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IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF NORTH CAROLINA

No. COA24-141

Filed 3 September 2024

Forsyth County, Nos. 21JT75-77

IN RE A.J., L.J., A.V.

Appeal by respondent from judgment entered 30 October 2023 by Judge David E. Sipprell in Forsyth County District Court. Heard in the Court of Appeals 19 August 2024.

Vitrano Law Offices, PLLC, by Sean P. Vitrano, for the respondent-appellant-mother.

Forsyth County DSS, by Theresa A. Boucher, for the petitioner-appellee.

Ellis & Winters, LLP, by Christopher E. Rhodes, Jr., for the guardian ad litem.

PER CURIAM.

I. Background

Respondent-Mother (“Respondent”) appeals from the 30 October 2023 order terminating her parental rights to her three children, A.J., L.J., and A.V. *See* N.C. R. App. P. 42(b) (pseudonyms used to protect the identity of minors). Counsel for Respondent filed a no-merit brief under Rule 3.1(e) of the North Carolina Rules of

Appellate Procedure. N.C. R. App. P. 3.1(e). Respondent did not exercise her opportunity to file a *pro se* brief in accordance with Rule 3.1(e). *Id.*

II. No Merit Brief

Counsel filing a Rule 3.1(e) no-merit brief must “identify any issues in the record on appeal that arguably support the appeal and must state why those issues lack merit or would not alter the ultimate result.” *Id.*

Counsel has fully complied with the requirements of Rule 3.1(e) and identified three potential issues for our review: (1) whether the trial court reversibly erred by concluding grounds existed to terminate Respondent’s parental rights because the evidence failed to support the findings; (2) whether the trial court abused its discretion by terminating parental rights because termination was not in the best interests of the juveniles; and (3) whether the termination order should be remanded for the correction of clerical errors.

We have conducted an independent review of the potential issues raised in counsel’s no-merit brief in accordance with *In re L.E.M.* 372 N.C. 396, 402, 831 S.E.2d 341, 345 (2019) (“We conclude that the text of Rule 3.1([e]) plainly contemplates appellate review of the issues contained in a no-merit brief”). We discern no abuse of discretion and are satisfied the trial court’s order terminating Respondent’s parental rights “is supported by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence and is based on proper legal grounds.” *In re K.M.S.*, 380 N.C. 56, 59, 867 S.E.2d 868, 870 (2022).

III. Conclusion

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Opinion of the Court

We affirm the trial court's order terminating Respondent's parental rights. *Id.*

It is so ordered.

AFFIRMED.

Panel consisting of Judges Tyson, Zachary, and Hampson.

Report per Rule 30(e).