

2025 McLean County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the McLean County Juvenile Detention Center on April 16, 2025, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). While there were several areas of strength observed, there were some areas of non-compliance noted with respect to the requirements of 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602 County Juvenile Detention Standards (“County Detention Standards”).

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.230 Education	Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education.
2602.170 Discipline	Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Program Coordinator
 - Mental Health Practitioner
 - Detention Officer (1)
 - Detention Officer Supervisor (1)
 - Educator
 - Teaching Assistant
 - Nurse
 - Youth (3)

- Documents Reviewed
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Medical Files
 - MAR tracking
 - New Employee Background Check Documentation
 - Nursing Credentials
 - Mental Health Credentials
 - Grievance Log and Sample Grievances
 - Health Department Inspection Report (2/21/25)
 - Menu with Caloric Counts
 - Program Calendar and Attendance Documentation
 - Confinement Data
 - Resident Handbook

Overview

The McLean County Juvenile Detention Center is a 26-bed facility located in Normal, Illinois. The facility has a main common area with three primary living units, an outdoor recreation space, gymnasium and large classroom that are easily accessible from the main common area. The physical plant was in good condition, clean, and had a lot of natural lighting. Facility administrators reported the average daily population is 15 youth, however there were only 8 youth detained at the time of the inspection.

Admission Policy and Procedures, Prison Rape Elimination Act

The facility conducts youth intakes 24-hours a day. Youth personal items are collected and stored according to standards. All youth receive a Resident Handbook that includes an overview of resident rights, behavior program information, and the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). An orientation to PREA is conducted by the program manager; with documentation of the same placed in youth files to verify completion. Interviewed youth were familiar with PREA. The facility has implemented the use of an assessment of risk of victimization. The program manager maintains the results and a log of youth responses, along with documentation of any youth allegations and follow-up investigations. Examples of completed PREA Risk Assessments were observed in resident files, including re-assessments of youth who had been detained more than six months. The facility has not, however, had a formal PREA audit completed.

Recommendations:

- Complete a formal PREA audit.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

The facility was fully staffed on the date of the audit with 15 detention counselors, four supervisors, a program manager, and two administrators. Given the population size, the number of employees working at the facility is well within the ratios required by PREA. However, despite being fully staffed, administrators report they still struggle to maintain enough coverage to manage day-to-day operations. A standard shift includes four staff for the day shift and five staff for the evening shift (inclusive of the shift supervisor and control room staff). Because of daily fluctuations in staffing, such as when staff ask for time off or must conduct transportation, administrative staff are frequently pulled to cover line staff duties. Administrators have requested additional positions through the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC). Despite being fully staffed based upon budgeted positions, the facility still utilizes rotating youth confinements. The facility communicates that staffing is not sufficient to safely manage the youth population with current staffing levels.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility has maintained a robust programming schedule, with programming delivered both internally and via external partnerships. The Program Coordinator maintains a programming calendar that includes substance abuse groups, leisure groups, life skills groups, art groups and external volunteer programming. The program coordinator tracks youth attendance at all programming activities and

documents any youth absences with the reason for such absence. The volume, consistency, and documentation of daily programming continues to be a significant strength of the facility.

The facility offers in-person family visitation two days per week; reduced from four days in 2024. Over the past year, youth who did not receive visits were confined during visitation time. Administrators attribute this to lack of staffing. Administrators reduced the amount of visitation days to mitigate youth confinements.

The facility continues to utilize a “no fail” behavioral management system, where each day, youth start at the highest behavioral level, “A”, and during the day they may be placed on a lower level based on their behavior. If they remain on “A” level until the end of the day, the youth can earn privileges in the facility. For example, a youth can choose not to participate in group programming once a week after accruing 30 consecutive “A” days. Levels also impact when a youth goes to bed in the evening, with lower behavioral levels equating to earlier bedtimes.

If a youth engages in disruptive behavior during the day, their level is lowered to a “B” level. If the youth retain their “B” level throughout the day, they start the next day with an “A.” Youth on “B” level who engage in further disruptive behavior can be moved to “C” level. Youth who engage in continued, prolonged extreme behavior may be lowered to Group 3, which can lead to placement on a special security status. In the past Group 3 status came with 12-24 hours of confinement. This has changed however, as youth are released from confinement upon de-escalated behavior of the youth. Youth and administrators report there have been only two instances of youth being placed on Group 3 status in this calendar year.

While the facility has made improvements to compliance with standards related to confinement for behavioral reasons, there are still operational factors contributing to youth confinement that have persisted for much of the past year. As noted in the 2024 Inspection Report, youth typically engage in regular programming throughout the day. During visitation, court movement and on weekends, particularly during first shift, groups of youth rotate in and out of confinement due to limited staffing levels. The facility has just recently made changes to the daily schedule to eliminate this condition. The facility remains out of compliance with the confinement portion of the County Detention Standards due to the amount of operationally driven confinement over the past year, but that finding will fall off during the next inspection if the schedule changes eliminating those confinements remain in effect.

Areas of Noncompliance and Recommendations:

- 2602.170 Discipline states: “Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Staff all shifts sufficiently enough to avoid youth confinement for operational reasons.

Medical and Health Care

There is a full-time nurse that works at the facility with an office just off the main dayroom of the facility. All youth receive a physical within seven days of admission. A physician, contracted through Advanced Correctional Healthcare, is on-call 24-hours per day and on-site approximately once per week. There is an active process to ensure youth medication is administered when youth are admitted, with the nurse verifying prescriptions with parents and prescribing doctors. The facility nurse manages medication distribution while present at the facility. Medication distribution is managed by supervisory staff at all other times. Medications were stored appropriately. The nurse is an active contributor to programming at the facility, participating in regular groups with youth.

Mental Health Services

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) has been on contract since 1999. The contract calls for 10 hours of services to be offered each week, however the LCSW estimates she spends approximately 15 hours per week at the facility. The LCSW runs groups every Wednesday afternoon, focused on emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and relaxation. Much of her work with youth is 1:1, primarily seeing youth upon their request or referral from a staff member. The LCSW does assessments for all youth identified as a suicide risk and reviews the mental health screenings that are completed by nursing staff during the intake process.

Education

The facility has one teacher who is an employee of the Regional Office of Education (ROE) who provides educational services. Youth at the facility are enrolled through the Normal Illinois School District (Unit 5). The 2022 and 2023 Inspection Reports found deficiencies in the educational services offered at the facility, with youth only attending school for approximately 1.75 hours per day. This was largely due to only having one teacher at the facility who was only permitted 30 hours of work per week by the ROE. Since the 2023 Inspection, the educator is now on full-time status and has obtained her special education endorsement. The facility has added a teacher's aide to assist over the past year, however that aide is not a licensed teacher. Youth largely take classes via the Edmentum Online Learning System, with the educator and teacher's aide floating between classrooms to provide instruction and assistance to youth.

Despite improvements over the past two years, the facility remains out of compliance with a portion of the County Detention Standards. The facility regularly has a youth population that exceeds 12 youth. Given the increased population within the facility at times, the facility will need at least one additional full-time educator in order to be fully compliant in this area.

Areas of Noncompliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: "Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education"
 - Recommendations:
 - Hire an additional full-time educator.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff all shifts sufficiently enough to avoid youth confinement for operational reasons.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hire an additional full-time educator.
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a formal PREA audit.