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DISTRICT I

September 24, 2025

To:

Hon. Joseph R. Wall
Circuit Court Judge
Electronic Notice

Tammy Kruczynski
Juvenile Clerk
Milwaukee County Courthouse
Electronic Notice

Katie L. Gutowski
Electronic Notice

Christopher D. Sobic
Electronic Notice

A.C.

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective
Services
Charmian Klyve
635 North 26th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233-1803

Courtney L.A. Roelandts
Electronic Notice

You are hereby notified that the Court has entered the following opinion and order:

2024AP979-NM

In re the termination of parental rights to J.C.M.C., a person under
the age of 18: State of Wisconsin v. A.C. (L.C. # 2022TP187)

Before Donald, J.¹

**Summary disposition orders may not be cited in any court of this state as precedent or
authority, except for the limited purposes specified in WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(3).**

A.C. appeals from an order terminating her parental rights to her daughter, J.C.M.C.
A.C.'s appellate counsel filed a no-merit report pursuant to WIS. STAT. RULES 809.107(5m) and
809.32. A.C. received a copy of the report, was advised of her right to file a response, and has

¹ This appeal is decided by one judge pursuant to WIS. STAT. § 752.31(2)(e) (2023-24). All
references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version.

elected not to do so. Upon consideration of the report, and an independent review of the record as required by *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738 (1967), this court concludes there is no arguable merit to any issue that could be raised on appeal. Therefore, we summarily affirm the order.² WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

J.C.M.C. (“Jane”)³ was taken into protective custody in May 2021, after a domestic violence incident resulted in bruising and red marks to her body. At the time, she was seven months old and residing with her mother A.C. (“Amber”). Jane was subsequently found to be a child in need of protection or services.

In November 2022, the State petitioned to terminate Amber’s parental rights. Amber pled no contest to the allegation that Jane was a child in continuing need of protection or services. The circuit court accepted the plea and found Amber unfit. After a dispositional hearing, the court terminated her parental rights. This no-merit appeal follows.

The no-merit report addresses whether Amber’s plea was validly entered and had a factual basis. Before accepting a plea to a ground for termination, the circuit court is required to engage the parent in a personal colloquy in accordance with WIS. STAT. § 48.422(7). Additionally, the record must establish that the parent understands the constitutional rights given up by the plea. *Kenosha Cnty. DHS v. Jodie W.*, 2006 WI 93, ¶25, 293 Wis. 2d 530, 716 N.W.2d 845. The parent must also understand that acceptance of the plea will result in a finding

² The order also terminated the parental rights of J.C.M.C.’s father, who was found in default. Termination of the father’s parental rights is not the subject of this appeal.

³ We have assigned pseudonyms to the child and mother in this matter, both for ease of reading and to protect the confidentiality of the proceedings.

of unfitness. *Oneida Cnty. DSS v. Therese S.*, 2008 WI App 159, ¶¶10-11, 314 Wis. 2d 493, 762 N.W.2d 122. Here, the circuit court’s colloquy prior to the acceptance of Amber’s plea reflects that it satisfied these requirements.⁴ The court correctly determined that a factual basis existed based upon the evidence presented by the State.

The no-merit report also addresses whether the circuit court properly exercised its discretion at the dispositional hearing in terminating Amber’s parental rights. The court’s determination of whether to terminate parental rights is discretionary. *State v. Margaret H.*, 2000 WI 42, ¶27, 234 Wis. 2d 606, 610 N.W.2d 475. Under WIS. STAT. § 48.426(2), the “best interests of the child” is the prevailing standard, and the court is required to consider the factors delineated in § 48.426(3) in making this determination. *Margaret H.*, 234 Wis. 2d 606, ¶¶34-35. Again, the circuit court’s remarks reflect that it considered the appropriate factors. Those factors weighed in favor of a determination that it was in the best interests of Jane to terminate Amber’s parental rights.

Finally, the no-merit report addresses other issues, including (1) whether the circuit court adhered to mandatory time limits required by WIS. STAT. ch. 48; and (2) whether the termination of parental rights petition satisfied the requirements for content set forth in WIS. STAT. § 48.42(1). We agree with appellate counsel that these issues do not have arguable merit for appeal, and accordingly, we will not discuss them further.

⁴ The circuit court did not expressly establish whether a proposed adoptive resource for Jane had been identified; however, Jane’s foster parents had previously been identified as a proposed adoptive resource in the court report for termination of parental rights. Moreover, WIS. STAT. § 48.422(7) does not require the court to directly address this element with the parent in order for the parent’s admission to be valid.

Our independent review of the record does not disclose any potentially meritorious issue for appeal. Because we conclude that there would be no arguable merit to any issue that could be raised on appeal, we accept the no-merit report and relieve Attorney Christopher D. Sobic of further representation in this matter.

Upon the foregoing reasons,

IT IS ORDERED that the order is summarily affirmed. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Attorney Christopher D. Sobic is relieved of further representation of A.C. (“Amber”) in this matter. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.32(3).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this summary disposition order will not be published.

Samuel A. Christensen
Clerk of Court of Appeals