed in the home. Amy appears to feel safe and nurtured in this home. She feels comfortable when she has to attend daycare and has no issues on the days she attends. Jennifer D. is willing to provide permanency by way of adoption.

WISHES

Amy is too young to express her wishes with respect to her permanency however, she is clearly bonded to her foster family.

COMMUNITY TIES

Amy attends daycare at Ivy Learning Academy in Geneva during the week when foster parent is working. She is not involved in any services or activities at this time. She does attend sporting events with foster siblings and extended family events.

CASA/GAL has seen videos of Amy dressed up for all occasions. She dressed up for Halloween and Christmas pictures with the family. Foster mother has many outfits for all special occasions. Amy plays with other children in the neighborhood around her age and foster mother’s best friend has a son around the same age that comes to visit often. During the summer season, the foster family has many other children over to swim and play in the backyard.

NEED FOR PERMANENCE

Amy has been with the foster family since she was 8 weeks old. Now at 15 months, this is the only family she knows.

UNIQUENESS OF FAMILY & CHILD

Amy completed an Early Intervention assessment and did not qualify since she is meeting age-appropriate developmental milestones. The foster family is filling all of her needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the minor, the court should

FIND IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST FOR THE PARENTAL RIGHTS TO BE TERMINATED AND THE MINOR BE FREE FOR ADOPTION

Yes

PROCEED TO PERMANENCY REVIEW HEARING INSTANTER AND CONSIDER THE PERMANENCY GOAL OF ADOPTION

Yes

FIND AT THE PERMANENCY REVIEW HEARING THAT MINOR REMAIN A WARD OF THE COURT AND CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP REMAIN WITH DCFS

Yes

AGENCY HAS MADE REASONABLE EFFORTS

Yes

THE CLIENT SERVICE PLAN AND SERVICES ARE APPROPRIATE

Yes

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY CASA/GAL

Carla U.

DATE

06/28/2021

SUPERVISOR

Sandie Cross sandiec@casakanecounty.org