

Arkansas Department of Human Services

**COURT REPORT**

**I. COURT INFORMATION**

**Hearing Type:** Court Review  
**Hearing Date:** 10/15/2021

**County of Jurisdiction:** Marion (Yellville)  
**Judge's Name:** Hon. Deanna S. Layton

**II. CHILD(REN)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>
PAULA MILLS	01/11/2011

**III. DHS RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Return Home
- Continued Foster Care and Work with Family
- Placement with Relatives
- Proceed Toward Custody with Parental Rights Terminated
- None of the Above

**DHS Recommendations Text:**

The Department respectfully recommends Paula continues in foster care with a permanency goal of reunification with Kimberly Mills and a concurrent plan of permanent relative custody with Donna Smith.

**IV. FAMILY PROGRESS**

**A. Child Welfare Background and Reasons for Intervention:**

Harm Statement: It was reported that on August 21, 2021, Kimberly Mills overdosed on meth and lost consciousness while cooking dinner, causing the kitchen to catch fire. A neighbor smelled smoke and called police who entered the home and found Paula scared of the fire and worried for her mother's health. DCFS provided substance misuse treatment services for the family previously when Paula was 6 resulting in successful case closure of the protective services case.

**B. Child(ren)'s Situation (physical, emotional, educational, psycho-social) Including Current Health and Safety Needs and Current Placement (Independent Living, if appropriate):**

Paula is placed in a provisional resource home with her maternal aunt, Donna Smith. Paula is well adjusted in Donna's home. Paula had a counseling intake with Ozark Counseling Services and participates in school-based counseling weekly. Progress report was requested 9/23/2021 and is attached to the court report.

Paula was worried that she would lose connection with her friends in her neighborhood and church, so Donna has been taking Paula to church youth group meetings on Wednesday nights and Paula has been playing in neighborhood basketball games twice per week after school. Paula attended her PACE appointment and there were no recommendations for follow up.

### **C. Children's Adjustment in Placement and Progress in School:**

Paula was able to remain in her school of origin. The school was provided a notice of traumatic events and is aware Paula may experience some adjustment issues. Paula is in 4th grade at Yellville Summit School. Paula is doing well in school and brings home A's and B's on her graded papers. Interim progress reports will not be issued until after this review period. Paula does not have any special educational needs.

### **D. Parent's Current Living Situation (Financial, Physical, Mental, and Emotional):**

#### **Worry Statements:**

- Paul is worried he will be unable to reintegrate into society if he is unable to participate in discharge planning.
- Paul is worried that he will be homeless if he isn't able to communicate with Kim while he is in prison.
- Paul is worried that he will have no income if he cannot locate a job prior to release.
- DCFS is worried that Paul will use poor coping skills and criminal activity to 'survive' if he is unable to engage in services and discharge planning while incarcerated.

**Goal Statement:** Paul will have confidence in his discharge plan when he engages with the prison social worker and participates in discharge planning. Paul is meeting this goal currently.

**Worry Statement:** Mrs. Mills and Donna and Ann are worried Paula could experience homelessness, lack of adequate nutrition, or social instability if Mrs. Mills is unable to obtain full-time employment.

**Goal Statement:** Paula will feel safe and secure in the care provided for her when Kim uses positive coping skills and always reaches out to the network for help when triggered. Mrs. Mills has stable residence through assistance of family members. Kim is currently managing her depression and anxiety through attending counseling and medication management with Ozark Guidance Center. Progress report requested from OCG 9/27/21 and is attached to this court report.

### **E. Parent's Progress on Disposition Order/Court Order/Treatment Plan/Efforts to Correct Conditions(s):**

**Worry Statement:** Mr. and Mrs. Mills and all Network members are worried that Mrs. Mills' relapse will continue to put Paula in situations where Paula is unsafe, scared for her mother's safety, and traumatized. **Goal Statement:** Paula will feel safe and secure in the care provided for her when Kim uses positive coping skills and always reaches out to the network for help when triggered. Mrs. Mills is attending counseling and has demonstrated an ability to reach out to her sponsor, Millie, and therapist, Sam, when she is having trouble coping and wants to use meth.

Paul has started meeting monthly with his social worker at the prison to discuss services and discharge planning. Paul has requested family therapy with Kimberly Mills to discuss their relationship going forward. The prison and DCFS worked together and scheduled an intake to be completed in the prison for October 22.

Mrs. Mills has not had the opportunity to contact the network to keep Paula safe and for this reason, the Department is recommending that family time be expanded to unsupervised weekends to provide Mrs. Mills opportunity to demonstrate this action of protection.

### **F. Family Time (Visitation Between Child(ren) and Parents, Relatives, Siblings, etc., and Results):**

**Worry Statement:** Paula is worried about the well-being of her mom and dad if she loses connection with them. **Goal Statement:** Paula will have a sense of safety and security about her parent's well-being when Mr. and Mrs. Mills have routine contact with Paula each week. Paula and Kimberly have a minimum of 4 hours per week of bonding and interaction in the home of Donna Smith. What's working well during family time is Kim's overall consistent sobriety and demonstration of age-appropriate discipline and planning of interactive activities with Paula. Kim attends all family time as scheduled and Paula demonstrates a respect for her mother by following directions and showing affection in the form of hugging and verbal, "I love you's". Paula has family time with Paul via zoom and in person at the prison

on a basis coordinated with the prison in accordance with prison rules and guidelines. Paula also had two face-to-face family time sessions with Paul at the prison.

**G. Permanency Plan:(Include Independent Living Information, if Appropriate):**

**Worry Statement:** Donna and Paula are worried that Paula will be confused, scared, and sad if Paula is unable to return to Kim's home. **Goal Statement:** Paula will have a sense of security about her future when DCFS completes an adoption packet and concurrently plans for permanency in Donna's home as a backup plan. The network has agreed that the best concurrent plan for Paula is to remain in the care and custody of Donna Smith if reunification with Kimberly Mills is not possible. The network agrees that Paula is very bonded to Mr. and Mrs. Mills and that terminating parental rights would not benefit anyone in the family. Donna Smith has agreed to work with the network to provide supervision for and allow continued contact between Paula and Mr. and Mrs. Mills on a long-term basis if necessary.

**Worry Statement:** Paula, DCFS, and Mrs. Mills are worried that Paula will suffer emotionally, physically, and socially if she loses her connections with her Network. **Goal Statement:** Paula will remain connected with her network and her neighborhood culture. On a short-term basis, the network has agreed to work together to ensure Paulais able to continue attending her church youth group on Wednesday nights and her neighborhood basketball game twice per week.

**H. Additional Information (location of siblings, services offered, etc.):**

Mrs. Mills has a stable support network and has expanded her network to include those necessary to support sobriety and stable care of Paula. Services benefitting the family include: provisional resource home, crisis intervention, network development, substance misuse outpatient treatment, individual counseling. Services referred and not yet benefitting the family include: employment services, family counseling.

**V. SIGNATURES**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Family Service Worker

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date