

Court Appointed Special Advocate Report to the Court

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the CASA Volunteer serving in an advisory capacity to the Court. This report is confidential and for the benefit of the parties involved in this proceeding. This report may only be distributed to, or read by parties of the proceeding.

In the Interest of:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Case No.</u>	<u>D.O.B.</u>	<u>Age</u>
Kiddo	18JU01234	12/25/2009	08 yr 10 mo
Kiddo #2	18JU01234	08/25/2011	07 yr 01 mo
Kiddo #3	18JU01234	03/25/2013	05 yr 06 mo
Kiddo #4	18JU01234	09/25/2015	03 yr 01 mo
Kiddo #5	18JU01234	06/25/2018	03 mo 02 wk

Date of Hearing: October 07, 2018 -08:30 AM

Case Summary: *(Reason children came to care, any significant changes, and current situation)*

The children came into care in May 2018, cited reason of neglect and substance abuse. Father was and is incarcerated is scheduled for release February 2019. Originally the five children were in two separate foster homes, but were placed together as soon as circumstances allowed. As of October 2018, all five children were returned to mother for trial reunification.

This Case is before the Court today for a Permanency Hearing at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton, Oregon 97801

General Observations: *(general description of the children including strengths/needs)*

These children are fun-loving, beautiful children who, in spite of their adverse experiences, are still full of brightness and light that young children possess. They have a strong bond with each other, which is evidenced in how well they play together and rely on each other. The girls, especially the oldest two, thrive on individual attention needing to feel important and to not get lost in the chaos. Attention should be given to allow them to focus on just being kids. They are happy back at home with mother.

Findings: *(specific observations over the life of the case. Bold key points)*

CASA was assigned to this case June 2018. CASA has observed the children in their current home since the inception of trial reunification with **mother**. Mother's home manifests as a loving and nurturing environment. Frieda **is committed to supporting the children** in feeling settled and "at home" as she has focused her attention in procuring items to help them each create their own space in their room. Mother has had some challenges with sibling rivalry to which she has **responded in a kind and caring way, encouraging and facilitating the children to work out their differences**. CASA has observed Frieda interacting with the children in the home, outside playing, and in town while shopping and has seen Frieda to be **attentive to the children's needs and engaged in conversation that is inclusive of them all during their activities together**. Frieda validated the children's feelings and then worked with them to find common ground and come to a mutually acceptable agreement. On a few separate occasions, CASA observed as

Frieda **prepared healthy meals for the children and allowed them to help her cook, while being appropriately observant of dangerous situations** and mitigating them before they could happen. The children are obviously loved and show the ability to cope with all the changes they have been confronted with since taken into care. CASA has been impressed by how well adjusted the children are in spite of their adverse experiences. **While the children seemed to cope well in foster care, CASA has observed a calmness to the moods of the children and overall atmosphere in the home since the trial reunification ensued.** CASA believes **this speaks positively for mother's ability to parent and is an illustration of prior positive parenting practices.** The children seem fairly well adjusted to what is appropriate for their age. They are happy, friendly, and engage easily with others. CASA has observed Skype and face-to-face family time with **father**. Frederick seems reserved, but **interacts appropriately with his children.** The children do not seem as comfortable with Frederick as they seem with Frieda, which may be due, in part, to the natural differences between father/child and mother/child relationships, but undoubtedly is indicative of the restricted ability of the children to interact with Frederick on a daily basis. CASA has observed father playing both individually and with all the children together in the children's area of the visiting room at EOIC. Although reserved, Frederick was **attentive to each of the children and was able to manage his time with them to include and visit with each of them, asking questions about their recent activities, and then listening and responding appropriately.** CASA observed father hugging and playing with the children and when the children began to argue Frederick **addressed it kindly but was clear in his expectations.** The children seem to respect Frederick, and while they seem timid, they do not seem fearful. Frederick's loves for his children and theirs for him is evident.

Recommendations: *(should the kids continue as is, increase family time, should DHS do more?)*

1. Continue trial reunification with mother.
2. Increase family time with father to support a better relationship.
3. Reevaluate safety threats and risks for updated safety plan. Give clear and specific requirements with expected outcome timelines to allow for identification of remaining barriers.

DHS: Safety threats have been copied from original PCR. **Current and active safety threats should be identified and updated for the current circumstances.** Afterward, current risk to children should be evaluated, and a new safety plan put in place to provide **the least restrictive placement** and to support with continued forward progression. Case plan needs updated and should list **specific** remaining requirements, **clearly identify** achieved outcomes with dates, and timelines identified for expected completion of goals. Completion of goals should show **progress and does not allow for safety threats to remain identical** to the inception of this case. This will allow for both parents to **identify any remaining barriers.**

Submitted by volunteer court appointed special advocate:

Name: CASA Advocate Name Date: 10/06/2018

Signature: /s/ CASA Advocate Signature