**GUARDIAN *ad Litem* REPORT TO COURT**

**CASA KANE COUNTY**

**CASE NUMBER(S)**: 16 JA-49/50 **TEMPORARY CUSTODY DATE**: 01/25/2016

**ADJUDICATION DATE**: 04/21/2016

**HEARING DATE**: 05/13/2016

**PURPOSE OF HEARING**: Disposition

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

DOB AGE

Demarcus Anderson 05/26/2010 6

Samantha Winters 01/08/2015 16 months

**INTERVIEWED:**

Lisa B. Paternal Grandmother of Demarcus Anderson, Foster Mother of Demarcus Anderson and Samantha Winters

Brenda Cline Mother of Demarcus Anderson and Samantha Winters

Annie Porter Daycare Provider for Samantha Winters

Tammy Richmond LSSI Caseworker

Samuel Winters Legal Father of Samantha Winters

Grace Zolotar Kindergarten Teacher for Demarcus Anderson

**REPORTS and MATERIALS REVIEWED:**

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| **DATE OF REPORT / TITLE** |
| 01/22/2016– Carpentersville Police Department Incident Report |
| 01/25/2016 - Petitions for Adjudication |
| 04/22/2016 - Adjudicatory Orders |

**DATES OF CHILD VISITS:**

Demarcus Anderson 01/30/2016, 02/13/2016, 02/24/2016, 03/12/2016; in-person

04/16/2016; virtual

Samantha Winters 01/30/2016, 02/13/2016, 03/10/2016, 03/12/2016; in-person

04/16/2016; virtual

**ICWA:** This case does or does not have Indian Child Welfare Act involvement.

**CASE HISTORY:**

On January 22, 2016, Officer T. S. Riley (Badge Number 615) of the Carpentersville Police Department, while responding to a 911 call regarding loud screaming from an apartment at 27 Oxford Drive in Carpentersville, Illinois, found Brenda Cline and Samuel Winters engaged in a domestic altercation. Brenda Cline was holding their one-year-old daughter, Samantha, and Officer Riley observed injuries on Samantha's upper back. The injuries consisted of four linear marks approximately 2 inches long and 1/2 to 3/4 inches in diameter. Neither parent was able to present an explanation of the injuries, so Officer Riley made a hotline call. A Department of Children and Family Services investigator was dispatched and removed Samantha Winters and her half-brother, Demarcus Anderson, from the home.

On January 25, 2016, the Temporary Custody Hearing was held and DCFS was given temporary custody of the two children, who were placed in foster care with Demarcus Anderson's paternal grandmother.

**FOSTER PLACEMENT HISTORY:**

Demarcus Anderson Lisa B. Relative-Paternal Grandmother 01/25/2016 to Present

Samantha Winters Lisa B. Fictive Kin 01/25/2016 to Present

**FINDINGS R ELATED TO THE CHILD:**

**Demarcus Anderson (Age 6)**

**Child Description and Developmental Observations**

Demarcus is a bright and active boy who is likes to watch television, play with Legos, and play outdoors. According to his Foster Mother and Paternal Grandmother, Lisa, B., he shows care and concern for his half-sister, Samantha Winter. CASA/GAL observed no developmental issues during any of her five visits with Demarcus.

**Placement/Living Situation**

Demarcus resides with Samantha in the home of Lisa B. On January 30, 2016, CASA/GAL observed that Demarcus does not have a bed in the home. Lisa B. reported that Demarcus sleeps either in bed with her or on the couch. CASA/GAL spoke with Tammy Richmond, the LSSI caseworker, about this and Ms. Richmond responded that she would address this situation in the near future. On April 16, 2016, CASA/GAL observed that Demarcus was still without a bed.

Lisa B. stated to CASA/GAL that she was committed to keeping Demarcus as long as necessary but did report that Demarcus exhibited some problematic behaviors. She shared that Demarcus does not always respond appropriately to her requests and that he can be bossy and demanding. CASA/GAL has observed Demarcus yelling “no” at Lisa B. when asked to put his dishes in the sink and again when asked to turn off the TV. Demarcus asked Lisa B. about watching an R-rated horror movie, and when she replied that he couldn’t, he stomped the floor repeatedly.

According to Lisa B., Demarcus has had some nightmares since coming to live with her, but Demarcus was unable to tell her about the content of those nightmares.

During two visits it was observed by CASA/GAL that Demarcus appeared to be a caring older brother to Samantha. CASA/GAL observed him hug and kiss her and do things to make her laugh. He also told CASA/GAL stories about Samantha during each visit. CASA/GAL observed one instance of Demarcus grabbing Samantha’s foot and causing her to cry. Additionally, it was observed that Demarcus took Samantha's stuffed animal away twice, even after Lisa B. scolded him and asked him to stop. Lisa B. told CASA/GAL that she thinks this is just normal sibling behavior and does not consider it a serious issue in the home.

**Daycare/School**

Lisa B. told CASA/GAL that Demarcus was doing well in his new kindergarten class at Parkview Elementary School. She said that he was learning to read and worked hard on his homework each night. Lisa B. also reported that she had received two phone calls from Demarcus' teacher regarding his aggressive behaviors. CASA/GAL has no further information about the two phone calls.

On February 24, 2016, CASA/GAL observed Demarcus in his classroom and saw that he listened well to the teacher and seemed engaged, working on a math activity. When he realized CASA/GAL was present at the back of the room, he proudly showed CASA/GAL around his classroom and shared a paper on which he had received a gold star. At snack time, CASA/GAL observed Demarcus push a couple of students in a rush to be first in line and, as a result, his name was written on the board for inappropriate behavior. When CASA/GAL asked Demarcus who his friends were, he did not point to or name any specific students. CASA/GAL spoke briefly with Demarcus’ teacher, Ms. Grace Zolotar, regarding setting up a future appointment to talk about his academic progress and social interactions.

**Medical and Health**

On January 30, 2016, Lisa B. informed CASA/GAL that Demarcus was current with his immunizations and dental exams. He is currently in good health and has no medical issues.

**Services**

No services have been recommended for Demarcus.

**Visitation**

CASA/GAL learned from Ms. Richmond that Levar Anderson, Legal Father, father has a history of criminal activity, so his visits are supervised by Ms. Richmond at the agency office in Elgin, Illinois. The visits are scheduled weekly, and so far, Mr. Anderson has attended ten out of a possible twelve visits. Mother, Brenda Cline, has attended all twelve scheduled visits with Demarcus held at the agency office in Elgin, Illinois. Ms. Cline is also allowed to visit with Demarcus at Lisa B.'s home, with Lisa B. supervising the visit. Lisa B. recently reported to Ms. Richmond that Ms. Cline made five visits during the twelve weeks that Demarcus has lived in her home.

During CASA/GAL's April 16, 2016, child visit, Ms. Cline was also visiting her children. CASA/GAL observed that Demarcus followed his mother's wishes and seemed to enjoy building Legos and reading books with her.

**Samantha Winters (Age 16 months)**

**Child Description and Developmental Observations**

Samantha Winters is a quiet and shy little girl who loves to play with her half-brother, Demarcus. CASA/GAL observed that Samantha has some difficulty walking and maintaining balance when bending. Ms. Richmond told CASA/GAL about Samantha's recent developmental screening which indicated Samantha is at age-appropriate levels in communication, problem solving, and social skills. The screening report recommended that Samantha's gross motor skills be monitored.

**Placement/Living Situation**

Samantha resides with Lisa B., Foster Mother, who is the paternal grandmother of Demarcus. On CASA/GAL’s first child visit with Samantha, she had just woken from a nap and was shy and a little fussy. Lisa B. held her most of the time CASA/GAL was there. During a subsequent child visit, Samantha was content but somewhat sedentary. She seemed to enjoy watching Demarcus’ antics but stayed seated in one spot on the floor for quite some time. She did later walk a few steps but was not very steady on her feet. Aside from one stuffed animal, CASA/GAL has not observed any other age-appropriate toys for Samantha in Lisa B.’s home.

CASA/GAL observed that Samantha does not yet have a crib at Lisa B.'s home; Lisa B. told CASA/GAL that Samantha sleeps in the bed with her or on the couch with Demarcus. CASA/GAL spoke with Ms. Richmond about this, and Ms. Richmond responded that she would address this situation in the near future. On April 16, 2016, CASA/GAL observed that Samantha was still without a crib.

**Daycare/School**

Samantha spends most weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the home of her daycare provider, Annie Porter. Lisa B. reports that Samantha loves going to Ms. Porter’s and seems very attached to her. CASA/GAL visited Samantha at Ms. Porter’s and observed that there were many age-appropriate toys and books, and a carpeted play area. There is one other child being cared for by Ms. Porter on a daily basis, a cousin of Samantha’s who is 3 years old. Ms. Porter showed CASA/GAL Samantha’s highchair and crib and stated that she is an easy toddler who eats and sleeps well. She stated that she encourages Samantha to crawl and walk and doesn’t believe in holding children constantly. She reported that Samantha was still a bit clumsy when walking, and that she topples over often if she squats or bends over to pick something up.

**Medical and Health**

Lisa. B. advised that Samantha is up to date with her vaccinations and has no other medical or health issues.

**Services**

According to the Developmental Screening Report results shared by Lisa B., Samantha will be monitored for her gross motor development over the next six months.

**Visitation**

Ms. Richmond told CASA/GAL that Ms. Cline has visited with Samantha weekly at the agency office in Elgin; those twelve visits have been supervised by the caseworker or a case aide. According to Ms. Richmond, Samantha has had three supervised visits with her Legal Father, Samuel Winters. Ms. Richmond told CASA/GAL that Mr. Winters missed three of his visits in February as well as one visit that was set for March 17, 2016.

**FINDINGS RELATED TO THE PARENT:**

**Brenda Cline (Mother)**

**Living Situation**

Ms. Cline is currently living with a friend in Carpentersville. She does not have a car, therefore is provided transportation assistance by friends and family.

**Employment**

Ms. Cline is currently unemployed.

**Medical/Mental Health Diagnosis**

On March 21, 2016, CASA/GAL received a call from Ms. Richmond indicating that there had been a new incident of domestic violence between Ms. Cline and Mr. Winters. Mr. Winters had been arrested and, at the time of the phone call, was still incarcerated. Ms. Cline had sustained a black eye and some red marks on her neck, but she told the caseworker that she had chosen not to seek medical treatment for her injuries.

During an interview, Ms. Cline told CASA/GAL that she was feeling depressed about her situation. She said she was “done with" Mr. Winters and wanted to end that relationship and move on with her life. She provided CASA/GAL with written consents for the release of information related to the services from Pathways and the Community Crisis Center. She stated that she misses her children, and it is her goal to regain custody of them.

**Services**

Ms. Richmond provided CASA/GAL with information about Ms. Cline’s portion of the Integrated Assessment; including a recommendation for individual counseling and services for victims of domestic violence. Ms. Cline has been referred to Pathways for individual counseling and to the Community Crisis Center for domestic violence services. As of the date of this report, services have not begun.

**Visitation**

On April 16, 2016, when CASA observed Ms. Cline with her children at Lisa B.'s home, she seemed at ease parenting them. She showed affection to both children, kissing Demarcus several times and cuddling with Samantha. CASA/GAL observed the children kissing and hugging their mother at various times during the visit. Ms. Cline successfully redirected Demarcus when his behavior warranted it. She appeared comfortable interacting with Lisa B., asking questions about each child and laughing with her when Demarcus made silly faces for Samantha.

**Levar Anderson (Legal Father of Demarcus Anderson)**

**Living Situation**

CASA/GAL was made aware by Ms. Richmond that Mr. Anderson has an extensive criminal background related to weapons and drugs. At the Temporary Custody Hearing, Mr. Anderson was told that he would need to move out of the home where he was living with his mother, Lisa B., if the children were to be placed with her. He did move out and is living with a cousin in Carpentersville.

**Employment**

Mr. Anderson’s employment status is not known at this time.

**Medical/Mental Health Diagnosis**

Mr. Anderson’s medical and mental health status is not known at this time.

**Services**

Ms. Richmond advised CASA/GAL that an Integrated Assessment interview had been scheduled with Levar Anderson.

**Visitation**

According to Ms. Richmond, supervised visits between Mr. Anderson and Demarcus are scheduled weekly. She reported to CASA/GAL that Mr. Anderson has attended 10 out of a possible 12 visits.

Ms. Richmond has shared that that Demarcus typically spent several weeks in the summers and many weekends in the care of his father and Lisa B. Ms. Richmond noted that due to Mr. Anderson's history of incarceration, there have been periods of time when Demarcus did not see him.

CASA/GAL has attempted to reach Levar Anderson by telephone on two occasions, but no one answered the phone either time.

**Samuel Winters (Legal Father of Samantha Winters)**

**Living Situation**

CASA/GAL received contact information for Samuel Winters from the caseworker in early March. During CASA/GAL’s first call with Mr. Winters, he sounded agitated and stated that he thought it was “ridiculous” that his daughter was taken by DCFS. He further stated that what he does with Ms. Cline is his own business.

Ms. Richmond told CASA/GAL that Mr. Winters has a criminal record which includes jail time for charges related to domestic abuse, as well as two charges related to the possession of illegal substances. As noted previously, the caseworker informed CASA/GAL that there had been a new incident of domestic violence toward Ms. Cline and that, at the time of the phone call, Mr. Winters remained incarcerated in the Kane County jail.

**Employment**

Mr. Winters is currently unemployed.

**Medical/Mental Health Diagnosis**

Mr. Winter’s current medical and mental health status is not known at this time.

**Services**

According to Ms. Richmond, the Integrated Assessment for Mr. Winters includes recommendations for evaluations related to individual counseling, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Mr. Winters had been referred to the Renz Center for the individual counseling and substance abuse evaluations and to the Community Crisis Center for the domestic violence evaluation. As of the date of this report writing, it is not known if Mr. Winters attended any of the evaluations.

**Visitation**

Per Ms. Richmond, Mr. Winters has attended three supervised visits with his daughter since the beginning of February. The case aide who supervised the visits shared that Mr. Winters had shown interest in Samantha by getting down on the floor to play with her. He also brought a snack for Samantha to the visits. The aide reported that he left one visit 20 minutes early, and that on another visit, he raised his voice to the case aide in front of Samantha when describing how unfairly the system was treating him.

**MEDIATION REVIEW:**

There are no identified issues for Mediation at this time.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Minors be made a ward of the court.
2. Custody and guardianship should be granted to DCFS.
3. The court should consider the permanency goal of return home within 12 months for the minors.
4. The Client Service Plan and services are appropriate.
5. Demarcus Anderson should be provided with his own bed at Lisa B.'s home.
6. Dues to nightmares and inappropriate social interactions, Demarcus Anderson should be assessed to determine whether a mental health evaluation is necessary.
7. Samantha Winters should be provided with a crib at Lisa B.'s home.
8. Brenda Cline should continue to make at least weekly supervised visits with both children.
9. Brenda Cline should follow the treatment plan established by Pathways and the Community Crisis Center.
10. Levar Anderson should continue to make weekly supervised visits with Demarcus Anderson.
11. Levar Anderson should complete the Integrated Assessment interview.
12. Samuel Winters should attend weekly supervised visits with Samantha Winters.
13. Samuel Winters should participate in referred evaluations for individual counseling, substance abuse, and domestic violence and follow any/all evaluation recommendations.

Respectfully submitted by CASA/GAL: Chris J. Date: 04/22/2016