2026 IL App (2d) 260304-U
No. 2-26-0304
Order filed November 2, 2026

NOTICE: This order was filed under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 23(b) and is not precedential except in the limited circumstances allowed under Rule 23(e)(1).

IN THE

APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS

SECOND DISTRICT

In re P.G., a Minor

(The People of the State of Illinois, Petitioner-Appellee, v. Satinia W., Respondent-Appellant).

Appeal from the Circuit Court of McHenry County.
Honorable Carl E. Metz II, Judge, Presiding.
No. 26-JA-10

JUSTICE MULLEN delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Hutchinson and Schostok concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held*: The trial court's finding that the minor was abused and neglected was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 2 Respondent, Satinia W., appeals from the judgment of the circuit court of McHenry County adjudicating her daughter, P.G., an abused and neglected minor pursuant to sections 2-3(1)(b) and 2-3(2)(ii) of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 (Juvenile Court Act) (705 ILCS 405/2-3(1)(b), 2-3(2)(ii) (West 2024)). On appeal, respondent challenges the trial court's findings of abuse and neglect. We affirm.

¶ 3 I. BACKGROUND

¶ 4 This appeal involves P.G., who was born on April 14, 2023. Respondent is P.G.'s mother and Justin G. is P.G.'s father. Respondent is also the mother to two other children, B.F. and O.T. Justin is not biologically related to B.F. or O.T. and is not a party to this appeal.

¶ 5 On February 3, 2026, the State filed a petition for adjudication of wardship regarding P.G. The petition alleged that P.G. was a neglected minor pursuant to section 2-3(1)(b) of the Juvenile Court Act (705 ILCS 405/2-3(1)(b) (West 2024)) in that her environment was injurious to her welfare. The petition further alleged that P.G. was an abused minor pursuant to section 2-3(2)(ii) of the Juvenile Court Act (705 ILCS 405/2-3(2)(ii) (West 2024)) because a family member or household resident created a substantial risk of physical injury to her by other than accidental means, which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of emotional health, or loss or impairment of bodily function.

¶ 6 In support of those allegations, the State recounted a series of incidents involving respondent and Justin. The petition alleged that on May 20, 2022 (prior to P.G.'s birth), respondent became intoxicated and sent Justin messages containing suicidal statements while she was the sole caregiver for B.F. and O.T. When Justin returned home, respondent was highly intoxicated and behaving erratically. Respondent cut her leg, and Justin restrained her on the ground. The petition further alleged that respondent had not been complying with her mental-health medications prior to the incident.

¶ 7 The petition also described later events involving the family. On October 3, 2023, B.F. reported that Justin had caused abrasions on his back. Both B.F. and O.T. reported that Justin was mean to them and disciplined them physically. The family later agreed to participate in a transitional visit with intact family services. During the intact-services case, Justin allegedly

resisted participation in services, consumed alcohol in the presence of the intact worker, and encouraged the worker to consume alcohol as well. The petition further alleged that on January 30, 2024, B.F. reported that Justin pushed him, and Justin admitted doing so because B.F. was not listening to respondent.

¶ 8 The petition next alleged that on November 27, 2025, Justin became highly intoxicated and threatened suicide using a firearm. Respondent hid the firearm to keep it away from Justin. According to the petition, respondent later departed the residence and left P.G. in Justin's care. When respondent returned, she found P.G. unsupervised in the bathroom playing with bath salts. The petition further alleged that when the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) attempted to conduct a home safety check on December 2, 2025, respondent denied the investigator entry to the residence. During that interaction, respondent acknowledged that Justin had stopped taking his mental health medication, had become intoxicated, and had threatened to harm himself. Respondent also admitted hiding the firearm and not contacting emergency services. Justin later admitted that he consumes alcohol after P.G. goes to sleep and that he was having "bad thoughts" on November 27, 2025. He further reported that he and respondent alternate their alcohol consumption so that one remains sober while the other drinks. The petition additionally referenced prior indicated findings involving respondent and Justin and concluded that adjudication of wardship was in P.G.'s best interests.

¶ 9 The trial court held an adjudicatory hearing on April 27, 2026. The State first called Ferrara Lund, a licensed clinical social worker employed at the DCFS hotline who had previously conducted and supervised DCFS investigations. Lund testified regarding a prior DCFS investigation involving respondent and Justin that resulted in an indicated finding concerning B.F. and O.T. Lund explained that DCFS initiated an investigation in June 2022 after receiving reports

that respondent was intoxicated, threatened self-harm, and had cut her leg. The investigation resulted in the Sequence B Report SCR2392902B (discussed below). Although DCFS offered intact family services at the conclusion of that investigation, respondent and Justin declined those services. The sequence B report was admitted into evidence with no objection from respondent's attorney.

¶ 10 According to the Sequence B Report, respondent was the sole caregiver for B.F. and O.T. during the May 20, 2022, incident. Around 1 a.m., dispatch received a call reporting that respondent was extremely intoxicated and threatening to cut herself. At the time, Justin was at work and started receiving suicidal messages from respondent. When Justin returned home from work, the children were in bed. Respondent was screaming, behaving erratically, and threatening self-harm. She ultimately cut her thigh. Justin reported that respondent had bipolar disorder and had not taken her medications for about six months. Based on those circumstances, DCFS indicated allegations of substantial risk of physical injury and injurious environment with respect to B.F. and O.T. Respondent later admitted to the allegations underlying the May 20, 2022, incident.

¶ 11 The Sequence B Report documented additional concerns regarding neglect, inadequate supervision, substance abuse, and mental-health issues affecting respondent's and Justin's ability to provide care. Respondent acknowledged earlier experiences involving domestic violence but denied any domestic violence in her relationship with Justin. During a later telephone interview, respondent admitted that she had consumed alcohol during the incident, had cut her thigh, and had behaved erratically. Respondent attributed her conduct to alcohol use and discussed a prior mental-health episode that she associated with bipolar disorder.

¶ 12 The State next called Darien Torres, who worked with the family as an intact caseworker between November 2023 and the summer of 2025. Torres testified that he maintained weekly contact with respondent and conducted regular visits to the family home. Whenever Justin was present during a visit, Torres observed him consuming alcohol. On one occasion, Justin offered Torres whiskey during a visit. Torres otherwise described respondent and Justin as cordial with one another and affectionate toward the children.

¶ 13 The State's final witness was Phylicia Ranes, a DCFS child protection specialist assigned to investigate allegations concerning P.G. in December 2025. Ranes testified regarding the November 2025 incident. She related that Justin became intoxicated, expressed suicidal thoughts, and asked respondent to secure his firearm so that he would not act on those thoughts. According to the call, respondent hid the firearm and left P.G. in Justin's care. Upon her return, respondent reportedly found Justin passed out and P.G. playing with bath salts in the bathroom.

¶ 14 Ranes visited the residence at about 12:30 p.m. on December 2, 2025. Ranes met respondent at the door. Respondent was disheveled and rubbing her eyes, explaining that she had just woken up from a nap. Respondent was verbally combative with Ranes. Ranes asked respondent about the incident where Justin said he was suicidal and she hid his gun. Respondent reported that the incident occurred and that Justin "was in a really bad place at that time." Respondent related that Justin was intoxicated and had not taken his medication for several days. According to respondent, she asked Justin if she should call 911 to get him help, but he "freaked out," so she did not report it. Respondent told Ranes that the firearm had been secured in a safe located in the garage.

¶ 15 Justin was not in the house when Ranes spoke to respondent at her door. Respondent initially said Justin was going to be gone for 28 days. However, later in the conversation, she said

Justin would only be gone until the end of the week. Ranes asked to see the home, but respondent refused to allow her access. Ranes asked to see P.G. and respondent brought her to the door. P.G. also appeared disheveled, her hair was a mess, and she was covered in marker. Respondent reported that the marker was permanent.

¶ 16 Ranes later spoke with Justin by phone. Justin admitted that he had consumed alcohol and had been in a poor mental state without his medication. Justin described both his own alcohol use and respondent's substance use. He stated that the couple's alcohol consumption tended to occur in "waves." He further reported that, while he typically drank after the children went to bed, there were occasions when he drank while the children were awake.

¶ 17 As part of her investigation, Ranes prepared the Sequence E Report SCR2392902E, which was admitted into evidence (discussed below). Ranes testified that DCFS could not offer intact family services because respondent refused to allow the agency entry to the residence.

¶ 18 On cross-examination, Ranes acknowledged that respondent later denied leaving P.G. alone with Justin and asserted that she had remained present throughout the incident. Justin likewise maintained that respondent had been present and sober during the relevant events. Ranes also testified that she did not know how long respondent may have been away from the residence.

¶ 19 The Sequence E report reflected conflicting accounts regarding whether respondent left Justin alone with P.G. Nevertheless, the investigator recommended that the allegation be indicated, concluding that sufficient evidence existed to support a finding that respondent left P.G. in Justin's care while he was intoxicated. The report further identified concerns relating to both parents' histories of substance use and mental-health issues. The allegation was ultimately indicated against both respondent and Justin.

¶ 20 After the State rested, respondent and Justin moved for a directed finding. The trial court denied the motion, finding Ranes credible and emphasizing that Justin was intoxicated, had stopped taking his medication, had expressed concern about harming himself, and had required the firearm to be secured. After respondent hid the firearm, she left for an unknown period of time. The court noted that respondent and Justin later changed their accounts and asserted that respondent remained in the residence throughout the incident. The court found those accounts not credible. The court further stated that, even if respondent had remained in the home, it was "incredibly dangerous and hazardous" to fail to seek assistance given the seriousness of Justin's condition.

¶ 21 Neither respondent nor Justin presented evidence. Following argument, the trial court found P.G. abused and neglected on both grounds alleged in the petition. The court explained that it placed no weight on the prior Sequence B Report and instead relied primarily on the testimony and evidence presented concerning the events of November and December 2025.

¶ 22 Following a hearing on May 21, 2026, the trial court entered a dispositional order finding it was in P.G.'s best interest that she be made a ward of the court. In addition, the court found respondent and Justin fit, able, and willing to care for, protect, train, educate, supervise, and discipline P.G. The court also found that reasonable efforts and appropriate services aimed at family reunification had been made to keep P.G. in the home. Therefore, custody and guardianship of P.G. remained with respondent and Justin. On June 22, 2026, respondent filed a notice of appeal.[1]

[1]Thirty days after the date of disposition fell on Saturday, June 20, 2026. Therefore, respondent timely filed her notice of appeal the following Monday, June 22, 2026.

¶ 23 II. ANALYSIS

¶ 24 On appeal, respondent contends that the trial court's findings that P.G. was neglected due to an injurious environment and abused due to a substantial risk of physical injury were against the manifest weight of the evidence. We disagree.

¶ 25 The Juvenile Court Act (705 ILCS 405/1-1 *et seq*. (West 2024)) establishes a two-stage process for the adjudication of wardship. *In re A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 18. Initially, the trial court conducts an adjudicatory hearing to determine whether the minor is abused, neglected, or dependent. 705 ILCS 405/2-18(1) (West 2024); *A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 19. At this stage, the focus is on the condition of the minor, not on assigning fault to a particular parent. *In re Arthur H.*, 212 Ill. 2d 441, 464-67 (2004). The State must prove the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. *In re V.S.*, 2025 IL 129755, ¶ 51; *In re Z.L.*, 2021 IL 126931, ¶ 61. Under this standard, the State must establish that the allegations are more probably true than not. *V.S.*, 2025 IL 129755, ¶ 51.

¶ 26 If the trial court determines that the minor is abused, neglected, or dependent, the matter proceeds to a dispositional hearing at which it determines whether it is consistent with the health, safety, and best interests of the minor and the public that the minor be made a ward of the court. 705 ILCS 405/2-21(2) (West 2024); *A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 21. Proceedings involving allegations of abuse and neglect and adjudication of wardship are *sui generis* and must be resolved on the basis of their unique facts and circumstances. *Arthur H.*, 212 Ill. 2d at 463. In all proceedings under the Juvenile Court Act, the minor's best interests remain the paramount consideration. *A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 18.

¶ 27 A neglected minor includes any minor whose environment is injurious to his or her welfare. 705 ILCS 405/2-3(1)(b) (West 2024); *A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 22. Neglect is defined as "the failure

to exercise the care that circumstances justly demand" and encompasses both willful and unintentional disregard of parental duty. *A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 22. "It takes its content always from specific circumstances, and its meaning varies as the context of surrounding circumstances changes." *A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 22. Similarly, the term "injurious environment" is an "amorphous concept that cannot be defined with particularity" but includes a "breach of a parent's duty to ensure a safe and nurturing shelter for his or her children." *A.P.*, 2012 IL 113875, ¶ 22.

¶ 28 An abused minor under section 2-3(ii) of the Juvenile Court Act includes one whose parent or other person responsible for his or her welfare creates a substantial risk of physical injury likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function. 705 ILCS 405/2-3(2)(ii) (West 2024). Actual injury is not required. *In re A.S.*, 2020 IL App (1st) 200560, ¶ 35. Exposure to a substantial risk of physical injury is sufficient. *A.S.*, 2020 IL App (1st) 200560, ¶ 35. Moreover, the same allegations supporting the finding of neglect due to injurious environment can also support the finding of abuse due to substantial risk of physical injury. *A.S.*, 2020 IL App (1st) 200560, ¶ 34.

¶ 29 A trial court's finding of neglect or abuse will not be reversed on appeal unless it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *Z.L.*, 2021 IL 126931, ¶ 61. A finding is against the manifest weight of the evidence where the opposite conclusion is clearly apparent or the trial court's determination is unreasonable, arbitrary, or not based on the evidence presented. *In re Juan M.*, 2012 IL App (1st) 113096, ¶ 49. Because the trial court observes the witnesses firsthand, it is in the best position to assess credibility and its factual findings are entitled to substantial deference. *In re Sharena H.*, 366 Ill. App. 3d 405, 415 (2006). Accordingly, we may not reweigh the evidence or substitute our judgment for that of the trial court merely because conflicting inferences could be drawn from the record. *In re K.W.*, 2026 IL App (1st) 250872, ¶ 75.

¶ 30 We conclude that the trial court's findings of both neglect and abuse were not against the manifest weight of the evidence. The trial court expressly stated that it relied primarily upon the events surrounding the November 2025 incident, not the earlier report involving respondent's older children. The evidence regarding that incident was sufficient to support the trial court's findings.

¶ 31 The evidence established that Justin became intoxicated, stopped taking his prescribed mental-health medication, and experienced suicidal thoughts severe enough that he requested that respondent remove his firearm. Respondent noted that Justin was "in a really bad place," admitted that he had been drinking and was off his medication, and acknowledged that she did not contact emergency services because Justin reacted negatively when she suggested doing so.

¶ 32 The evidence further showed that respondent initially confirmed the substance of the hotline allegations during her interview with Ranes. Those allegations included that respondent removed the firearm and then left P.G. in Justin's care. When respondent returned, Justin was reportedly passed out and P.G. was in the bathroom playing with bath salts. Although respondent and Justin later attempted to modify their accounts and asserted that respondent never left the residence, the trial court expressly rejected those later statements as not credible. The court was entitled to do so. It is not this court's role to reweigh that credibility determination. See *K.W.*, 2026 IL App (1st) 250872, ¶ 75.

¶ 33 Moreover, even accepting respondent's alternative version of events, the trial court reasonably found the circumstances "incredibly dangerous and hazardous." As the court observed, respondent knew that Justin was intoxicated, was not taking his medication, and was experiencing a mental-health crisis serious enough that his firearm had to be secured. Yet, respondent did not seek emergency assistance. The court could reasonably conclude that such circumstances created both an injurious environment and a substantial risk of harm to a 2½-year-old child.

¶ 34 Additional evidence supported the trial court's determination. Ranes testified that respondent refused to allow DCFS access to the residence during the investigation. Justin admitted that both he and respondent consumed alcohol and that alcohol use in the home occurred in "waves." Torres testified that throughout the intact-services case, he observed Justin consuming alcohol whenever Justin was present during his visits, including one occasion when Justin offered him whiskey.

¶ 35 Viewed collectively, this evidence permitted the trial court to conclude that P.G. was exposed to circumstances involving intoxication, untreated mental-health concerns, suicidal ideation, and inadequate supervision. The trial court could reasonably conclude that P.G. was subjected to an injurious environment and a substantial risk of physical injury.

¶ 36 Although the trial court stated that it placed no weight on the Sequence B Report in reaching its decision, that evidence was admitted into evidence and formed part of the record before the court. Because the November 2025 incident independently supports the trial court's findings of abuse and neglect, however, we need not rely on the earlier report to affirm.

¶ 37 Many of respondent's arguments ultimately ask this court to reassess the weight of the evidence and the credibility of the witnesses. Those matters were for the trial court to resolve. See *K.W.*, 2026 IL App (1st) 250872, ¶ 75; *In re J.S.*, 2013 IL App (3d) 120744, ¶ 12. The trial court heard the witnesses, evaluated conflicting accounts, and found portions of respondent's and Justin's testimony not credible. The record provides ample support for those determinations.

¶ 38 Nor are we persuaded by respondent's assertion that the State failed to prove neglect or abuse because P.G. was asleep during portions of the incident. A child need not be awake or directly witness dangerous conduct before a trial court may find that the child was subjected to an injurious environment or a substantial risk of physical injury. See *In re A.W., Jr.*, 231 Ill. 2d 241, 256-57

(2008) (holding that an adjudication of neglect is to be reviewed based on the totality of the evidence, not merely those incidents occurring in the minor's presence); *In re K.F.*, 2023 IL App (1st) 220816, ¶ 10 (concluding that evidence that a parent exposed a child to a risk of danger is sufficient to support a finding of an injurious environment even if the child has not yet been harmed by that danger); *A.S.*, 2020 IL App (1st) 200560, ¶ 35 (noting that the statute requires only a substantial risk of physical injury, not proof that such injury occurred); *In re Jordyn L.*, 2016 IL App (1st) 150956, ¶ 39 (noting that courts need not wait until a child becomes a victim of physical abuse or permanent emotional damage). The focus is on the risk created by the totality of the circumstances. See *A.W., Jr.*, 231 Ill. 2d 241, 261 (2008); see also *In re J.R.*, 2022 IL App (1st) 221109, ¶¶ 54-55 (reasoning that the presence of an individual in the mother's life who physically assaulted her while under the influence of alcohol could be construed as a risk to the child, especially given the mother's own history of alcohol use). Here, the trial court could reasonably conclude that P.G., a 2½-year-old child, was exposed to danger when left in the care of an intoxicated adult experiencing suicidal thoughts and not taking prescribed mental-health medication. Indeed, respondent's position ignores the fact that when she returned to the residence, P.G. was unsupervised in the bathroom playing with bath salts while Justin was passed out.

¶ 39 The caselaw cited by respondent does not compel a different result. In *In re N.B.*, 191 Ill. 2d 338 (2000), the supreme court reversed a finding of neglect where the evidence involved an isolated incident in which a baby carrier struck a wall during an argument. The evidence established that the child was unharmed, and there was no evidence that the mother mistreated her children or failed to care for them. *N.B.*, 191 Ill. 2d at 350-51. The court specifically noted the absence of evidence demonstrating a pattern of neglect or danger to the children. *N.B.*, 191 Ill. 2d at 350-51. This case bears little resemblance to *N.B.* There, the evidence involved a single, isolated

event that caused no demonstrated danger. Here, by contrast, the evidence involved an intoxicated parent experiencing suicidal ideation, a firearm in the residence, untreated mental-health concerns, and circumstances that the trial court found created a substantial risk of harm to a very young child.

¶ 40 Respondent's reliance on *In re L.M.*, 319 Ill. App. 3d 865 (2001), is likewise misplaced. In *L.M.*, the court held that a father's status as a registered sex offender, standing alone, did not establish that his infant daughter's environment was injurious. *L.M.*, 319 Ill. App. 3d at 868-69. The decision turned on the absence of evidence showing that the father's status created an actual risk to the child. In contrast, the present case does not rest upon an individual's status. Rather, it rests upon conduct. The trial court's findings were based on evidence that Justin was intoxicated, off his medication, experiencing suicidal thoughts, and responsible for a 2½-year-old child. The court also considered respondent's role. She knew that Justin was intoxicated, not taking his medication, and was experiencing a mental-health crisis serious enough that his firearm had to be secured. Yet, she did not seek emergency assistance. Those facts are materially different from those presented in *L.M.*

¶ 41 Respondent also cites *J.R.*, 2022 IL App (1st) 221109. That reliance is similarly unavailing. Significantly, the court in *J.R.* affirmed, rather than reversed, a finding of abuse. *J.R.*, 2022 IL App (1st) 221109, ¶¶ 53, 65, 67. Moreover, the case reiterates the principle that the trial court must evaluate the totality of the circumstances in determining whether a substantial risk of injury exists. *J.R.*, 2022 IL App (1st) 221109, ¶¶ 53-56. Here, the evidence as a whole supported the trial court's conclusion. As noted earlier, the court was not required to wait for actual harm to occur before finding that P.G. faced a substantial risk of injury. See *A.W., Jr.*, 231 Ill. 2d at 256-57; *K.F.*, 2023 IL App (1st) 220816, ¶ 10; *A.S.*, 2020 IL App (1st) 200560, ¶ 35; *Jordyn L.*, 2016 IL App (1st) 150956, ¶ 39.

¶ 42 In short, the evidence presented at the adjudicatory hearing was sufficient to support the trial court's findings of neglect and abuse. Given the evidence of Justin's intoxication, untreated mental-health condition, and suicidal ideation as well as respondent's failure to obtain assistance despite her awareness of those circumstances, the trial court's determinations were neither unreasonable nor arbitrary. Because the opposite conclusion is not clearly apparent from the record, the findings of neglect and abuse were not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 43 III. CONCLUSION

¶ 44 For the foregoing reasons, we conclude that the trial court's findings that P.G. was neglected due to an injurious environment and abused due to a substantial risk of physical injury were not against the manifest weight of the evidence. Accordingly, we affirm the judgment of the circuit court of McHenry County.

¶ 45 Affirmed.