

Path to Permanency – the Smith family

In August 2014, the Division received a report of concern about Amy (age 3) and Joseph (age 5) Smith due to concerns of parental substance abuse and mental health concerns about their parents, Mr. and Ms. Smith. After investigation, on August 24, 2014, a court hold was granted and the children were placed in foster care

On September 12, 2014, both parents entered no fault admissions. On October 23, 2014, treatment plan for the parents was adopted with no objections. It required both parents to demonstrate sobriety, engage in substance abuse evaluations and recommended treatment, engage in mental health evaluations and recommended treatment.

After a month in foster care, the foster parents gave 30-day notice, stating that the behaviors of Amy and Joseph were unmanageable and disruptive to the other children in the home. After consultation, it decided that it would be therapeutically appropriate for the children to be placed in separate foster homes due to their behaviors. The children have remained in their respective foster homes which are not potential permanent placements. The goal is to have the children placed together again but it is unclear whether they can safely reside together in the future.

On January 16, 2015, the first permanency planning hearing was held. Mr. and Ms. Smith were engaged in twice weekly therapeutic visits and were making progress towards the therapeutic goals. Mr. Smith completed his mental health evaluation and has been referred for treatment. Ms. Smith completed her substance abuse evaluation and began treatment. Both parents completed some random urine screens, with missed UAs and positives for marijuana. A permanency plan of return home was adopted with a target date of August 24, 2015.

On April 10, 2015, a review hearing was held. The parents had no submitted any urine screens since the last court hearing. Mr. Smith continued to attend his mental health treatment but had not completed in his substance abuse evaluation. Ms. Smith stopped attending substance abuse treatment because she didn't like the provider but failed to attend treatment at a new facility. Ms. Smith has not engaged in mental health treatment. The case is set for a permanency planning hearing as progress in treatment has slowed.

On June 26, 2015, a permanency planning and permanent home hearing is scheduled. Respondent father has not demonstrated sobriety, although he began submitting UAs again in May 2015, but continued to have missed and positive UAs for marijuana. Respondent father continued to attend mental health treatment but is struggling to make progress. Respondent mother has not demonstrated sobriety and has not submitted a UA since January 2015. Respondent mother continues to have significant mental health issues and recently began

individual therapy with a therapist who comes into the home. The parents, however, continue to have supervised visits with Amy and Joseph two times a week. The visits go extremely well and the visitation supervisor reports that there is a strong reciprocal bond between the parents and children. Amy and Joseph have consistently told the caseworker and GAL that they would like to return home to their parents.

A diligent search has been completed and the only relatives identified as possible placement for the children are the maternal grandparents. The caseworker completed an Intensive Family Finding referral to locate all possible kin. The maternal grandparents already have guardianship of the parents' oldest child through a subsidized guardianship. They have made clear that, while desirous to take placement of Amy and Joseph, they simply do not have the financial means to do so and are struggling to meet daily needs as it is. It is also uncertain if they have a full understanding of Amy and Joseph's behaviors and mental health needs.

The permanency goal remains Return Home; however during a mapping the Division recommended that a concurrent permanency goal of Adoption Non-Relative be added.