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IN RE ANTHONY S.*
(AC 45549)

Alvord, Moll and Cradle, Js.

Syllabus

The respondent mother appealed to this court from the judgment of the trial court terminating her parental rights with respect to her minor child, A. The mother was incarcerated following an incident in 2016, during which A was exposed to an unsafe environment. As a result, the Department of Children and Families placed A in a department licensed home with a maternal cousin and her family. The trial court granted an order of temporary custody filed by the petitioner, the Commissioner of Children and Families, and, thereafter, A was adjudicated neglected and committed to the custody and care of the petitioner. The trial court ordered specific steps for the mother to take to facilitate her reunification with A. In 2019, the trial court approved a permanency plan with a recommendation of termination of the mother's parental rights, and the petitioner filed a petition for the termination of the mother's parental rights. A's father had died prior to the filing of the petition for termination. *Held*:

1. The trial court properly determined by clear and convincing evidence that the department had made reasonable efforts to reunify the respondent mother with A: the record contained ample evidence to support the trial court's conclusion, including that the department had referred the mother to multiple providers of substance abuse and mental health treatment, even after she informed the department that she would not participate in the dialectical behavior therapy that was recommended to her following a court-order psychiatric evaluation, provided her on two occasions with a security deposit and the first month's rent for an apartment to help her obtain and secure housing after she had been evicted for nonpayment of rent, provided her with transportation and/or bus passes so that she could travel to her appointments and her visits with A, and provided her with supervised visitation with A in a myriad of formats and arrangements despite frequent disruptions during those visits due to her inappropriate and aggressive behavior.
2. The trial court properly determined that the respondent mother had failed to achieve the requisite degree of personal rehabilitation, as required by statute (§ 17a-112 (j) (3) (B) (i)), to reasonably encourage a belief that she could, within a reasonable time, assume a responsible position in A's life: in its decision, the trial court detailed each of the specific steps that the mother had failed to follow and the corresponding facts that supported its determination that the petitioner had proven by clear and convincing evidence that the mother had failed to rehabilitate, namely, her failure to fully comply with the specific steps, her inappropriate behavior during her visitations with A, and her failure to engage in appropriate mental health treatment to develop an understanding of A's needs, in particular, the impact of an unsafe environment on his mental health.
3. The trial court's determination that termination of the respondent mother's parental rights was in A's best interest was factually supported and legally sound: the trial court made findings relating to each of the seven factors set forth in § 17a-112 (k) before making its determination on the basis of the totality of the circumstances; moreover, in its decision, the trial court emphasized that A had been living in his foster care placement for five years, he was thriving there, and he was very attached to his foster family, it explicitly stated that it balanced A's need for stability and permanency against the potential benefit of maintaining a connection with the mother, and it noted that A's counsel and guardian ad litem both recommended termination of the mother's rights; furthermore, although there was some evidence that the mother and A loved each other, such evidence was insufficient for this court to conclude that the trial court improperly determined that it was in A's best interest to terminate the mother's parental rights.

Argued January 12—officially released March 9, 2023**

Procedural History

Petition by the Commissioner of Children and Families to terminate the respondent mother's parental rights with respect to her minor child, brought to the Superior Court in the judicial district of Waterbury, Juvenile Matters, and tried to the court, *Hon. William T. Cremins*, judge trial referee; judgment terminating the respondent mother's parental rights, from which she appealed to this court. *Affirmed.*

David B. Rozwaski, assigned counsel, for the appellant (respondent).

Evan O'Roark, assistant attorney general, with whom were *Emily Karr*, assistant attorney general, and, on the brief, *William Tong*, attorney general, for the appellee (petitioner).

Opinion

ALVORD, J. The respondent mother, Agnes W., appeals from the judgment of the trial court terminating her parental rights with respect to her minor child, Anthony S.[1] On appeal, the respondent claims that the trial court improperly determined that (1) the Department of Children and Families (department) made reasonable efforts toward reunification between the respondent and Anthony, (2) the respondent had failed to rehabilitate to such a degree as to reasonably encourage a belief that she could assume a responsible position in the life of her child, and (3) the termination of the respondent's parental rights was in the best interest of Anthony.[2] We affirm the judgment of the trial court.

The following facts, which the court found by clear and convincing evidence, and procedural history, are relevant to this appeal. On November 8, 2016, the department invoked a ninety-six hour administrative hold on behalf of Anthony "due to the [respondent] being incarcerated and exposing [Anthony] to an unsafe environment."[3] That same day, Anthony was placed in a department licensed relative home with a maternal cousin and her husband.

On November 10, 2016, the petitioner, the Commissioner of Children and Families, sought an order of temporary custody, which the court granted, and filed a neglect petition on behalf of Anthony because the respondent remained incarcerated. On November 18, 2016, the court sustained the order of temporary custody.

On January 30, 2017, Anthony was adjudicated neglected and committed to the care and custody of the petitioner. He continued to reside in the relative foster care placement. The court ordered specific steps for the respondent to take to facilitate her reunification with Anthony. The steps required her, inter alia, to keep all appointments set by or with the department; to cooperate with visits by the child's court-appointed attorney and/or guardian ad litem; to take part in counseling services referred to her by the department; to accept and engage in-home support services referred to her by the department; to refrain from using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol or medicine; to cooperate with service providers' recommendations for parenting, individual, and family counseling, in-home support services and/or substance abuse assessment or treatment; to enhance her parenting skills and ensure the safety of her home environment; to address her mental health issues and understand the impact of an unsafe home environment on Anthony; to cooperate with court-ordered evaluations or testing; to obtain and/or maintain adequate housing and a legal income; and to visit with Anthony as often as the department permits.[4]

On July 25, 2019, the court approved a permanency

plan with a recommendation of termination of the respondent's parental rights and adoption. On August 14, 2019, the petitioner filed a petition for the termination of the respondent's parental rights as to Anthony.[5]

The termination of parental rights trial was held on June 21, August 13, September 2, September 10, and October 26, 2021. During the trial, the petitioner presented testimony from Jennifer Bushnell, a department social worker assigned to the case from April, 2018, to June, 2019; Kevin Paquette, a permanency clinician at Klingberg Family Centers (Klingberg), a child welfare agency; Stacey Shanahan, a department social worker assigned to the case in June, 2019; Ralph Balducci, a psychologist who testified as an expert in the area of children and families and conducted a court-ordered evaluation of the respondent and Anthony in 2018; Melissa Silagy, Anthony's therapist since June, 2017; and Emilia Anello, Anthony's guardian ad litem since the fall of 2018. The respondent testified and presented testimony from her former partner, Leodardo Serrano, who previously had lived with the respondent and Anthony, and the respondent's stepfather, Mario Perez Cruz (Perez).

On April 8, 2022, the court issued a memorandum of decision in which it terminated the respondent's parental rights.[6] After setting forth the legal principles governing a termination of parental rights proceeding,[7] the court stated that it "has carefully considered the petitions, all the evidence and testimony presented, and the arguments of counsel, according to the standards required by law. The court has observed all the witnesses and determined the validity and credibility of their testimonies."

Relevant to the adjudicatory phase of the termination proceeding, the court found "by clear and convincing evidence that the department has made reasonable efforts to reunify the child with the respondent." Additionally, the court found that the respondent had failed to achieve a sufficient degree of personal rehabilitation pursuant to General Statutes § 17a-112 (j) (3) (B) (ii). In support of its determination, the court stated that, at the time of the adjudication of neglect on January 30, 2017, the respondent's "presenting problems were [her] unaddressed mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, criminal activity, and parenting concerns." Moreover, the court recognized that, on January 30, 2017, the court ordered the respondent to comply with specific steps to facilitate the return of Anthony to her care. The court proceeded to set forth each specific step with which the respondent had failed to comply and provided factual support for each enumeration. The court concluded that the respondent "is unable to safely care for her child despite services offered, due to her mental health issues and unpredictable and explosive behaviors. [The respondent] will not be able

to assume a responsible position in the life of the child within a reasonable period of time."

In support of its decision, the court also made the following relevant findings regarding the respondent, Anthony, and their history of visitation. The court found that the respondent "has a history of domestic violence with her ex-husband, Johnny K." The court noted that "Anthony continues to present as anxious and fearful when discussing the events that took place while he was residing with [the respondent] and her ex-husband." See footnote 3 of this opinion. Additionally, the court found that the respondent "has not been consistent with attending individual therapy." The court also noted that the respondent provided proof to the department of her medical marijuana card; however, it "expired on June 8, 2019, and she is still testing positive for [tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)]." The court stated that the respondent's "last positive urine drug [THC] screen was on August 2, 2019."

The court stated that the respondent "report[s] that she is able to effectively parent Anthony" and she "denies utilizing physical discipline . . . ." The court noted that "it has been reported by Anthony's therapist that Anthony has disclosed to her that [the respondent] has hit him. Anthony compiled a list of questions to process with [the respondent including] . . . 'Why do you hit me?' " The court further noted that the respondent "has knowledge of Anthony's questions and continues to deny that she has used physical discipline."

The court found that Anthony was eleven years old at the time of trial. The court noted that, since November 8, 2016, Anthony has been residing in a department licensed relative foster home with a maternal cousin, her husband, and her two daughters. The court found that "Anthony has adjusted well since the placement" and that he "has his own bedroom . . . that he loves . . . ." Additionally, the court found that "Anthony enjoys playing outdoors, playing video games, building Lego sets and building his own Lego creations. Anthony also enjoys going to school and is involved in soccer, which he reported that he enjoys playing." Moreover, the court stated that, on "June 27, 2017, Anthony participated in an intake for individual therapy services with . . . Silagy, a clinician . . . [whom] [h]e continues to meet with . . . on a weekly basis."[8]

In regard to visitation, the court found that the respondent "is sometimes inconsistent with being present for her supervised visits." Additionally, the court found that, when the respondent and Anthony engaged in visitation, the visits occasionally "had to end prematurely due to [the respondent's] inappropriate, aggressive, and argumentative behaviors. For example, during a supervised visit on March 14, 2019, Anthony was sitting on [the respondent's] lap looking at pictures on her cell phone. When Anthony returned to his foster

home that evening, he reported to his foster mother that he was scrolling through pictures on [the respondent's] phone and saw nude photos of her 'bathing suit area,' 'front area,' 'butt and breasts.' Anthony said he kept scrolling, and that there were 'so many of them.' Anthony indicated that [the respondent] did not stop him from looking at the photos. This [interaction] resulted in a report to the department's Careline.[9]

"Also on May 24, 2019 . . . the visitation room that [was] usually reserved was full and occupied, so [the respondent] was told that the visit would need to be in a different room. [The respondent] then walked up to the doors of the visitation rooms, while occupied, and was pulling the visitation charts off the doors and was reading them. Bushnell asked her to stop, as that information is confidential. [The respondent] then yelled at Bushnell in the waiting room in front of Anthony, other clients, and social workers, 'You thought I was going to give up on my son!' She then started yelling inside the visitation room, 'You told me I can't have my visit at Chuck E. Cheese. The judge knows.' [The respondent] then commented on how Bushnell and Shanahan were late to the supervised visit. Bushnell informed her that she is always given her time, and it is always made up if needed to equal one hour. [The respondent] then said, 'No you don't. It is only an hour.' At this point, she was yelling and standing up at the table while Anthony was sitting at the table looking down at the floor. Bushnell asked her to stop yelling, as it appear[ed] as though it was making her son uncomfortable. [The respondent] then said, 'You don't know my son!' Bushnell asked [the respondent] to focus on her visit and indicated that her behaviors were inappropriate. [The respondent] then yelled, 'How am I being inappropriate?' [The respondent] then said, 'What about his report card?' Bushnell gave [her] the report card. [The respondent] said, 'Wow you actually did your job for once' and 'You are a drug addict, and everybody knows about you, girl.' At this point in time, the supervised visit had to end.

"After the visit ended, Bushnell and Shanahan spoke to Anthony about the visit and the reason it ended. Anthony pointed on his emotions chart that he felt 'hurt.' Anthony pointed to 'hot and cold, stomachache, sweating, and fast heart rate' on his physical feelings chart. Anthony then said that he did not feel safe and doesn't like when [the respondent] yells." (Footnote added.)

In the dispositional phase; see footnote 7 of this opinion; the court considered the seven statutory factors of § 17a-112 (k)[10] before finding that, "in considering the child's sense of time, need for a secure and permanent environment, need to avoid future placements, and the totality of circumstances, the court concludes that termination of the parental rights of the respondent . . .

is in the best interests of the minor child." This appeal followed. Additional facts and procedural history will be set forth as necessary.

Before turning to the respondent's claims, we set forth the following relevant legal principles. "Proceedings to terminate parental rights are governed by § 17a-112. . . . Because a respondent's fundamental right to parent his or her child is at stake, [t]he statutory criteria must be strictly complied with before termination can be accomplished and adoption proceedings begun." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Tresin J.*, 334 Conn. 314, 322–23, 222 A.3d 83 (2019). Section 17a-112 (j) provides in relevant part that "[t]he Superior Court, upon notice and hearing as provided in sections 45a-716 and 45a-717, may grant a petition filed pursuant to this section if it finds by clear and convincing evidence that (1) the Department of Children and Families has made reasonable efforts to locate the parent and to reunify the child with the parent in accordance with subsection (a) of section 17a-111b, unless the court finds in this proceeding that the parent is unable or unwilling to benefit from reunification efforts, except that such finding is not required if the court has determined at a hearing pursuant to section 17a-111b, or determines at trial on the petition, that such efforts are not required, (2) termination is in the best interest of the child, and (3) . . . (B) the child (i) has been found by the Superior Court or the Probate Court to have been neglected, abused or uncared for in a prior proceeding, or (ii) is found to be neglected, abused or uncared for and has been in the custody of the commissioner for at least fifteen months and the parent of such child has been provided specific steps to take to facilitate the return of the child to the parent pursuant to section 46b-129 and has failed to achieve such degree of personal rehabilitation as would encourage the belief that within a reasonable time, considering the age and needs of the child, such parent could assume a responsible position in the life of the child . . . ."

I

The respondent first claims that the court improperly determined that the department made reasonable efforts to reunify her with Anthony. We disagree.

The following legal principles and standard of review are relevant to our resolution of this claim. "Section 17a-112 (j) (1) requires that before terminating parental rights, the court must find by clear and convincing evidence that the department has made reasonable efforts to locate the parent and to reunify the child with the parent, unless the court finds in this proceeding that the parent is unable or unwilling to benefit from reunification efforts provided such finding is not required if the court has determined at a hearing . . . that such efforts are not appropriate . . . . Thus, the department may meet its burden concerning reunification in

one of three ways: (1) by showing that it made such efforts, (2) by showing that the parent was unable or unwilling to benefit from reunification efforts or (3) by a previous judicial determination that such efforts were not appropriate. . . . [I]n determining whether the department has made reasonable efforts to reunify a parent and a child . . . the court is required in the adjudicatory phase to make its assessment on the basis of events preceding the date on which the termination petition was filed. . . . This court has consistently held that the court, [w]hen making its reasonable efforts determination . . . is limited to considering only those facts preceding the filing of the termination petition or the most recent amendment to the petition . . . .

"Our review of the court's reasonable efforts determination is subject to the evidentiary sufficiency standard of review. . . . Under this standard, the inquiry is whether the trial court could have reasonably concluded, upon the facts established and the reasonable inferences drawn therefrom, that the cumulative effect of the evidence was sufficient to justify its [ultimate conclusion]. . . . When applying this standard, we construe the evidence in a manner most favorable to sustaining the judgment of the trial court. . . . The court's subordinate findings made in support of its reasonable efforts determination are reviewed for clear error." (Citations omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Ryder M.*, 211 Conn. App. 793, 808–809, 274 A.3d 218, cert. denied, 343 Conn. 931, 276 A.3d 433 (2022).

The court properly determined by clear and convincing evidence that the department had made reasonable efforts to reunify the respondent with Anthony. In support of its determination, the court stated that the department engaged in "reasonable and active efforts," which included "providing case management and support services" to the respondent; referring the respondent "to Southwest Community Health Services to be evaluated for and to receive substance abuse and mental health treatment," "Therapeutic Family Time . . . services via the Community Mental Health Affiliates," and to "dialectical behavior therapy . . . providers in Waterbury, Hartford, and Southington"; offering a "Permanency Placement Service Program through Klingberg"; and providing the respondent with "weekly supervised visits with her son," offering "supervised visits in a clinical setting," and providing "thirty-one day bus passes" to her.

On appeal, the respondent argues that the court improperly found that appropriate services had been offered to her to assist in reunification. Specifically, the respondent argues that "the court pointed to the respondent's mental health issues and behavior. However, this does not take into consideration the impact on the respondent and the child of their separation and

the ensuing stress, anxiety and anger that it caused."[11] The petitioner responds that "[t]he record is full of evidence showing the department's consistent and targeted efforts to help [the respondent] overcome the impediments to reunification, including her untreated mental health issues, substance abuse, refusal to acknowledge the full extent of Anthony's trauma, and history of unstable housing." We agree with the petitioner.

"[O]ur courts have consistently held that [t]he word reasonable is the linchpin on which the department's efforts in a particular set of circumstances are to be adjudged, using the clear and convincing standard of proof. Neither the word reasonable nor the word efforts is, however, defined by our legislature or by the federal act from which the requirement was drawn. . . . [R]easonableness is an objective standard . . . and whether reasonable efforts have been proven depends on the careful consideration of the circumstances of each individual case. . . . [R]easonable efforts means doing everything reasonable, not everything possible." (Citations omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Unique R.*, 170 Conn. App. 833, 855, 156 A.3d 1 (2017).

The record contains ample evidence to support the court's determination that the department engaged in reasonable efforts to reunify the respondent with Anthony. To assist the respondent in obtaining substance abuse and mental health treatment, the department referred her to the Southwest Community Health Center, Tides of Mind Counseling (Tides of Mind), the Institute of Living, and St. Vincent's Behavioral Health. Pursuant to a recommendation from Dr. Balducci, who conducted a court-ordered psychiatric evaluation of the respondent, the department made several referrals for the respondent to participate in dialectical behavior therapy[12] (DBT). The court found that, "[o]n August 29, 2018, Bushnell made a referral to Tides of Mind for DBT . . . . On October 26, 2018, [the respondent] still had not participated in her intake with Tides of Mind due to cancelling and rescheduling multiple appointments and going to the wrong address." The court further found that Tides of Mind ceased activity on the respondent's referral because she "miss[ed] so many scheduled intake appointments and [was] difficult to get ahold of . . . ." The court noted that, thereafter, Bushnell "called the Institute of Living DBT program in Hartford, [a] DBT private practice provider . . . in Southington . . . Apple Valley Behavioral Health in Plantsville, and [also] Wilcox Wellness in Southington to inquire about their DBT programs." The court stated that the respondent subsequently informed Bushnell and Paquette that "she was not going to participate in DBT anywhere." The court further found that, despite the respondent's expressed refusal to engage in DBT services, the department "re-referred [her] to DBT provider, St. Vincent's Behavioral Health . . . ." Addition-

ally, the court found that the department assisted the respondent in obtaining stable and secure housing by providing her with a security deposit and first month's rent for two successive apartments and notifying her of Section 8 rental assistance program openings. The court stated that the respondent, however, was evicted from two apartments for nonpayment of rent during the department's involvement. Additionally, the court found that the department assisted the respondent's travel to her appointments and to visits with Anthony by providing her with transportation or bus passes.

Moreover, the record supports the court's finding that the department actively sought reunification between the respondent and Anthony by providing supervised visitation in a myriad of formats and arrangements despite frequent disruptions due to the respondent's behavioral outbursts. In April, 2018, the department provided the respondent with weekly supervised visitation with Anthony in the community. However, in June, 2018, the department moved the supervised visits to the department's offices where security was available due to concerns that the respondent was "argumentative" with the supervisor and had made the supervisor "uncomfortable." Then, due to several incidents where the respondent "was raising her voice, [and] was causing a scene in the waiting room" at the department's offices, the department sought to conduct supervised visitation between the respondent and Anthony in yet another format, with therapeutic providers. The department utilized a variety of providers, including Anthony's therapist, Silagy,[13] Therapeutic Family Time, and Klingberg. After the respondent was "unsuccessfully discharged" from Klingberg's therapeutic reunification program in the spring of 2019, the department resumed supervised visits between the respondent and Anthony at the department's offices.

On the basis of the evidence in the record and the reasonable inferences drawn therefrom, the court reasonably could have concluded that the evidence was sufficient to justify its determination that the department had made reasonable efforts to reunify the respondent and Anthony.

II

The respondent next claims that the court improperly determined that she had failed to rehabilitate to such a degree as to reasonably encourage a belief that she could, within a reasonable time, assume a responsible position in Anthony's life. We disagree.

We begin by setting forth the following relevant legal principles and standard of review. "The trial court is required, pursuant to § 17a-112, to analyze the [parent's] rehabilitative status as it relates to the needs of the particular child, and further . . . such rehabilitation must be foreseeable within a reasonable time. . . . The

statute does not require [a parent] to prove precisely when [she] will be able to assume a responsible position in [her] child's life. Nor does it require [her] to prove that [she] will be able to assume full responsibility for [her] child, unaided by available support systems. It requires the court to find, by clear and convincing evidence, that the level of rehabilitation [she] has achieved, if any, falls short of that which would reasonably encourage a belief that at some future date [she] can assume a responsible position in [her] child's life." (Citations omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Shane M.*, 318 Conn. 569, 585–86, 122 A.3d 1247 (2015). "Personal rehabilitation as used in [§ 17a-112 (j) (3) (B) (i)] refers to the restoration of a parent to [her] former constructive and useful role as a parent. . . . [I]n assessing rehabilitation, the critical issue is not whether the parent has improved [her] ability to manage [her] own life, but rather whether [she] has gained the ability to care for the particular needs of the [children] at issue. . . .

"[The] completion or noncompletion [of the specific steps], however, does not guarantee any outcome. . . . Accordingly, successful completion of expressly articulated expectations is not sufficient to defeat a department claim that the parent has not achieved sufficient rehabilitation. . . . Whereas, during the adjudicatory phase of a termination proceeding, the court is generally limited to considering events that precede the date of the filing of the petition or the latest amendment to the petition, also known as the adjudicatory date, it may rely on events occurring after the [adjudicatory] date . . . when considering the issue of whether the degree of rehabilitation is sufficient to foresee that the parent may resume a useful role in the child's life within a reasonable time. . . .

"A conclusion of failure to rehabilitate is drawn from *both* the trial court's factual findings and from its weighing of the facts in assessing whether those findings satisfy the failure to rehabilitate ground set forth in § 17a-112 (j) (3) (B). Accordingly . . . the appropriate standard of review is one of evidentiary sufficiency, that is, whether the trial court could have reasonably concluded, upon the facts established and the reasonable inferences drawn therefrom, that the cumulative effect of the evidence was sufficient to justify its [ultimate conclusion]. . . . When applying this standard, we construe the evidence in a manner most favorable to sustaining the judgment of the trial court. . . . We will not disturb the court's subordinate factual findings unless they are clearly erroneous. . . . A factual finding is clearly erroneous when it is not supported by any evidence in the record or when there is evidence to support it, but the reviewing court is left with the definite and firm conviction that a mistake has been made." (Citations omitted; emphasis in original; internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re G. H.*, 216 Conn. App.

671, 684–85, 286 A.3d 944 (2022).

The respondent argues, inter alia, that "the trial court erred in finding that [she] had failed to rehabilitate" because the "testimony presented clearly demonstrates that the respondent has been engaged in services, and is willing to reengage in services so that she can provide for her son."[14] Additionally, she argues that, other than the child's therapist, "everyone involved with the respondent and the child . . . noted the respondent's issues and at times her difficulties in interactions with others, but they all agreed that the respondent and child each loved each other and cared for each other, and that the child wanted to still have continuing contact with the respondent." We disagree.

In its memorandum of decision, the court detailed each of the specific steps that the respondent had failed to follow and the corresponding facts supporting its determination that the respondent had failed to rehabilitate. Specifically, the court noted that the respondent (a) has not kept all appointments set by or with the department; (b) has been inconsistent at times with therapy and the counseling services referred by the department; (c) has failed to accept and cooperate with in-home services referred to by the department, specifically participation in DBT; (d) has continued to test positive for marijuana, despite having an expired medical marijuana card; (e) has failed to cooperate with service providers for parenting, individual, and family counseling, to enhance her parenting skills, to ensure the safety of her home environment, and to understand the impact of an unsafe home environment on the child; (f) has not cooperated with all court-ordered testing evaluations, specifically a competency evaluation; (g) has failed to obtain or maintain adequate housing and a legal income; and (h) is "sometimes inconsistent with being present for her supervised visits . . . [which] have also had to end prematurely due to [her] inappropriate, aggressive, and argumentative behaviors." Thereafter, the court concluded that the respondent "is unable to safely care for her child despite services offered, due to her mental health issues and unpredictable and explosive behaviors. [The respondent] will not be able to assume a responsible position in the life of the child within a reasonable period of time."

Construing the record before us in the manner most favorable to sustaining the judgment of the trial court, as we are obligated to do; see *In re G. H.*, supra, 216 Conn. App. 685; we conclude that the record contains sufficient evidence to support the court's conclusion that the petitioner had proven by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent had failed to rehabilitate considering the age and needs of Anthony. Although "[a] finding of rehabilitation is not based on a mechanistic tabulation of whether a parent has undertaken specific steps ordered"; (internal quotation marks omitted) *In*

re Yolanda V., 195 Conn. App. 334, 347 n.12, 224 A.3d 182 (2020); the court appropriately emphasized the respondent's lack of consistent engagement in individual counseling, reluctance to participate in DBT as recommended by the court-appointed psychologist, and "inappropriate, aggressive, and argumentative behaviors" during visitations in finding that the respondent has failed to gain the insight and ability to care for Anthony. See id. The court noted that Anthony is diagnosed with "post-traumatic stress disorder . . . impulse control, and conduct disorder . . . as well as parent-child relational problem[s]." The court found that five years after Anthony was removed from the respondent's care, he "continues to present as anxious and fearful when discussing the events that took place while he was residing with [the respondent] and her ex-husband." Moreover, the court found that, on at least one occasion when the respondent acted in an "inappropriate, aggressive, and argumentative" manner during supervised visitation with Anthony, he reported that "he did not feel safe and doesn't like when [the respondent] yells." Accordingly, it was imperative that the respondent engage in appropriate mental health treatment to develop an understanding of Anthony's needs, particularly the impact of an unsafe home environment on his mental health. See *In re Ryder M.*, supra, 211 Conn. App. 814 ("[i]n assessing rehabilitation, the critical issue is . . . whether [the parent] has gained the ability to care for the particular needs of the child at issue" (internal quotation marks omitted)). The court properly concluded that the respondent had failed to do so.

The evidence in the record does not support the respondent's assertion that she "has been engaged in services, and is willing to reengage in services so that she can provide for her son." Dr. Balducci testified that, on the basis of the reports and documents he received as part of his court-ordered evaluation of the respondent in June, 2018, he recommended that the respondent engage in DBT to learn "strategies for distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, emotional regulation and mindfulness." Despite the court finding that the department referred the respondent to numerous mental health and DBT providers, the respondent "did not accept DBT . . . ." Additionally, the court found that the respondent "is inconsistent at times with therapy," both in attendance and engagement. The court found that the respondent's therapist, Jessica Davis, reported that the respondent's "therapy sessions with her have been 'bashing' sessions for months, in which she will arrive to vent and express displeasure about [the department], the court, Anthony's foster mother, and her sister . . . [and the respondent] claimed she was given the wrong information about DBT and was being 'set up' and sent to the wrong place." Furthermore, the record reflects that, "[t]o the department's knowledge, [the respondent] was not engaged in any mental health ser-

vices from January, 2020, until March, 2021." Thereafter, the record reflects that the respondent engaged in some individual counseling with a provider at Tides of Mind and attended a DBT group therapy session that "was a bad fit for [the respondent], [as] she was overwhelmed and 'was triggered.' " The respondent testified that she "was receiving therapy but [is] not having any contact with her [therapist] right now . . . because she lied to me" and that she has subsequently been discharged from Tides of Mind because she stopped attending. Despite the fact that the respondent acknowledges in her brief that "there is clearly a need for [her] to be able to engage in appropriate individual counseling and in DBT therapy," she has failed to engage in the requisite treatment to address her mental health issues for the past five years that Anthony has been in the department's care. See *In re Shane M.*, supra, 318 Conn. 589 ("respondent's failure to acknowledge the underlying personal issues that form the basis for the department's concerns indicates a failure to achieve a sufficient degree of personal rehabilitation" (internal quotation marks omitted)).

Moreover, the respondent's behavior during visitations with Anthony further supports the court's determination that she failed to "[gain] the insight and ability to care for . . . her child given the age and needs of the child within a reasonable time." *In re Victor D.*, 161 Conn. App. 604, 617, 128 A.3d 608 (2015). As set forth previously, the court found that "[s]upervised visits have . . . had to end prematurely due to [the respondent's] inappropriate, aggressive, and argumentative behaviors," including showing Anthony nude photos of herself and yelling "in the waiting room in front of Anthony, other clients, and social workers . . . ." The court found that, following the visit during which the respondent was yelling at the department social workers, "Anthony . . . said that he did not feel safe and doesn't like when [the respondent] yells." Additionally, Paquette testified that, while he was conducting supervised visitation between the respondent and Anthony, "there were times when [the respondent] would say things and accuse her son of being a liar and during the . . . visits . . . [Paquette] was concerned that that [behavior] was harming her relationship with her son." By way of example, Paquette testified that the respondent often called Anthony a liar when they discussed "an incident that [Anthony] described that happened in the home where he thought [the respondent] was in serious physical jeopardy of being harmed by her husband so he called the police," the incident that led to Anthony's removal from the respondent's care. See footnote 3 of this opinion. Thereafter, Paquette testified that he did not recommend reunification because the respondent "struggled with being able to really understand her son's experience and to validate his experience in what he had been through." See *In*

re G. H., supra, 216 Conn. App. 688 ("[i]t is well established that [i]n a case tried before a court, the trial judge is the sole arbiter of the credibility of the witnesses and the weight to be given specific testimony" (internal quotation marks omitted)).

On the basis of the foregoing evidence, including the respondent's reluctance to address her mental health issues, her failure to fully comply with the specific steps ordered by the court, and her inappropriate behaviors during visits with Anthony, we conclude that the court properly determined that the respondent had failed to achieve the requisite degree of personal rehabilitation as required by § 17a-112 (j) (3) (B). See *In re A'vion A.*, 217 Conn. App. 330, 353, 288 A.3d 231 (2023).

III

Last, the respondent claims that the court improperly determined that termination of her parental rights was in the best interest of Anthony. We disagree.

We first set forth the relevant principles and the standard of review. "In the dispositional phase of a termination of parental rights hearing, the emphasis appropriately shifts from the conduct of the parent to the best interest of the child. . . . It is well settled that we will overturn the trial court's decision that the termination of parental rights is in the best interest of the [child] only if the court's findings are clearly erroneous. . . . The best interests of the child include the child's interests in sustained growth, development, well-being, and continuity and stability of [his] environment. . . . In the dispositional phase of a termination of parental rights hearing, the trial court must determine whether it is established by clear and convincing evidence that the continuation of the [respondent's] parental rights is not in the best interest of the child. In arriving at this decision, the court is mandated to consider and make written findings regarding seven statutory factors delineated in [§ 17a-112 (k)]. . . . The seven factors serve simply as guidelines for the court and are not statutory prerequisites that need to be proven before termination can be ordered. . . . There is no requirement that each factor be proven by clear and convincing evidence." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Brian P.*, 195 Conn. App. 558, 579, 226 A.3d 159, cert. denied, 335 Conn. 907, 226 A.3d 151 (2020).

"It is axiomatic that a trial court's factual findings are accorded great deference. Accordingly, an appellate tribunal will not disturb a trial court's finding that termination of parental rights is in a child's best interest unless that finding is clearly erroneous. . . . A finding is clearly erroneous when either there is no evidence in the record to support it, or the reviewing court is left with the definite and firm conviction that a mistake has been made. . . . On appeal, our function is to determine whether the trial court's conclusion was fac-

tually supported and legally correct. . . . In doing so, however, [g]reat weight is given to the judgment of the trial court because of [the court's] opportunity to observe the parties and the evidence. . . . We do not examine the record to determine whether the trier of fact could have reached a conclusion other than the one reached. . . . [Rather] every reasonable presumption is made in favor of the trial court's ruling." (Citation omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Davonta V.*, 285 Conn. 483, 488, 940 A.2d 733 (2008).

The respondent argues that the "court erred in finding that it was in the best [interest] of the child to grant the petition for termination of parental rights . . . [because] [i]n this case, it is undisputed that there is a bond between the respondent and her son, and that they both love and care for each other." The respondent asserts, therefore, that "[t]he proper determination for the child's best [interest] is not to terminate parental [rights but] rather, to institute a vigorous therapeutic program toward rebuilding the relationship between the parent and the child."[15] We are unpersuaded.

The court considered and made findings under each of the seven statutory factors of § 17a-112 (k) before determining that, under the totality of the circumstances, a termination of the respondent's parental rights was in the best interest of Anthony. In setting forth its findings, the court emphasized that Anthony "is thriving in [his department licensed relative foster care] placement and is extremely attached to his foster parents and their children" and has stated that "he enjoys the fact that there is no violence in this home." Additionally, the court stated that it "examined multiple relevant factors, including the child's interests in sustained growth, development, well-being, stability, and continuity of [his] environment; his length of stay in foster care; the nature of his relationship with [his] foster parents and biological parent; the degree of contact maintained with his biological parent; and [his] genetic bond to the respondent." Moreover, the court explicitly stated that it "also balanced the child's intrinsic need for stability and permanency against the potential benefit of maintaining a connection with his biological parent." Finally, the court noted that "counsel for the child recommends termination of the respondent's parental rights, as does the guardian ad litem for the minor child." In conclusion, the court stated that, "considering the child's sense of time, need for a secure and permanent environment, need to avoid future placements, and the totality of circumstances, the court concludes that termination of the parental rights of the respondent . . . is in the best [interest] of the minor child."

"Our appellate courts have recognized that long-term stability is critical to a child's future health and development . . . ." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re*

Anthony H., 104 Conn. App. 744, 767, 936 A.2d 638 (2007), cert. denied, 285 Conn. 920, 943 A.2d 1100 (2008); see also *In re Davonta V.*, supra, 285 Conn. 494 (our Supreme Court recognizing that "[v]irtually all experts, from many different professional disciplines, agree that children need and benefit from continuous, stable home environments" (internal quotation marks omitted)). The court found that Anthony was removed from the respondent's care on November 8, 2016, and placed with his current relative foster placement at the age of six. At the time of the trial, Anthony, who was then eleven years old, had been living with his foster family for five years, and the trial court found that he "is extremely attached to his foster parents," loves them, and "wants to be adopted by [them]."[16] See General Statutes § 17a-112 (k) (4) and (5). Moreover, the trial court's findings were supported by the testimony of Anthony's guardian ad litem, who testified that it is "in Anthony's best interest to remain in the foster home and be adopted by the foster family . . . because they have been providing his basic needs . . . [t]hey have his best interests in mind . . . [and they take] care of him as if he was their own." See *In re Kadon M.*, 194 Conn. App. 100, 107, 219 A.3d 985 (2019) ("a guardian ad litem must promote and protect the best interest of a child" (internal quotation marks omitted)). In support of her argument, the respondent asserts that "it is undisputed that there is a bond between the respondent and her son, and that they both love and care for each other." Although there was some evidence for the court's consideration that the respondent and Anthony love one another, such evidence is insufficient for this court to conclude that the trial court improperly determined that it is in Anthony's best interest to terminate the respondent's parental rights. See *In re Ryder M.*, supra, 211 Conn. App. 821 ("[t]hat a bond *may* exist between the respondent and [the child] does not undercut the court's best interest determination in light of the myriad of other considerations taken into account by the court" (emphasis added)); *In re Anthony H.*, supra, 765–66 ("[o]ur courts consistently have held that even when there is a finding of a bond between parent and a child, it still may be in the child's best interest to terminate parental rights" (internal quotation marks omitted)). Accordingly, we conclude that the court's determination that termination of the respondent's parental rights was in Anthony's best interest was factually supported and legally sound.

The judgment is affirmed.

In this opinion the other judges concurred.

* In accordance with the spirit and intent of General Statutes § 46b-142 (b) and Practice Book § 79a-12, the names of the parties involved in this appeal are not disclosed. The records and papers of this case shall be open for inspection only to persons having a proper interest therein and upon order of the court.

** March 9, 2023, the date that this decision was released as a slip opinion, is the operative date for all substantive and procedural purposes.

[1] Lewis S., Anthony's father, died on October 5, 2017, prior to the filing of the operative petition for termination of parental rights. We hereinafter refer to the respondent mother as the respondent and to Lewis S. by name.

[2] Pursuant to Practice Book §§ 67-13 and 79a-6 (c), the attorney for the minor child filed a statement adopting the brief filed by the petitioner, the Commissioner of Children and Families.

[3] The record reflects that the department received a call from the Bridgeport Police Department indicating that the police were called to the respondent's home on a neighbor's report of a domestic dispute between the respondent and her partner at the time, Johnny K. Upon obtaining a search warrant, the police found "a large amount of [c]ocaine . . . in the bedroom area . . . [and] drug paraphernalia was found in the kitchen, such as material to 'cut' the cocaine and a scale . . . ." The police observed the respondent to have "a small laceration on her forearm and swelling on the left side of her face" and that Anthony, age six, was in the home with another child. The respondent and Johnny were "arrested on charges of [p]ossession with [i]ntent to [s]ell, [p]ossession [w]ithin 1500 [f]eet of a [s]chool, [d]isorderly [c]onduct, and [r]isk of [i]njury to a [m]inor . . . [and Johnny] was also arrested for [a]ssault 3."

[4] The respondent's complete specific steps were (1) to keep all appointments set by or with the department and to cooperate with the department's home visits, announced or unannounced, and visits by Anthony's court-appointed attorney and/or guardian ad litem; (2) to let the department and her and Anthony's attorneys know her and Anthony's whereabouts at all times; (3) to take part in counseling and make progress toward the identified treatment goals, specifically, to "[e]nhance parenting skills and ensure [the] safety of [the] home environment; address mental health issues [and] understand [the] impact of [an] unsafe home environment [on] children"; (4) to accept the in-home support services referred by the department and cooperate with them; (5) to submit to a substance abuse evaluation and follow the recommendations about treatment, including inpatient treatment if necessary, aftercare and relapse prevention; (6) to submit to random drug testing, the time and method of testing to be determined by the department; (7) not to use illegal drugs or abuse alcohol or medicine; (8) to cooperate with service providers recommended for parenting, individual, and family counseling, in-home support services and/or substance abuse assessment and/or treatment, including a "[p]arenting program, to be referred/individual therapy/substance abuse treatment, Southwest Community Health Center [and] AIC program-Community Solutions"; (9) to cooperate with court-ordered evaluations or testing; (10) to sign releases allowing the department to talk to service providers to check on attendance, cooperation, and progress toward identified goals and for use in future proceedings with the court; (11) to sign releases allowing Anthony's attorney and guardian ad litem to review his medical, psychological, psychiatric and/or educational records; (12) to get or maintain adequate housing and a legal source of income; (13) to immediately inform the department of any changes in the makeup of the household to make sure that the change does not hurt the health and safety of the child; (14) to have no further involvement with the criminal justice system and to follow conditions of probation or parole; (15) to cooperate with Anthony's therapy; (16) to visit Anthony as often as the department permits; (17) to notify the department in writing of the name, address, family relationship, and birthdate of any person(s) whom the department should investigate and consider as a placement resource for Anthony; and (18) to tell the department the names and addresses of Anthony's grandparents.

[5] The petitioner had previously filed a petition for termination of parental rights as to Anthony on August 24, 2018, which was withdrawn on May 14, 2019.

[6] In its memorandum of decision, the court also denied two of the respondent's motions: (1) a motion to revoke commitment of Anthony filed on July 29, 2020, to which the petitioner filed an objection on November 9, 2020, and (2) a motion for posttermination visitation filed on August 18, 2021, to which the petitioner and counsel for Anthony filed separate objections on September 1, 2021.

On her appeal form, the respondent purports to appeal from the court's denial of her motions. The respondent, however, has not briefed any specific claims of error with respect to these rulings and, thus, has abandoned those aspects of her appeal. See *Casiraghi* v. *Casiraghi*, 200 Conn. App. 771, 772 n.1, 241 A.3d 717 (2020). "It is necessary to this court's review of a party's claims on appeal that [her] brief contain, inter alia, argument and analysis regarding the alleged errors of the trial court, with appropriate references

to the facts bearing on the issues raised." *Zappola* v. *Zappola*, 159 Conn. App. 84, 86, 122 A.3d 267 (2015).

[7] "Proceedings to terminate parental rights are governed by [General Statutes] § 17a-112. . . . Under § 17a-112, a hearing on a petition to terminate parental rights consists of two phases: the adjudicatory phase and the dispositional phase. During the adjudicatory phase, the trial court must determine whether one or more of the . . . grounds for termination of parental rights set forth in § 17a-112 [(j) (3)] exists by clear and convincing evidence. . . . If the trial court determines that a statutory ground for termination exists, then it proceeds to the dispositional phase. During the dispositional phase, the trial court must determine whether termination is in the best interests of the child. . . . The best interest determination also must be supported by clear and convincing evidence." (Citation omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Shane M.*, 318 Conn. 569, 582–83 n.12, 122 A.3d 1247 (2015).

[8] The court noted that, "[a]ccording to Silagy, Anthony is diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder . . . child physical abuse, confirmed, other specified disruptive, impulse control, and conduct disorder (to include inappropriate sexualized behaviors) as well as parent-child relational problems."

Additionally, the court stated that "[s]ome of Anthony's long-term goals are to recall the traumatic event without becoming overwhelmed with negative emotions; interact normally with friends and family without irrational fears or intrusive thoughts that control behavior; return to pre-trauma level of functioning without avoiding people, places, thoughts, or feelings associated with the traumatic event; display a full range of emotions without experiencing loss of control; and develop and implement effective coping skills that allow for carrying out normal responsibilities and participating in relationships and social activities."

[9] "Careline is a department telephone service that mandatory reporters and others may call to report suspected child abuse or neglect." *In re Katherine H.*, 183 Conn. App. 320, 322 n.4, 192 A.3d 537, cert. denied, 330 Conn. 906, 192 A.3d 426 (2018).

[10] General Statutes § 17a-112 (k) provides: "Except in the case where termination of parental rights is based on consent, in determining whether to terminate parental rights under this section, the court shall consider and shall make written findings regarding: (1) The timeliness, nature and extent of services offered, provided and made available to the parent and the child by an agency to facilitate the reunion of the child with the parent; (2) whether the Department of Children and Families has made reasonable efforts to reunite the family pursuant to the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, as amended from time to time; (3) the terms of any applicable court order entered into and agreed upon by any individual or agency and the parent, and the extent to which all parties have fulfilled their obligations under such order; (4) the feelings and emotional ties of the child with respect to the child's parents, any guardian of such child's person and any person who has exercised physical care, custody or control of the child for at least one year and with whom the child has developed significant emotional ties; (5) the age of the child; (6) the efforts the parent has made to adjust such parent's circumstances, conduct, or conditions to make it in the best interest of the child to return such child home in the foreseeable future, including, but not limited to, (A) the extent to which the parent has maintained contact with the child as part of an effort to reunite the child with the parent, provided the court may give weight to incidental visitations, communications or contributions, and (B) the maintenance of regular contact or communication with the guardian or other custodian of the child; and (7) the extent to which a parent has been prevented from maintaining a meaningful relationship with the child by the unreasonable act or conduct of the other parent of the child, or the unreasonable act of any other person or by the economic circumstances of the parent."

[11] Additionally, as part of the respondent's argument that the department failed to offer appropriate services to her, she asserts that "[t]he [department] never made a referral for a neutral family therapist." The respondent's argument falters on the fact that she has failed to direct us to any evidence that tends to support her claim; rather, she merely asserts that the child's therapist was "not 'a neutral party.' " We are unpersuaded by the respondent's argument because, "[e]ven if the evidence had established that additional family therapy might have been beneficial, such evidence does not render the trial court's finding clearly erroneous." *In re Melody L.*, 290 Conn. 131, 147, 962 A.2d 81 (2009), overruled in part on other grounds by *State*

v. *Elson*, 311 Conn. 726, 91 A.3d 862 (2014).

[12] "Dialectical [b]ehavior [t]herapy is an evidence-based psychotherapy to treat borderline personality disorder and is useful in treating patients seeking change in behavioral patterns such as substance abuse and domestic or non-domestic violence against others. It is a process in which the therapist helps the patient find and employ strategies and ultimately synthesize them to accomplish consistently the defined ultimate goal and is used to treat borderline personality disorders and addictive personality disorders. To be successful, it demands honesty both from the patient and the clinician." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Aubrey K.*, 216 Conn. App. 632, 661 n.14, 285 A.3d 1153 (2022), cert. denied, 345 Conn. 972, 286 A.3d 907 (2023).

[13] In support of her claim that the court improperly determined that the department had made reasonable efforts toward reunification, the respondent argues that "[t]he [department] did not offer appropriate services to [her] and, if anything, contributed to the deterioration of the parent-child relationship by allowing the child's therapist to exert inappropriate control of the visitation between the respondent and her child." The respondent furthers asserts that "the child's therapist actively undermined the relationship between the respondent and her son," "[t]he involvement of the child's therapist to supervise visits and/or to provide family therapy was entirely inappropriate," and "[t]he child's therapist took a difficult situation regarding the increasing strain and anxiety of the relationship during visits between the respondent and her child and made it worse."

In response, the petitioner asserts that the respondent "glosses over the dispositive fact that Ms. Silagy only supervised her visits with Anthony for one month out of the six years [that] Anthony has been in the department's care. So any concerns about Ms. Silagy's supervision would not be a basis for reversing the trial court's finding that the department's reunification efforts on the whole were reasonable." Additionally, the petitioner notes that, "[a]s soon as [the respondent] expressed concerns about Ms. Silagy, the department secured a new provider, Klingberg, to supervise the visits." We agree with the petitioner's response.

"[O]ur courts are instructed to look to the totality of the facts and circumstances presented in each individual case in deciding whether reasonable efforts have been made." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Ryder M.*, supra, 211 Conn. App. 811. The totality of the circumstances reveals that the department made extensive efforts to support visitation between the respondent and Anthony prior to its decision to utilize Silagy as a therapeutic services provider, the department utilized her therapeutic services for a very short period of time, and, following cessation of her services, the department continued to make reasonable efforts toward reunification between the respondent and Anthony by making alternative arrangements for therapeutic services. Accordingly, we cannot conclude that the department's use of Anthony's therapist as a visitation supervisor rendered the entirety of the petitioner's efforts inappropriate.

[14] As set forth in her principal appellate brief, the majority of the respondent's arguments in support of her failure to rehabilitate claim simply restate her arguments in support of her reasonable efforts claim. For example, as a general proposition, the respondent maintains that "there is insufficient evidence to support the court's finding that the respondent has failed to rehabilitate herself, especially when considering the limitation of services, as well as interference by the child's therapist in the reunification process." We have already concluded that the court properly found that the department made reasonable efforts to reunify Anthony with the respondent; see part I of this opinion; accordingly, we decline to address the respondent's arguments premised on the department's efforts. Additionally, for the same reasons, we reject the respondent's arguments premised on the alleged "interference" of the child's therapist. See footnote 13 of this opinion.

[15] In her reply brief, the respondent argues, for the first time, that "[t]here [was] a clear alternative to termination of parental rights especially when the child is placed with a family member . . . [and the court] can find that it is appropriate to have a permanent transfer of guardianship rather than a termination of parental rights as being in the [child's] best [interest]." During oral argument before this court, the respondent's appellate counsel conceded that, because this argument was not raised in the respondent's principal brief, this court need not review it. We decline to review the respondent's argument because not only was it not raised in her principal appellate brief, but it also was not raised before the trial court. See *In re Sequoia G.*, 205 Conn. App. 222, 234–35, 256 A.3d 195, cert. denied, 338 Conn. 904, 258 A.3d 675 (2021).

[16] In support of her argument, the respondent asserts that she "raised her child for seven years and according to the testimony of Mr. Serrano and Mr. Perez, the respondent was loving, kind, attentive and met her son's needs when he was in her care." Additionally, the respondent cites to *In re Kezia M.*, 33 Conn. App. 12, 17–18, 632 A.2d 1122, cert. denied, 228 Conn. 915, 636 A.2d 847 (1993), for the proposition that "the commonly understood general obligations of parenthood entail these minimum attributes . . . 1. Expressions of love and affection; 2. Personal concern for the health, education and well-being of the child; 3. Supplying food, clothing, medical care, etc. for the minor child; 4. Providing adequate housing for the child; and 5. Providing social and religious guidance for the child." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) Thereafter, she asserts that she "undeniably has expressed her love and affection for her son, she has expressed interest in her son's health, education and well-being by bringing gifts and food to the visits, she has bought him food, clothing and gifts, she can provide adequate housing, and she has attempted to provide social and religious guidance as well."

The court in *In re Kezia M.* cited to "[t]he commonly understood general obligations of parenthood" as part of its analysis of whether the parent had abandoned his child pursuant to what is now § 17a-112 (j) (3) (A), which is not at issue in this appeal. (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re Kezia M.*, supra, 33 Conn. App. 18. Accordingly, we are unpersuaded by the respondent's argument.