

2025 St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center Interim Inspection Report

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Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center on October 6, 2024, pursuant to [730 ILCS 5/3-15-2\(b\)](#). There were several areas of non-compliance observed that require immediate attention. IDJJ conducted a follow-up inspection on April 24, 2025 to assess facility progress towards the non-compliant areas. While there were some improvements noted in the medical portion of the 2024 findings, many of the non-compliant areas and recommendations from the 2024 Inspection Report still remain. 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. The full annual inspection of the detention center will occur later in the year.

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.170 Discipline	All facilities shall have a developmentally appropriate, research informed behavioral management program that supports the development of pro-social skills and provides positive reinforcement for good behavior. The program shall provide opportunities for immediate recognition of pro-social behavior as well as meaningful incentives and rewards for improvement and maintenance of desired behavior. The program shall also include potential sanctions for negative behavior that are developmentally appropriate, research informed, proportionate and fair. . . 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.
2602.230 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. . . Classes shall be coeducational."

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Mental Health Professional
 - Nurse
 - Educators (2)
 - Youth (5)
 - Corrections Officer (3)
 - Supervisor
- Documents Reviewed
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Medical Files

Overview

The St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center is a 38-bed facility located in Belleville, IL. The on-site portion of the interim inspection took place on April 24, 2025. The facility has eight living units surrounding a control room, gym, outdoor space, classrooms, and multi-purpose rooms. There were 13 youth detained on the date of the inspection.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

Staffing levels were markedly improved compared to those observed in 2024. On the date of the interim inspection, 22 out of 23 budgeted staff were filled. Administrators report that maintaining adequate staffing numbers was a challenge in 2024 (averaging 18 staff for much of the year) and the facility experienced a high staff turnover rate. Administrators cited several issues that contributed to staffing challenges at the facility, including a low starting salary (\$44,900) compared to other commensurate county jobs, hiring only individuals who reside in St. Clair County, and a county policy that does not permit staff being paid for overtime worked; instead relying on earned comp time exclusively. The facility employs one part-time dietary worker, but when she is unavailable, line staff must take time away from supervising youth to coordinate food prep and delivery. The overtime policy contributes to staff turnover and exacerbates the negative impact on youth programming and confinement when comp time is used. The lack of full-time dietary staff also contributes to youth confinement. Administrators have requested two additional positions from the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center conducts intakes 24-hours per day. Youth complete a Mental Status Information Form upon intake that captures information on mental health and substance abuse backgrounds. The information is forwarded to the Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) if needed.

County Detention Standards require completion of a Risk for Victimization Assessment during the intake process. The 2024 Inspection Report cited the facility for failing to implement a Risk for Victimization Assessment within 72 hours of a youth's arrival to the facility. During the course of this inspection, this assessment was observed in resident files, and the facility is now compliant in that area. 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 do not meet County Detention Standards. These conditions were observed in the current inspection as well. The living unit dayrooms are very stark, containing only a cafeteria-style table and lone bench bolted to the floor against one of the walls. This is a repeat finding from multiple previous inspections. Youth have also complained about the quality of the showers, which are dirty and need of repair. The showers were controlled by a button, and youth continue to report the button needed to remain depressed for the shower to work. Other shower heads are inoperable and the showers themselves are dirty. Administrators report they have submitted requests to have the showers repaired. Living unit dayrooms and youth rooms were observed to be dirty as well. In one living unit dayroom, a large pile of hair was observed on the floor and a broken comb was on the table. The youth in the dayroom reported that the items had been there since the day prior. In another dayroom the table was covered with white stains.

The sinks in multiple youth rooms were also observed to be dirty. One of those rooms was for a youth who had just arrived the previous day. The facility has a form called "Room Checklist" that staff complete prior to assigning a youth to a room. The checklist in this particular youth's file indicated the room and sink were okay for use, only indicating there was some graffiti in the room. Upon inspection, the sink was clearly not in a condition for use.

The 2024 Inspection Report indicated all youth were dressed in correctional-style orange jumpsuits and recommended the facility purchase new clothing and move to dressing youth in pants and shirts instead of jumpsuits. At the time of the current inspection, it was observed that youth clothing was of better quality.

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 rooms, dayrooms, and shower areas.
 - Complete a formal PREA audit.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

While the facility has demonstrated some improvement in the use of confinement since the 2024 inspection, much of the youth experience at the facility can be characterized as isolated. Facility

confinement records showed a total of 1003 confinements in June 2024 attributed to staffing limitations. Nearly every day of that month had these types of confinements noted, typically lasting between three and eight hours for each confinement. By March 2025, the number of these confinements was reduced to 103, which occurred over eight days of the month. While there certainly has been a reduction in youth confinements since the 2024 inspection, the facility still remains out of compliance. Operational confinements were directly observed on the day of the interim inspection, as only 6 of the 13 youth in the facility were present in school at the start of the inspection, with the rest of the youth either in their rooms or living unit dayrooms.

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 are converted into “Boogie Bucks” that can be redeemed from a facility store twice a week for books, puzzles, hygiene items, or extra phone calls. They also report they have adjusted the system of consequences cited as non-compliant in the 2022 and 2023 Inspection Reports, changing from a lengthy confinement-based process to short-term confinements in which staff check on youth every 15 minutes and release them as soon as they are de-escalated. While these changes are positive improvements, given the volume of operationally driven confinement at the facility, it remains difficult to render a compliance assessment of these improvements.

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. 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.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.170 Discipline states: “All facilities shall have a developmentally appropriate, research informed behavioral management program that supports the development of pro-social skills and provides positive reinforcement for good behavior. The program shall provide opportunities for immediate recognition of pro-social behavior as well as meaningful incentives and rewards for improvement and maintenance of desired behavior. The program shall also include potential sanctions for negative behavior that are developmentally appropriate, research informed, proportionate and fair. . . 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 unity dayrooms.

Medical and Health Care

The facility entered a contract with Advanced Correctional Healthcare (ACH) which went into effect in March of last year. The contract includes eight hours of medical service per week, typically split amongst two different nurses. Nurses respond to youth sick call requests, manage needed 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. These are typically failure to chart medication administration or documenting a youth refusal. Some disorganization was noted on the date of inspection, as medication refusal forms were observed loosely arranged on desk in the medical area. 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 and organized.

Mental Health Services

Mental health services are provided through Chestnut Behavioral Health. Youth are screened using a Mental Status Form upon intake. If any areas of concern are flagged, the facility superintendent is contacted to determine if a youth will receive an Illinois Medicaid Comprehensive Assessment of Needs and Strengths (IM+CANS) Assessment. Youth are referred to the Chestnut caseload based on the results of the assessment. The MHP is on-site twice per week and reported that she provides most of her services in a group format in living unit dayrooms due to operational problems at the facility. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 12 youth on her caseload. An additional service provider is available twice per week through the “Embrace of Change” program through the East St. Louis Police Department. That provider conducts CBT groups with youth.

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. They have access to the Edgenuity Online Credit Recovery Program, but only use it to supplement direct instruction. Teachers maintain a thorough attendance record that indicates when youth are present in class as well as reasons for absences. Given the average number of youth at the facility, the number of educators is insufficient to meet County Detention Standards, which require a teacher student ration of 1:12 for general education students and 1:8 for students with Individual Education Programs.

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. This has been an area of non-compliance

since 2022, as youth are frequently restricted from 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. . . Classes shall be coeducational.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Ensure all youth receive five hours of educational services each day.
 - Ensure classes are co-educational.
 - Hire at least one additional educator.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admissions	<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 rooms, dayrooms, and shower areas.
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 and organized.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all youth receive five hours of educational services each day.• Ensure classes are co-educational.• Hire at least one additional educator.