

An unpublished opinion of the North Carolina Court of Appeals does not constitute controlling legal authority. Citation is disfavored, but may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of Rule 30(e)(3) of the North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure.

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF NORTH CAROLINA

No. COA24-146

Filed 2 April 2025

Johnston County, No. 18 JT 189

IN THE MATTER OF:

J.M.

Appeal by respondent-father from order entered 17 October 2023 by Judge Joy A. Jones in Johnston County District Court. Heard in the Court of Appeals 18 March 2025.

*Batch, Poore & Williams, PC, by Sydney J. Batch, for respondent-appellant-father.*

*Reece & Reece, by Mary McCullers Reece, for petitioners-appellees.*

PER CURIAM.

Respondent-appellant (“Father”) appeals from the termination of parental rights (“TPR”) order entered on 17 October 2023 and filed on 8 November 2023. Counsel for Father filed a no-merit brief under Rule 3.1(e) of the North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure.

Counsel filing a Rule 3.1(e) no-merit brief is required to “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.” N.C. R. App. P. 3.1(e) (2023).

Here, counsel fully complied with all the requirements of Rule 3.1(e) and identified two issues for our independent review: (1) whether the trial court erred in terminating Father's parental rights based on neglect and a likelihood of future neglect and (2) whether the trial court abused its discretion by concluding it was in the child's best interest to terminate Father's rights.

This Court conducts an independent review of the issues raised in the no-merit brief. *In re L.E.M.*, 372 N.C. 396, 402 (2019). "[T]he text of Rule 3.1([e]) plainly contemplates appellate review of the issues contained in a no-merit brief." *Id.* "[W]e are satisfied that the trial court's order terminating [Father]'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 (2022). Accordingly, we affirm the trial court's order.

AFFIRMED.

Panel consisting of Chief Judge DILLON and Judges CARPENTER and GRIFFIN.

Report per Rule 30(e).