

2025 Lake County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

JOHN ALBRIGHT, CHIEF OF PERFORMANCE AND INNOVATION
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted the annual inspection of Hulse Juvenile Detention Center in Lake County on February 27, 2025, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The center meets most County Detention Standards, with several examples of exceeding standards. There was, however, one area of non-compliance noted, which administrators have already taken steps to address.

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.170 Discipline	Room confinement may be used only as a temporary response to behavior that threatens the safety of the youth or others.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Director
 - Assistant Director
 - Deputy Superintendent
 - Deputy Superintendent
 - Educator (1)
 - Nurse (1)
 - Mental Health Staff (1)
 - Juvenile Counselor (1)
 - Youth (6)
- Documents Reviewed
 - Crisis Intervention Policy
 - Handle with Care Training Materials
 - Room Time Policy
 - Behavior Motivation Program Policy
 - Behavior Modification Program Training Materials
 - Sample Incident Reports
 - Youth Grievance Policy
 - Youth Grievance Log
 - Resident Handbook
 - Medical Licenses
 - Educator Licenses
 - Menus
 - Education and Programming Schedules
 - Sample Youth Medical Records

- Sample Youth IEP
- Sample Employee Training Records
- Food Service Menus and Permit
- Youth Confinement Data

Overview

The Hulse Juvenile Detention Center in Lake County, Illinois is a 48-bed facility. The facility contains both a juvenile detention center and a residential treatment facility called the FACE-IT Program.

The facility was assessed as fully compliant through a formal audit process conducted in November 2021 with Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standards. The facility underwent another PREA audit in November 2024. That report had not been finalized at the time of the inspection.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The facility continues to accept youth admissions 24-hours per day and maintains updated procedures for determining the type of admissions search to be conducted on youth. Facility policy affirms the need for strip searches, also known as visual searches, based upon reasonable suspicion of contraband. Such searches require approval from the Superintendent or designee.

The Resident Handbook provided to youth is thorough and includes information on PREA and grievance procedures consistent with County Detention Standards. Interviewed youth were familiar with the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

Staffing levels have been a challenge to maintain at the appropriate levels over the past year, with seven vacant Juvenile Counselor positions at the time of the inspection. The facility has obtained a waiver from the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) to hire applicants that have completed three years of college; however, administrators report they are still not receiving enough applicants for consideration. Administrators have increased attendance at career fairs to try and attract more applicants. The facility typically operates with 5-6 staff during waking hour shifts, which is sufficient during normal operations, however, not enough when additional tasks such as transportation are needed.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility maintains a consistent daily schedule for youth that includes time blocks for school, meals, daily access to the gym, free time, and groups. The facility has external vendors that are providing programming that includes pet therapy, music therapy and art therapy programs. Staff conduct a mindfulness group at the start of each day. Juvenile Counselors also facilitate regular cognitive-behavioral groups, usually on the second shift. The facility has Carey Group Guides for use in regular cognitive-behavior groups, which contain a collection of cognitive-behavioral group topics organized in a lesson plan format. Juvenile Counselors have authority to choose a group topic, including topics outside

of the Carey Guides curriculum, based on the needs of the group. The facility also utilizes the Effective Practices in Correctional Settings – II (EPICS) cognitive skill-building curriculum that focuses on relationship and problem-solving skill development.

The facility utilizes a token economy system to promote positive youth behavior. The facility has made some modifications to the program over the past year by expanding the number of incentives available to youth. These changes include permitting books and personal photos to remain in a youth's room overnight and improved hygiene products and soda available for purchase based on token economy earnings. Youth earn points throughout the day which determine one of three daily behavior levels (referred to as A-Group, B-Group, and C-Group). Youth have access to different privileges based on their level.

Facility Policy HDC 11E "Room Time" governs the use of confinement at the facility. The policy is reflective of the County Detention Standards in that confinement is only used as a temporary response to behavior that threatens the immediate harm to the resident or others. The policy also places Unit Managers as the responsible party to ensure confinement does not last for more than three hours without the development of an individualized plan. There is a specialized training on the appropriate use of confinement that clearly articulates the requirements on the use of confinement. The table below summarizes the number and average length of behaviorally driven confinements since the start of 2024.

Month	Number of Confinements	Average Length (in hours)
2024	210	2.72
Jan	5	1.82
Feb	10	1.31
Mar	26	2.25
Apr	15	1.92
May*	9	12.60
Jun	17	2.25
Jul	11	2.45
Aug	17	2.69
Sep	11	2.15
Oct	27	2.76
Nov	36	2.25
Dec	26	2.22
2025	4	1.36
Jan	4	1.36
Grand Total	214	2.69

**The significant outlier in average length during the month of May 2024 is driven by a group of youth confinements after an incident. Those confinement times began one evening and lasted through the following day. They are also inclusive of the overnight resident sleeping hours. This outlier is not considered to be out of compliance with County Detention Standards.*

The facility averages less than one confinement event per day, with an overall average length of 2.69 hours. This is well within the guidelines of the County Detention Standards.

A Specialized Individual Programming Plan (SIPP) is developed when youth engage in serious behaviors. When a SIPP is needed, the facility convenes a multi-disciplinary team to develop a SIPP for the youth. SIPP plans and youth progress are now documented within the facility case management system (Tracker), inclusive of completed Carey Guide Assignments.

The facility does have to utilize regular operational confinements throughout the week. These confinements typically take place during visitation times and during facility cleaning over the weekends, during which time youth who are not participating, are confined in their rooms. Given the reported frequency, these confinements are out of compliance with County Detention Standards. They also had not been formally tracked as of the time of the inspection. Each of these confinements should be tracked in the same manner as confinements associated with resident behavior. It should be noted that within days of the on-site inspection, administrators reported they implemented some process changes to address these confinements by changing cleaning schedules to have youth clean their rooms during the morning wake-up process and having staff clean general programming areas during midnight shifts. Administrators also adjusted visitation processes to combine living units during visitation times into one pod except for youth with no contact orders. Doing so saves at least one staff from having to provide coverage and preventing youth from having to be confined. They are also having intake staff participate in providing supplemental coverage when needed to prevent confinements. If these changes are maintained, this finding of non-compliance will fall off at the next inspection.

The facility utilizes Handle with Care as the method of physical restraint at the facility. The facility policy that governs restraints (Policy HDC 1I "Crisis Intervention") is very thorough, describing the crisis response continuum and tension reduction cycle. The policy clearly articulates de-escalation techniques and affirms that Handle with Care is not to be used as a form of discipline or punishment. It also describes a debriefing and review process as part of every physical restraint event to target training and feedback to employees. The facility tracks all uses of physical intervention.

Areas of Non-compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.170 Discipline states: "Room confinement may be used only as a temporary response to behavior that threatens the safety of the youth or others."
 - Recommendations
 - Adjust programming schedules to maximize staff coverage to prevent operationally driven confinement.
 - Begin tracking operationally driven confinement.

Medical and Health Care

The facility contracts with Wellpath for medical services. There are two primary nurses assigned to the facility on-site 8am-6pm seven days per week. The contract also includes psychiatric and physician services. All youth receive an initial medical screening upon intake, and a full physical within seven days of intake. Prescriptions are verified, prescribed by a medical doctor, and administered exclusively by nursing staff. The medical room at the facility is orderly and medications are appropriately stored.

Mental Health Services

The facility has a part-time therapist that provides approximately 20 hours of services per week. Youth are assessed using the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (CSSRS) upon admission to the facility. Results are shared with the facility MHP who conducts further assessments for youth, including a trauma safety plan that identifies youth triggers and coping skills. Those results are shared with staff with the permission of the youth. The MHP meets with youth who require services or request to see the MHP while onsite. The MHP also meets with all youth who are on a SIPP or crisis watch status and conducts weekly SPARCS Groups for all youth. The volume of mental health services available to youth is sufficient given the population size of the facility. There are also additional program therapists and a psychologist who work with the FACE-IT program and provide therapy in detention when called upon. There is also a probation therapist working in the community who sees youth in the facility if they are on his/her caseload. The therapist also completes suicide assessments if the primary MHP is not available.

Youth Grievances

The facility youth grievance policy (Policy HDC 7C “Grievance Process”) describes a process that is consistent with County Detention Standards. The facility maintains a grievance log for tracking purposes. The facility processed a total of 42 youth grievances from March 2024 – January 2025; 38 of which were addressed within one day of submission. Interviewed youth were familiar with the grievance process, knew where to obtain a form, as well as the locations of the confidential grievance boxes.

Education

Education at the facility is managed by the Regional Office of Education. The facility has a total of four teachers, three for the detention center, and one teacher for the FACE-IT Program. The facility has four teaching assistants available to assist youth. The ratio of educators to students at the facility is amongst the best in the state. The FACE-IT teacher acts as the primary liaison between the detention center and youth home schools. The teacher reaches out to home schools to obtain transcripts and IEPs, which are distributed to the rest of the education team. Educators were able to show copies of student IEPs in shared, organized electronic folders. The FACE-IT teacher also collates daily attendance for all youth in the facility. Most of the educational services at the facility are delivered via the APEX online credit recovery system. Two youths at the facility were graduates and taking college prep courses through APEX. The school day runs from 8:30am – 2:30pm with blocks for APEX, gym, and lunch. The 1:30 – 2:30 hour is designated for a documentary or educational game facilitated by educators.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjust programming schedules to maximize staff coverage to prevent operationally driven confinement.• Begin tracking operationally driven confinement.