

2025 St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center on October 28, 2025, pursuant to [730 ILCS 5/3-15-2\(b\)](#). The sections and specific requirements of 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602, County Juvenile Detention Standards, (“County Detention Standards”) noted as non-compliant are listed in the table below, while specific observations are noted in the sections that follow. Each section of the report also includes policy and practice recommendations to either gain compliance or move towards best practices. Those are combined in a second table at the end of the report.

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 and others. Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others.
2602.120 Sanitation	A cleaning schedule shall be established. . . floors shall be swept and mopped at least once daily. . . quarters equipment (e.g., toilets, washbasins, shower stalls and sinks) shall be thoroughly cleaned each day.
2602.80 Medical and Health Care	A record shall be maintained as part of the youth's personal file of all treatment (including special diet) and medication prescribed, including the date and hour the treatment and medication is administered.
2602.90 Mental Health	All facilities shall employ or contract with qualified mental health professionals to address the needs of youth identified in the mental health screening, as well as needs that arise during the period of confinement. Services shall meet or exceed the community level of care. . . Youth with significant mental health needs shall be assessed by a qualified mental health professional.
2602.230 Education	Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education and 1:8 for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). . . All youth are enrolled immediately upon admission. . . There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Mental Health Professional
 - Nurse
 - Educator (1)
 - Youth (6)
 - Corrections Officer (2)

- Supervisor
- Training Supervisor
- Documents Reviewed
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Medical Files
 - Fire Inspections
 - Behavior Management Manual
 - Sample Employee Background Checks
 - Sample Employee Training Documentation
 - Youth Grievance Log
 - Sample Youth Grievances
 - Educator Credentials
 - MOU with East St. Louis School District
 - Confinement Documentation
 - Sample Incident Reports

Overview

The St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center is a 38-bed facility located in Belleville, IL. The on-site portion of the inspection took place on October 2, 2025. The facility has eight living units surrounding a control room, gym, outdoor space, classrooms, and multi-purpose rooms. There were 10 youth detained on the date of the inspection.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

On the date of the inspection, 21 out of 23 budgeted staff were filled (one staff was on military leave and another was in the hiring process). The facility is approved for seven additional positions by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) for 2026; including one supervisor position, a PREA Coordinator, and five Corrections Officers. The additional staffing allotment is a significant step for the facility; as recent inspections have found low staffing levels to be a contributing factor of areas of non-compliance. Administrators cited several issues that contribute to staffing challenges at the facility, including a low starting salary (\$44,900) compared to other commensurate county jobs. Additionally, hiring only individuals who reside in St. Clair County, and a county policy that does not permit paying staff for overtime worked, instead relying on earned comp time exclusively have also made staffing challenging. The facility is embarking on a new labor contract negotiation which presents an opportunity to address some of these barriers.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center conducts intakes 24-hours per day. County Detention Standards require completion of a Risk for Victimization Assessment during the intake process. This assessment has been implemented and was observed in resident files. All interviewed youth were familiar with PREA. The facility has not, however, pursued a formal PREA audit.

The 2024 Inspection Report found that the physical spaces and conditions in the facility are poor and not up to par with County Detention Standards. While this finding remains, there has been noticeable improvement since the last inspection. Living unit dayrooms and showers were much cleaner than previous inspections. They continue to be very stark, however, containing only a cafeteria-style table for seating. While the showers were cleaner, youth continue to note the poor quality of the showers. This was also observed by auditors. Showers are controlled by a button that needs to remain depressed for the shower to work. Deficiencies with shower heads were noted, with the heads only producing a mist. Auditors did note that some plumbing repairs were taking place at the time of the audit.

The sinks in multiple youth rooms were observed to be dirty. Both youth and staff report that cleaning is done every other day, but even so, it is difficult to get sinks clean. Either a deeper cleaning will need to take place, or the sinks may need to be replaced. Administrators report they have attempted to have the sinks replaced but must get permission from facility maintenance and have been denied. Without a solution to clean the sinks or replace them this will likely continue to be a finding.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendation

- Section 2602.120 Sanitation states: “A cleaning schedule shall be established. . . floors shall be swept and mopped at least once daily. . . quarters equipment (e.g., toilets, washbasins, shower stalls and sinks) shall be thoroughly cleaned each day.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Complete repairs to facility showers.
 - Improve the quality of furniture available to youth in the living unit dayrooms.
 - Improve the cleanliness of youth room sinks.
 - Complete a formal PREA audit.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

Administrators have made some changes to the facility behavior program by implementing a new incentive system in which youth earn points during the week which can be redeemed from a facility store. The facility has also added some gaming systems for youth use in the art room along with gaming tables.

The facility has made noticeable progress in reducing the amount of youth confinement. The facility utilizes short term confinements in response to youth behaviors, checking on youth every fifteen minutes until the youth has sufficiently de-escalated. Operationally driven confinements have reduced significantly over the past year, only occurring a few days a month, over the months preceding the inspection. While these improvements are noted, this area is still noted as non-compliant since operational confinements are still occurring.

The facility has transitioned to the use of Handle with Care as an intervention technique to manage youth who become aggressive. The facility trainer recently completed a train-the-trainer course and some staff have been trained, several still need training. The facility trainer estimated approximately only half of current employees had been trained. The balance of training has been scheduled by the end

of the year. This continues to be an area of risk for the facility, both from a youth and staff safety perspective, as well as from a liability standpoint. All facility staff need to be trained on de-escalation and physical intervention strategies. This is a repeat finding from previous inspections.

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 and others. Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Ensure youth are only confined as a temporary response to behavior and only lasts until the youth has de-escalated.
 - Ensure all staff are trained on youth de-escalation and use of physical intervention.
 - Assign employees to directly supervise and engage with youth when they are in programming, including within living unit dayrooms.

Medical and Health Care

In March of 2024 the facility entered into a contract with Advanced Correctional Healthcare (ACH). The contract includes 8 hours of medical services per week, although administrators are hoping to increase that amount to 20 hours in the coming year. Increasing the number of hours is essential, as the current amount is insufficient to meet the needs of the average population size. Nurses respond to youth sick call requests, manage prescription verification and refills, and conduct physicals for any new intakes. Facility staff complete medication distribution when the nurses are not on-site. There have been some medication errors noted by the nurses, however, these are typically the result of mis-charting medication or documenting youth refusal. This was observed on the date of the inspection, as a review of the MAR showed medication distribution had not been documented for several evenings prior to the audit. A doctor is on-site once per week.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- Section 2602.80 Medical and Health Care states: “A record shall be maintained as part of the youth's personal file of all treatment (including special diet) and medication prescribed, including the date and hour the treatment and medication is administered.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Ensure medication administration and refusals are documented.
 - Increase the number of contracted nursing hours.

Mental Health Services

Mental health services are provided through Chestnut Behavioral Health. Youth are screened using a Mental Status Form upon intake. The current MHP is only onsite once per week for approximately three hours to see youth on the Chestnut caseload and provide individual therapy and community support services. The number of hours, however, are significantly insufficient given the youth population size.

County Detention Standards require that all youth receive a mental health evaluation upon admission. However, this is not currently occurring.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- Section 2602.90 Mental Health Services states: “All facilities shall employ or contract with qualified mental health professionals to address the needs of youth identified in the mental health screening, as well as needs that arise during the period of confinement. Services shall meet or exceed the community level of care. . . Youth with significant mental health needs shall be assessed by a qualified mental health professional.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Hire or contract with a mental health practitioner to provide a sufficient number of services hours for the youth population size.
 - Ensure all youth receive a mental health assessment.

Education

Educational services are offered through the East St. Louis School District and operates based upon the School District 189 schedule. Summer school is offered to youth. There are two primary educators posted at the facility, one of which is a special education teacher who operates a self-contained classroom. Teachers maintain a thorough attendance record that indicates when youth are present in class as well as reasons for absences.

As noted in previous inspections, youth access to full-day school continues to be an area of non-compliance at the facility as youth frequently attend school for only half of the school day or less. Despite only having 10 youth in the facility at the time of the inspection, youth still were not scheduled to attend full-day school. One youth missed an entire month of school recently, attributable to a behavioral incident. Other youth were only scheduled for a few hours during the school day due to problems with youth interpersonal relations. This has been an area of non-compliance since 2022, as youth are frequently restricted for part of the school day either due to short-staffing or separation driven by interpersonal conflict.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education and 1:8 for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). . . All youth are enrolled immediately upon admission. . . There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Ensure all youth receive five hours of educational services each day.
 - Hire at least one additional educator.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a formal PREA audit.
Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete repairs to facility showers.• Improve the quality of furniture available to youth in the living unit dayrooms.• Improve the cleanliness of youth room sinks.
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure youth are only confined as a temporary response to behavior and only lasts until the youth has de-escalated.• Ensure all staff are trained on youth de-escalation and use of physical intervention.• Assign employees to directly supervise and engage with youth when they are in programming, including within living unity dayrooms.
Medical and Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure medication administration and refusals are documented.• Increase the number of contracted nursing hours.
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hire or contract with a mental health practitioner to provide a sufficient number of services hours for the youth population size.• Ensure all youth receive a mental health assessment.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all youth receive five hours of educational services each day.• Hire at least one additional educator.