

Adjudicatory and Disposition Report to Court

June 20, 2016

Case Summary

Samantha Stewart is a married, 35-year-old, Caucasian female. She has five biological children: Charles Stewart, age 10; Simon Stewart, age 7; Jessica and Kyle Stewart, age 5; and Courtney Stewart, age 3. Mrs. Stewart's husband and father of all 5 children is Solomon Stewart. Mr. Stewart is currently incarcerated for involuntary manslaughter and is scheduled to be released in November 2017.

Mrs. Stewart denies a history of child abuse or domestic violence. She denies the use of alcohol prior to her husband's incarceration. Mrs. Stewart is employed in the financial office of a local retailer. She receives public assistance, specifically SNAP, a housing subsidy and assistance with her heating bills.

The Stewart family first came to the attention of the Department on November 3, 2015, for a report of physical abuse. It was reported that both Jessica and Kyle Stewart were observed to have bluish bruises and welts on their arms and thighs as a result of their mother hitting them with a belt. This report was substantiated for physical abuse, and Mrs. Stewart agreed to voluntary in-home services.

A second report was received in the afternoon of April 6, 2016. Law enforcement called when Mrs. Stewart was arrested and jailed for driving while intoxicated with her children in the car. This was Mrs. Stewart's third offense and there was no one to care for the children. Ms. Stewart could not think of any relatives or friends for the children to stay with. The children were very upset that their mother was arrested.

The Department substantiated neglect and lack of supervision and took emergency custody of all five children. Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart were placed in foster care after determining the family friend specified in a previous safety plan was unable to provide care for them.

On April 7, 2016, the Court signed an ex parte order and granted emergency custody of the Stewart children to the Department. On April 8, 2016, the Department met with Ms. Stewart following her arraignment and release from jail. The Department met with Ms. Stewart on April 8, 2016, to develop an assessment plan. Concurrent permanency plans of reunification and adoption were established for all five children on May 6, 2016. The Department made contact with Mr. Solomon on April 25, 2016, in the Mock State Correctional Facility and informed him that his children were in the legal and physical custody of the Department. The Department learned from Samuel Burbank, Mr. Stewart's case manager at Mock State Correctional Facility, that Mr. Stewart has been a model prisoner, has participated in substances abuse services, and has been taking on-line educational courses.

Mrs. Stewart participated in a number of supervised visits with her five children at the Department offices. The visits had mixed success, and the Department arranged for a parenting assessment for Ms. Stewart. The Department also arranged for a substance abuse assessment for Ms. Stewart for June 3, 2016 and are awaiting the results.

In mid-May, with the help of Solomon Stewart, the Department was able to identify and locate a paternal great aunt whom they worked with to license as a foster parent.

On June 7, 2016, the Department placed all five children in the home of paternal great aunt Jill Francis and her husband, Logan Morris.

Reason(s) for Removal From Home: The children were removed on an emergency basis to ensure their safety. Mrs. Stewart was arrested and taken into custody for her third DUI offense. She was unable to execute her parental responsibilities. The children's father, Solomon Stewart, is currently in the Mock State Correctional Facility and unable to execute his parental responsibilities.

Children's Perception of Situation: Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart are sad at their removal and placement into foster care. They are aware of their mother's alcohol use. Charles feels responsible because he has been in the habit of taking care of his siblings when his mom is intoxicated. All four older children recognize and verbalize that their mother needs help. Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart want to be reunited with their mother.

Child(ren) Information

Physical Health

Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart are all in good general health. The children are up to date on their immunizations. Simon Stewart was diagnosed as farsighted and prescribed corrective lens on May 16, 2016. All of the other children have no unmet physical health, including vision and dental, needs at this time.

Mental/Behavioral Health

All children appear to be adjusting well to the new foster home.

Education

The placement change will require Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart to change schools this fall. The Department has already worked to ensure that records were transferred to Jackson Elementary. Simon Stewart has identified developmental delays in speech and language skills. Services through the school are currently in place and were recently reviewed at his review IEP meeting, which was held in March of this year.

Social/Emotional Development

Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart appear to be developmentally on target. Jessica, Kyle and Charles are outgoing and make friends easily. Simon is more reserved and shy. Courtney is close to her siblings and appears bonded with her relative foster parents.

Placement

Relative as Placement Resource

In mid-May, with the help of Solomon Stewart, the Department was able to identify and locate a paternal great aunt whom they worked with to license as a foster parent.

On June 7, 2015, the Department placed all five children in the home of paternal great aunt Jill Francis and her husband, Logan Morris.

Description of Current Placement

Placement Type and Description:

Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Charles, and Simon Stewart are placed in the licensed family foster home of their paternal great aunt Jill Francis and her husband, Logan Morris. The placement provides the least restrictive placement option. The foster care placement is considered stable.

Needs of Foster Parents:

The foster parents have been provided with known background information on Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Charles, and Simon Stewart. They have also been provided with Medicaid cards to secure health care services for the children and with the name of their primary health care provider. Foster parents will receive monthly foster care maintenance.

Visitation

Ms. Stewart visited with Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart the day following her release from jail. The Department met with Ms. Stewart to establish a supervised visitation plan that includes visits twice weekly for 2 hours at the Department office. Mr. Stewart is incarcerated, and no visitation plan was established at this time.

Safety and Risk Assessment

Safety threats include:

- No adult in the home is performing basic parenting duties and responsibilities that assure child safety.
- One or both parents/caregivers will not/cannot control their behavior.
- One or both parents/caregivers lack parenting knowledge, skills, or motivation necessary to assure a child's safety.

Risk level: High

Permanency Plan

Reunification and Adoption

Signatures		
Foster Care Worker: Sally Jordan	<i>Sally Jordan</i>	Date: 6/20/2016
Foster Care Supervisor: Robin White	<i>Robin White</i>	Date: 6/20/2016