

MONICA BERRY

Monica Berry is a 14-year-old Caucasian girl who has lived in foster care for the past 12 months. Monica is under the jurisdiction of the State because her 31 year-old mother, Ms. Eleanor Berry, overdosed on methamphetamines and alcohol and was brought to the Emergency Room. Monica was home alone for the previous three days. Monica's mother acknowledges that she is addicted to both alcohol and prescription and non-prescription drugs. The court ruled that if left untreated, she would be unable to appropriately care for Monica and keep her safe. Monica's father died in an automobile accident when Monica was 2 years old. The DHS caseworker conducted a diligent relative search and no suitable kinship placement was available to care for a 14 year-old girl with the need for specialized educational, behavioral, and medical needs. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is not applicable because it was determined by the court that ICWA does not apply.

Monica was in care once previously. Her 9 year-old twin brothers were taken into custody from the hospital at birth. They were born medically fragile met the criteria for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. They were unable to regulate their body temperatures and were fed through a g-tube. They were placed in a non-relative foster care placement specialized to serve children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). Ms. Berry relinquished the twins for adoption and expressed the belief that the boys would receive the care that they deserved. Subsequently, the foster parents adopted the boys when they were 18 months old.

Monica was also removed from the home when her brothers were removed from their mother's care. She was five years old at the time. Monica's mother made sufficient progress

during the next year such that the court determined that it was safe for Monica to be returned to her mother just after her 6th birthday.

Monica resided with her mother for the next eight years. She attended several different schools during this time. She was eligible to receive Special Education services and she has an Individual Support Plan (ISP) that addresses cognitive/developmental delays and her need for help in the reading, arithmetic, and speech. Monica also receives services to address her behavioral issues. The behavioral specialist reports that she has trouble concentrating and staying focused, is impulsive and belligerent, displays poor judgment, and does not seem to respond to disciplinary strategies that are typically used in an educational setting.

When the Citizen Review Board (CRB) reviewed her file 6 months ago, they recommended that Monica be assessed for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Although she did not have any physical signs of the disorder, several factors were concerning: Monica's mother disclosed that she used alcohol and substances throughout her life; her brothers were identified as having FASD; and Monica's developmental and behavioral characteristics were consistent with FASD.