

2026 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 March 9, 2026, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The center is compliant with County Detention Standards, with several examples of exceeding standards.

Areas of Non-Compliance

None.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Director
 - Assistant Director
 - Deputy Superintendent (2)
 - Educator (1)
 - Nurse (1)
 - Mental Health Staff (1)
 - Juvenile Counselor (2)
 - Youth (4)
 - Dietary Manager
- Documents Reviewed
 - Crisis Intervention Policy
 - Handle with Care Training Materials
 - Room Time Policy
 - Behavior Motivation Program Policy
 - Behavior Modification Program Training Materials
 - PREA Audit Report (6/10/25)
 - Health Department Inspection Report (11/13/25)
 - Sample Incident Reports
 - Youth Grievance Policy
 - Youth Grievance Log
 - Resident Handbook
 - Medical Licenses
 - Educator Licenses
 - Mental Health Practitioner Licenses
 - Menus
 - Education and Programming Schedules
 - Volunteer Schedule
 - Sample Youth Medical Records

- Sample Youth IEP
- Sample Employee Training Records
- Fire/Tornado Drill Records
- Physical Intervention Records
- 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. There were 16 youth detained at the time of the inspection.

The facility has undergone multiple Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audits and been found fully compliant. The most recent audit was conducted in late 2024.

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 with an associate's degree. The facility typically operates with 5-6 staff during waking hour shifts, which is sufficient during normal operations.

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 provide programming that includes pet therapy, music therapy and mentoring. Juvenile Counselors facilitate regular mindfulness groups in the morning and cognitive-behavioral groups on 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. Youth can earn “Extras” whereby they can have extra meals with a family member during a visit and purchase items such as body wash or later bedtimes. Youth earn points throughout the day which determines which behavior level (A-Group, B-Group, and C-Group) they will be placed on. 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 immediate harm to the resident or others. The policy also places Unit Managers as the party responsible to ensure confinement does not last for more than three hours without the development of an individualized plan. Confinement data and resident interviews indicate the use of confinement is rare at the facility and only lasts a short duration until youth are de-escalated.

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 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.

Medical and Health Care

The facility contracts with Wellpath for medical services. There are two primary nurses assigned to the facility, on-site 8am-8pm seven days per week, with additional part-time nurses deployed when needed. 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. Nurses also conduct quarterly personal hygiene and substance abuse educational groups with youth.

Mental Health Services

The facility has a part-time therapist that provides approximately 20 hours of services per week, along with a “lead therapist” who supervises and fills in when the primary therapist is not available. 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 only with

permission of the youth. The MHP meets 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 daily 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.

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 69 youth grievances during the inspection period, most of which were addressed within 24 hours. Interviewed youth were familiar with the grievance process, knew where to obtain a form, as well as the locations of 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 continues to be amongst the best in the state. One of the teachers 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.

Recommendations

None.