

IN THE OHIO COURT OF APPEALS
FIFTH APPELLATE DISTRICT
LICKING COUNTY, OHIO

IN RE: P.L.

Case No. 2026 CA 0030

Opinion and Judgment Entry

Appeal from the Licking County Court of
Common Pleas, Juvenile Division, Case No.
C2025-0250

Judgment: Affirmed

Date of Judgment Entry: September 14, 2026

BEFORE: William B. Hoffman; Robert G. Montgomery; Kevin W. Popham, Judges

APPEARANCES: Jenny Wells, Licking County Prosecuting Attorney, Kenneth Oswalt, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, for Plaintiff-Appellee; Christopher L. Trolinger, for B.L. and J.L. for Appellants-Parents; J.R. Stremski, for Advocate for Children; Laurie R. Wells, Guardian ad Litem.

Hoffman, P.J.

{¶1} Appellants B.L. and J.L. (“Mother” and “Father,” individually; “Parents,” collectively) appeal the March 20, 2026 Opinion/Judgment Entry entered by the Licking County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile Division, which overruled, in part, and granted, in part, their objections to the magistrate’s October 27, 2025 and December 16, 2025 decisions; approved and adopted the magistrate’s October 27, 2025 decision with modification; approved and adopted the magistrate’s December 16, 2025 decision; and granted temporary

custody of their minor child (“the Child”) to appellee Licking County Job and Family Services (“LCJFS” or “the Agency”).

STATEMENT OF THE FACTS AND CASE

{¶2} Mother and Father are the biological parents of the Child and three older siblings, B.L., S.L., and M.L. LCJFS became involved with the family in February, 2023, due to concerns about Parents’ substance abuse, their illegal activity, the lack of parental supervision, and significant safety issues. LCJFS filed complaints alleging S.L. and M.L. were dependent. In January, 2024, LCJFS filed motions for permanent custody as Parents had failed to make progress on their case plans. The permanent custody hearing was conducted in March, 2025, and July, 2025.¹ Mother became pregnant with the Child while those cases were pending and gave birth to the Child within days of the conclusion of the permanent custody hearing.

{¶3} LCJFS became involved with the family relative to the Child on July 31, 2025, after an LCJFS caseworker conducted a scheduled home visit and discovered the Child had been born. Parents refused to let the caseworker have access to the Child’s room. Both Mother and Father submitted to drug screens. Mother tested positive for suboxone, for which she did not have a valid prescription. Father tested negative for all substances. On August 6, 2025, LCJFS filed a complaint, alleging the Child was dependent and requesting the Child remain in the custody of Parents with a protective supervision order or, in the alternative, placed in emergency shelter care and temporary custody of the Agency. Following a hearing on August 8, 2025, the trial court granted LCJFS emergency shelter care custody of the Child. The Child was placed in kinship placement with Paternal Grandfather.

¹ The trial court ultimately terminated Parents’ parental rights and granted permanent custody of S.L. and M.L. to LCJFS. This Court recently affirmed the trial court’s decision. See, *In re S.L.*, 2026-Ohio-1814 (5th Dist.), and *In re M.L.*, 2026-Ohio-1815 (5th Dist.).

{¶4} The magistrate conducted a contested adjudicatory hearing on October 20, 2025, and found the Child to be dependent. The magistrate based her finding on the fact “the child [was] residing in a household in which a parent, guardian, custodian, or other member of the household committed an act that was the basis for an adjudication that a sibling of the child or any other child who resides in the household is an abused, neglected, or dependent child, and because of the circumstances surround the abuse, neglect, or dependency of the sibling or other child and the conditions in the household of the child, the child is in danger of being abused or neglected by that parent, guardian, custodian, or member of the household.” October 27, 2025 Judgment Entry and Magistrate’s Decision at p. 1. Upon the request of Attorney Christopher Signil, counsel for Parents, the magistrate bifurcated the dispositional hearing and continued the hearing until December 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

{¶5} On December 9, 2025, prior to the commencement of the dispositional hearing, Attorney Signil notified the Clerk’s Office he was running approximately 15 minutes late. The magistrate delayed the hearing for 74 minutes to allow Attorney Signil to arrive. Due to time constraints in the case and the court’s docket, the magistrate commenced the hearing at 11:14 a.m. Attorney Signil arrived at 11:24 a.m. At the onset of the hearing, LCJFS advised the magistrate the Agency intended to proceed on the dispositional prayer set forth in the complaint and requested the Child be placed in the temporary custody of LCJFS. Via Magistrate’s Decision and Judgment Entry filed December 16, 2025, the magistrate recommended the Child be placed in the temporary custody of LCJFS.

{¶6} Parents filed initial objections to the magistrate’s October 27, 2025, and December 16, 2025 decisions. The trial court granted Parents’ request for copies of the trial exhibits and transcripts of the October 20, 2025 adjudicatory hearing, and December 9, 2025

dispositional hearing. Parents filed supplemental objections on February 11, 2026. LCJFS filed a timely response thereto.

{¶7} Via Opinion/Judgment Entry filed March 20, 2026, the trial court sustained Parents' objection to the magistrate's adjudication of the Child as dependent pursuant to R.C. 2151.04(C), but overruled the remaining objections. The trial court approved and adopted the magistrate's October 27, 2025 Judgment Entry and Magistrate's Decision, with modification to reflect the Child was dependent pursuant to R.C. 2151.04(D). The trial court also approved and adopted the magistrate's December 16, 2025 decision. The trial court concluded it was in the Child's best interest to be placed in the temporary custody of LCJFS.

{¶8} It is from this judgment entry Parents appeal, raising the following assignments of error:

I. FIRST ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR: THE TRIAL COURT'S ADJUDICATION OF THE MINOR CHILD AS DEPENDENT PURSUANT [TO] R.C. 2151.04(D)(2) IS AGAINST THE MANIFEST WEIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE.

II. SECOND ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR: THE TRIAL COURT ERRED IN GIVING WEIGHT TO THE DRUG TEST RESULTS GIVEN THE TOTALITY OF THE FACTS AS SUCH WAS AGAINST THE MANIFEST WEIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE.

III. THIRD ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR: THE TRIAL COURT ERRED AND ACTED CONTRARY TO LAW BY PROCEEDING WITHOUT APPELLANTS' COUNSEL PRESENT DURING THE

DISPOSITION HEARING DESPITE THE OBJECTION OF THE APPELLANTS AND REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE AS SUCH WAS A DENIAL OF THEIR RIGHT TO COUNSEL AND SUCH WAS PREJUDICIAL TO APPELLANTS.

IV. FOURTH ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR: THE TRIAL COURT ERRED [AND] ABUSED ITS DISCRETION IN GRANTING THE AGENCY TEMPORARY CUSTODY OF THE MINOR CHILD INSTEAD OF PROTECTIVE SUPERVISION AS SUCH WAS NOT THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE MEANS OF PROTECTING THE MINOR CHILD.

V. FIFTH ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR: THE TRIAL COURT ERRED IN FINDING THAT THE AGENCY HAD MADE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE THE CONTINUED REMOVAL OF P.L. AND/OR MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO RETURN HOME AS TO ADJUDICATION AND DISPOSITION.

I

{¶9} In their first assignment of error, Parents assert the juvenile court's adjudication of the Child as dependent pursuant to R.C. 2151.04(D)(2) was against the manifest weight of the evidence.

{¶10} A juvenile court's adjudication of a child as abused, neglected, or dependent must be supported by clear and convincing evidence. R.C. 2151.35(A). "Clear and convincing evidence is that which produces in the mind of the trier of facts a firm belief or conviction as to the facts sought to be established." (Citations omitted.) *In re Alexander C.*, 2005-Ohio-6134,

¶ 7 (6th Dist.). “When an appellate court reviews a trial court's adjudication to determine whether the judgment is supported by clear and convincing evidence, the reviewing court must determine whether the trier of facts had sufficient evidence before it to satisfy the requisite degree of proof.” (Citations and internal quotations omitted.) *Id.* That is, we conduct a manifest-weight review to determine whether the Agency sustained its burden of producing clear and convincing evidence of dependency as defined by R.C. 2151.04. *In re C.T.*, 2018-Ohio-3823, ¶ 53 (6th Dist.). An appellate court will not reverse a juvenile court's adjudication where competent and credible evidence supports the findings of fact and conclusions of law. *In re Alexander C.*, *supra* at ¶ 7.

{¶11} The juvenile court found the Child was dependent pursuant to R.C. 2151.04(D), which provides:

As used in this chapter, “dependent child” means any child:

* * *

(D) To whom both of the following apply:

(1) The child is residing in a household in which a parent, guardian, custodian, or other member of the household committed an act that was the basis for an adjudication that a sibling of the child or any other child who resides in the household is an abused, neglected, or dependent child.

(2) Because of the circumstances surrounding the abuse, neglect, or dependency of the sibling or other child and the other conditions in the household of the child, the child is in danger of being abused or neglected by that parent, guardian, custodian, or member of the household.

{¶12} Parents concede the Agency satisfied R.C. 2151.04(D)(1) as the Child “was residing in a household in which a parent, guardian, custodian, or other member of the household committed an act that was the basis for an adjudication that a sibling of the child or any other child who resides in the household is an abused, neglected, or dependent child.” However, Parents contend LCJFS failed to satisfy R.C. 2151.04(D)(2) as the Agency failed to establish the Child was at risk of being an abused or neglected child.

{¶13} In support of their contention, Parents explain they had not had visitation or contact with the older siblings, who were adjudicated dependent on April 21, 2023, since September, 2023, and since that time:

Mother received mental health treatment. Father and Mother received drug treatment. Appellants were successfully engaging in probation services related to their previous criminal convictions. Appellants were gainfully employed. The Appellants maintained a clean and appropriate home and environment. Father was engaged in suboxone treatment pursuant to his provider. Mother gave birth to [the Child] without any complications or drugs reported in either Mother or [the Child]. All drug screens have resulted in negative drug screens.

Brief of Appellants at pp. 8-9.

{¶14} The case plan adopted in the matter involving S.L. and M.L. required Parents to, inter alia, participate in and complete drug and alcohol treatment programs; produce negative drug screens; participate in mental health assessments and recommended

counseling; complete a parent education program and demonstrate appropriate parenting practices; address safety issues affecting the children (including reports of truancy and hygiene issues, suicidal ideations, and possible cognitive delays); demonstrate sober lifestyles in order to provide stability to the children; and demonstrate income stability. The juvenile court found, and this Court agreed, “Parents failed to make sufficient progress towards remedying the issues that led to the children's removal.” *In re: S.L.*, 2026-Ohio-1814 at ¶ 19; *In re: M.L.*, 2026-Ohio-1815 at ¶ 19. The Child was born prior to the juvenile court’s final disposition in the sibling cases. The Agency’s concerns remained at the time of the Child’s birth and thereafter.

{¶15} At the adjudicatory hearing in the instant action, Mother still refused to acknowledge her drug use. Mother had not engaged with a mental health counselor despite having been subject to an involuntarily emergency hospitalization due to mental health issues in December, 2024. The Guardian ad Litem questioned Father’s ability to be a stable parent given his significant criminal record and history of incarceration.

{¶16} “[R.C.] 2151.04(D) allows the trial court to make a determination a child is dependent before any actual harm is suffered by the child as a result of previous acts by the parents and contemporaneous conditions.” (Citations omitted.) *In re V.S.*, 2017-Ohio-9136, ¶ 12 (9th Dist.). “In other words, the law does not require the juvenile court to experiment with the health and safety of a newborn baby where the state can show by clear and convincing evidence, that placing the child in such an environment would be threatening to the health and safety of that child.” (Internal quotations and citations omitted.) *Id.*

{¶17} Upon review of the transcript of the adjudicatory hearing, we find the same “circumstances surrounding the abuse, neglect, or dependency of the sibling * * * [remain

and] the child is in danger of being abused or neglected by that parent, guardian, custodian, or member of the household.” R.C. 2151.04(D)(2).

{¶18} Parents’ first assignment of error is overruled.

II

{¶19} In their second assignment of error, Parents submit the trial court’s finding and reliance upon Mother’s alleged positive drug test was against the manifest weight of the evidence and should not have been given significant weight. Specifically, Parents contend the trial court, at best, could find a drug test, which was purported to be Mother’s July 31, 2025 drug test, showed the presence of suboxone and the record does not support any additional finding. We disagree.

{¶20} When considering a manifest weight of the evidence challenge, as an appellate court, our role is to determine whether there is relevant, competent and credible evidence upon which the fact finder could base its judgment. *Cross Truck Equipment Co. v. Jeffries*, 1982 Ohio App. LEXIS 15233, 1982 WL 2911 (5th Dist. Feb. 10, 1982). Accordingly, judgments supported by some competent, credible evidence going to all the essential elements of the case will not be reversed as being against the manifest weight of the evidence. *C.E. Morris Co. v. Foley Constr.*, 54 Ohio St.2d 279 (1978).

{¶21} At the adjudicatory hearing, LCJFS supervisor Mary-Ellen Greenwaldt testified Mother’s July 31, 2025 drug screen tested positive for suboxone. Greenwaldt stated Mother did not have a prescription for suboxone at the time.

{¶22} Bridget Lemberg, a lab director and toxicologist at Forensic Fluid Laboratories (“the Lab”), also testified at the adjudicatory hearing. Lemberg detailed the Lab’s procedures when conducting a drug screen analysis as well as the Lab’s compliance with federal

regulations. Lemberg stated, to her knowledge, all LCJFS caseworkers have been trained by the Lab on the collection of samples for drug screens. Lemberg explained, when a sample arrives at the Lab, the specimen processor confirms the sample is sealed and there are no indications of tampering. The specimen processor reviews the accompanying paperwork and the chain of custody. Lemberg also testified regarding the Lab's procedure for eliminating false positive samples through the use of scientifically accurate instruments. With respect to Mother's July 31, 2025 drug screen, Lemberg confirmed there was no evidence of tampering and there was no reason to believe Mother's specimen had been switched with another individual's specimen.

{¶23} The trial court agreed with the magistrate's finding Mother tested positive for suboxone and found such finding was supported by the information and evidence presented at the hearings as well as the exhibits entered into evidence. Upon review of the record, we find the trial court's finding Mother tested positive for suboxone was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

{¶24} Parents' second assignment of error is overruled.

III

{¶25} In their third assignment of error, Parents argue the trial court erred and acted contrary to law in proceeding with the dispositional hearing without counsel for Parents being present in violation of their due process rights and Juv.R. 4(A).

{¶26} Juv.R. 4(A) reads:

(A) Assistance of counsel. Every party shall have the right to be represented by counsel and every child, parent, * * * the right to appointed

counsel if indigent. These rights shall arise when a person becomes a party to a juvenile court proceeding. This rule shall not be construed to provide for a right to appointed counsel in cases in which that right is not otherwise provided for by constitution or statute.

{¶27} The right to counsel provided in Juv.R. 4(A) arises from R.C. 2151.352, which provides a parent “is entitled to representation by legal counsel at all stages of the proceedings under this chapter or Chapter 2152 of the Revised Code.”

{¶28} In determining whether a trial court violated a child or a parent’s right to counsel pursuant to R.C. 2151.352 or Juv.R. 4(A), “[t]he ultimate issue, however, is whether the violation of the right to counsel resulted in prejudice to the children or the parents” *In re Joshua B.*, 2003 Ohio 3096, ¶ 12 (6th Dist.). Upon review of the record, we find Parents were not prejudiced by the magistrate commencing the dispositional hearing prior to the arrival of their attorney.

{¶29} At the October 20, 2025 adjudicatory hearing, Attorney Signil, counsel for Parents, requested bifurcation of the dispositional hearing. The dispositional hearing was scheduled for December 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., with the date and time agreed upon by the parties and counsel. Prior to the commencement of the dispositional hearing on December 9, 2025, Attorney Signil notified the Clerk’s Office he was running approximately 15 minutes late. The magistrate delayed the hearing for 74 minutes to allow Attorney Signil time to appear. However, due to time constraints and the court’s docket, the magistrate commenced the hearing at 11:14 a.m. Attorney Signil arrived at 11:24 a.m.

{¶30} LCJFS called ongoing caseworker Melanie Cox as its sole witness. Prior to Attorney Signil's arrival, Cox testified regarding LCJFS's history with the family. Cox provided a brief summary of the concerns which led to the Agency's involvement. She explained the disposition of the older siblings' case, noting one child was placed in a planned permanent living arrangement and the Agency received permanent custody of the other two siblings. Cox also detailed Parents' case plan regarding the other sibling and the Agency's ongoing concerns with Mother's mental health and Father's criminal history.

{¶31} We find the limited testimony Melanie Cox gave prior to the arrival of Attorney Signil did not result in prejudice to Parents.

{¶32} Parents' third assignment of error is overruled.

IV

{¶33} In their fourth assignment of error, Parents maintain the juvenile court erred and abused its discretion in granting temporary custody of the Child to LCJFS rather than placing the Child in protective supervision.

{¶34} Legal custody is significantly different from the termination of parental rights in that, despite losing legal custody of a child, the parent of the child retains residual parental rights, privileges, and responsibilities. *In re G.M.*, 2011-Ohio-4090, ¶ 14 (8th Dist.), citing R.C. 2151.353(A)(3)(c). In such a case, a parent's right to regain custody is not permanently foreclosed. *In re M.J.M.*, 2010-Ohio-1674, ¶ 12 (8th Dist.). For this reason, the standard the trial court uses in making its determination is the less restrictive "preponderance of the evidence." *Id.* at ¶ 9, citing *In re Nice*, 141 Ohio App.3d 445, 455 (7th Dist. 2001). "Preponderance of the evidence" means evidence which is more probable, more persuasive, or of greater probative value. *In re C.V.M.*, 2012-Ohio-5514, ¶ 7 (8th Dist.).

{¶35} “Following an adjudication of neglect, dependency, or abuse, the juvenile court's determination of whether to place a child in the legal custody of a parent or a relative is based solely on the best interest of the child.” *In re K.H.*, 2016-Ohio-1330, ¶ 12 (9th Dist.). Although the statutory scheme regarding an award of legal custody does not include a specific test or set of criteria, Ohio courts agree a juvenile court must base its decision to award legal custody on the best interest of the child. (Citation omitted.) *In re B.B.*, 2016-Ohio-7994, ¶ 18 (9th Dist.). The juvenile court is guided by the best interest factors enumerated in R.C. 2151.414(D) relating to permanent custody. (Citation omitted.) *In re B.G.*, 2008-Ohio-5003, ¶ 9 (8th Dist.).

{¶36} A trial court has broad discretion in proceedings involving the care and custody of children. *Hobbs v. Mullen (In re Mullen)*, 2011-Ohio-3361, ¶ 14. Accordingly, we review a juvenile court's decision to grant legal custody under an abuse-of-discretion standard. *In re H.J.H.*, 2019-Ohio-116, ¶ 3 (1st Dist.). An abuse of discretion connotes more than an error of law or judgment; rather, it implies the trial court's decision was unreasonable, arbitrary, or unconscionable. *Blakemore v. Blakemore*, 5 Ohio St.3d 217, 219, (1983). A juvenile court's decision regarding a child's best interest in a legal custody proceeding is not unreasonable if it is supported by competent, credible evidence. *In re A.W.*, 2015-Ohio-489, ¶ 10 (1st Dist.).

{¶37} At the dispositional hearing, LCJFS caseworker Melanie Cox testified it was in the Child's best interest to remain in the temporary custody of the Agency. Cox expressed concerns the Child was vulnerable due to his age and his inability to protect himself.

{¶38} On cross-examination, Cox acknowledged her original recommendation regarding placement had changed, explaining Parents “continue to minimize the things that have happened in the past as it relates to substance abuse and the other previous concerns that

would affect [the Child].” Transcript of December 9, 2025 Disposition Hearing at p. 25. When asked, “if the [older siblings] haven’t been in [Parents’] care since Twenty Twenty-Three, where are you getting the conclusion that the child would be -- that there would be harm to the child in their care today?,” the caseworker again responded, “Because of the previous concerns of the parents that happened in the prior case.” *Id.*

{¶39} On re-direct examination, Cox noted Parents’ current case plan with the Child was substantially similar to their case plan for the older siblings and part of the reason for the ruling on permanent custody was “the incomplete nature of [Parents’] progress on their case plan objectives in that case.” *Id.* at p. 26. Cox agreed “the same concerns persist now with a more vulnerable child.” *Id.*

{¶40} Laurie Wells, the Guardian ad Litem, testified in Parents’ case-in-chief. Counsel for Parents asked, “So, the basis for your recommendation in this case is based upon [Mother] not admitting to things that may have happened in the past, is that correct?” *Id.* at p. 39. Wells answered:

No. * * * my basis for my recommendation is the last * * * two years of constant conflict and failure to make good choices by both of these parents. * *
* I have never had any reason to believe that they would make good choices for their children. * * * The issues that I still continue to have are that either [Mother] has a drug problem which she does deny or she has a mental health problem such that she does not know what’s happening to her and she begins to act like she’s on drugs. * * * So, either she’s so mentally ill that she doesn’t

know what she's doing and poses a risk to the child or she uses drugs and doesn't know what she's doing but she denies that.

{¶41} *Id.* at pp. 39-40.

{¶42} Counsel for Parents commented, "So everything you're referencing is from at least a year ago?" *Id.* at p. 40. Wells replied, "Yes and that's not enough time for me." *Id.*

{¶43} The juvenile court evaluated the evidence and found:

The Magistrate heard testimony from Agency Supervisor Greenwaldt and Caseworker Cox, as well as from the Guardian ad Litem, regarding continuing concerns that Father is not a stable parent due to his lengthy criminal history, incarcerations, and substance abuse. There are also ongoing concerns that Mother has unresolved mental health issues and/or ongoing substance abuse issues that have never been addressed, including an admission to a mental health facility in 2024 that she never reported to the Agency or Guardian ad Litem.

Mother denied ever abusing substances; however, numerous positive drug screens contradict her assertions. Furthermore, there are concerns regarding parents' unwillingness to be truthful and forthcoming with the Agency. The parents have been reluctant to provide the Agency with information regarding their income and housing, making it difficult to verify the legitimacy and stability of either.

Moreover, the parents were not truthful or forthcoming with the Agency regarding the birth of [the Child]. Communication between the parents and the Agency has also been inconsistent, which has resulted in important information not being discovered until later.

Finally, there is concern that the parents' older children, [the Child's] siblings, have been adjudicated dependent children, with recent permanent custody of those children granted to the Agency during the pendency of this case. Those cases were still ongoing when [the Child] was removed from the home, and the concerns that led to the removal of the older children are very similar to those that led to the removal of [the Child].

{¶44} March 20, 2026 Opinion/Judgment Entry at p. 12.

{¶45} Based upon the foregoing, we find the trial court's decision awarding LCJFS temporary custody of the Child was in the Child's best interest and supported by sufficient clear and convincing evidence.

{¶46} Parents' fourth assignment of error is overruled.

V

{¶47} In their final assignment of error, Parents challenge the trial court's finding LCJFS made reasonable efforts to eliminate the continued removal of the Child and/or made it possible for the Child to return to Parents' home.

{¶48} The Ohio Revised Code imposes a duty on the part of children services agencies to make reasonable efforts to reunite parents with their children where the agency has removed the children from the home. R.C. 2151.419. "Case plans are the tools that child

protective service agencies use to facilitate the reunification of families who * * * have been temporarily separated.” (Citation omitted.) *In re Z.G.A.A.*, 2024-Ohio-326, ¶ 48 (5th Dist.). To that, case plans establish individualized concerns and goals, along with the steps the parties and the agency can take to achieve reunification. (Citation omitted.) *Id.*

{¶49} What constitutes “reasonable efforts” requires consideration of the nature of a case plan and varies with the circumstances. *In re S.M.*, 2015-Ohio-2318, ¶ 31 (12th Dist.). “In determining whether the agency made reasonable efforts [pursuant to R.C. 2151.419(A)(1)] to prevent the removal of the child from the home, the issue is not whether the agency could have done more, but whether it did enough to satisfy the reasonableness standard under the statute.” *In re Lewis*, 2003-Ohio-5262, ¶ 16 (4th Dist.). “‘Reasonable efforts’ does not mean all available efforts. *Id.* A “reasonable effort” is “* * * an honest, purposeful effort, free of malice and the design to defraud or to seek an unconscionable “advantage.” *In re Weaver*, 79 Ohio App.3d 59, 63 (12th Dist. 1992).

{¶50} Parents assert “[t]he only efforts that the agency made was to remove the child and maintain said removal.” Brief of Appellants at p. 18. We find the record belies this assertion.

{¶51} In its March 20, 2026 Opinion/Judgment Entry, the trial court found:

Upon review, the Magistrate properly concluded that clear and convincing evidence was presented, pursuant to R.C. 2152.419, that the Agency has made reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of [the Child] from his home, to eliminate the continued removal, and to make it possible for the child to return safely home. The Agency’s reasonable efforts include, but are

not limited to: a case plan was created; case plan services were offered in both the siblings['] cases and this case; drug screens were offered and facilitated; home visits were conducted; criminal and Agency records were obtained and reviewed; income and housing information was requested; releases were sought; mental health and substance abuse treatment was monitored; and kinship placements were investigated.

{¶52} *Id.* at pp. 10-11.

{¶53} Upon review of the record, we find LCJFS's case planning and efforts were reasonable and diligent under the circumstances of this case and the trial court did not err in reaching this conclusion.

{¶54} Parents' fifth assignment of error is overruled.

{¶55} The judgment of the Licking County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile Division, is affirmed.

{¶56} Costs to Appellants.

By: Hoffman, P.J.

Montgomery, J. and

Popham J. concur.