

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
NEWAYGO

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MARIANNE
DIRECTOR

COURT REPORT

CHILD'S NAME: Alyssa Keast
Amber Keast

DATE OF BIRTH: 1/22/2000
8/18/2002

CASEWORKER: Kathy Sholty/Lacey Gonzalez-
Borstler

DATE: August 29, 2005

PROGRESS TO DATE

On 7/29/05 the caseworker was transferred from Kathy Sholty to Lacey Gonzalez-Borstler.

During this report period Alyssa and Amber were removed from their maternal grandparents care on June 25, 2005. On June 22, 2005 the grandparents were informed on the agency's intent to remove the children. A CPS referral was made against the grandparents for physical abuse. This case was not substantiated, however more information was obtained regarding the appropriateness of the grand parents. Tim Atwood Sr. admitted to smoking marijuana with his daughter, Erica sometime before the children were removed, but new information states that he recently asked her to smoke marijuana with him. He also reportedly smokes marijuana on a daily basis and hides it in the barn on the family property. Additional information indicated that Mr. and Mrs. Atwood did not follow the case plan by permitting Erica Keast to take the children on an unsupervised and unapproved visit. Mrs. Keast ended up taking the children over to her boyfriends, Richard Wingfield's home and the children were not supposed to have any contact with him. On 6/23/05 a homestudy was conducted on Tim Atwood Jr. and his wife as an alternative placement for the children. The homestudy was approved and the children were placed there on 6/25/05. On 6/30/05 Tim Atwood Jr. called the agency and requested that the children be removed due to them being undisciplined and their inability of being able to control them. On 7/01/05 the children were placed in foster care.

The behavior of Alyssa and Amber has been unstable. They both have concerning behavioral and emotional issues. Both girls have a difficult time listening to authority figures, following directions, they often fight/argue with each other, and have no fear of strangers. The foster parent has been working on redirecting the girl's behavior and getting them stabilized. In addition Alyssa and Amber have been referred to Community Mental Health for case management.

To date Erica Keast has been cooperative and does express a sincere willingness to do what is necessary to get her children placed back in her home. To date she has remained clean on all of

her random drug tests. Mrs. Keast has also been attending counseling with Joyce Dykstra from Arbor Circle/PROST. In addition she just began services with Parents as Teachers. Despite Mrs. Keast's efforts there are still many concerns regarding reunification. One of these concerns is in regards to Erica's emotional stability. Although she appears to have shown stability thus far she has a long history of depression and poor coping skills. Parenting is also a concern as Erica lacks follow through in disciplining the children. Based on the girl's behavior it seems apparent that Erica has not provided them with a consistent and stable environment. Another area of concern is substance abuse. The children were removed from her care due to a drug raid in the home where she resides with her boyfriend Richard Wingfield. Mrs. Keast also admits to a long history of substance abuse.

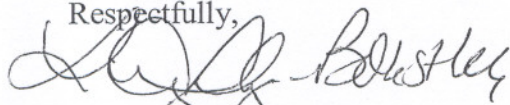
Mr. Wingfield is also participating in reunification services. He is getting drug tested randomly and is in counseling with Emily Eisen from Arbor Circle/PROST. Initially parenting time visits were reserved for just Erica and the children. However, during this report period Erica has moved back in with Mr. Wingfield and has made it clear that she intends to stay in a relationship with him. Mr. Wingfield is now attending weekly-supervised visits with Erica. Neither Erica nor Richard is employed. Erica has been diagnosed with MS and has applied for disability but was denied. She is appealing this decision. Currently Erica is on Medicaid and receives food assistance. Mr. Wingfield receives cash assistance. The support of the children is another concern as well as the condition of the home. Mr. Wingfield has applied for emergency assistance several times through the agency with regards to home repairs. Mr. Wingfield submitted two estimates from local contractors. Both contractors reported to the DHS worker that the home was not in livable condition and that the repairs would not be worth doing. One of the contractors told the worker that they did not think the home would pass an inspection (not up to code). The home has one bedroom that is livable. There are holes in the floor of the spare bedroom. Recently Mr. Wingfield reported that he replaced the sliding glass door to the home that was broken during the drug raid. There had been plastic in place of the glass. This worker has provided Mrs. Keast with a list of available rentals, apartment complexes and information on subsidized housing, however it is not known if she will utilize these resources.

During this report period this worker located Alyssa's biological father Douglas Keast. Mr. Keast is currently residing in the Upper Peninsula. He informed this worker that he would not be able to attend the August 31st court hearing due to lack of transportation. However, he stated that he is interested in reunification services with his daughter. Mr. Keast also indicated that he was not in a position to care for his daughter at the present time. The agency also conducted a criminal background check. The check indicated that there was presently a warrant for his arrest for failure to appear regarding child support. In addition to the background check this worker learned that Mr. Keast is presently on felony probation for third offense OUIL. He is presently considered an absconder from his probation for failure to report to his probation officer. This worker has sent a copy of the initial petition as well as hearing notices and also advised Mr. Keast to contact the court so that he can be appointed an attorney.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Alyssa and Amber Keast remain temporary court wards under supervision of the Newaygo County DHS and remain in their present placement. It is also recommended that Erica Keast and Richard Wingfield continue to comply with the Parent-Agency Treatment Plan and continue to work on the above listed concerns.

Respectfully,



Lacey Gonzalez-Borstler
Foster Care Worker
Newaygo County DHS