

2023 Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center on October 24, 2023, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). While there were some areas of non-compliance noted, there is a marked improvement since the 2022 report. These areas of improvement are noted throughout the report. The sections and specific requirements of the 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 following sections of this report. Each section of the report also includes policy and practice recommendations to either gain compliance or move towards best practice. Those recommendations are combined in a second table at the end of the report.

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.110 Food Services	Meals shall be served and conducted in a group setting except when prohibited by security or medical needs.
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. Supervisory staff shall be notified immediately when room confinement is used. At no time should room confinement exceed 4 hours without administrators and/or mental health staff developing an individualized plan to address the behavior.
2602.230 Education	The educational authority must ensure that: IEPs are in place for youth with special education status. Teachers shall follow the IEP and document the progress. . . A youth's home school shall be immediately notified of the youth's detention status. Detention school attendance is credited on the youth's home school. . . attendance record. Facilities shall develop protocols to optimize the potential for youth to receive credit in their home schools for work in detention. . . There shall be a written policy for obtaining school records upon a youth's admission into detention and for sharing of school records when a youth leaves detention in accordance with Section 6 of the Illinois School Student Records Act [105 ILCS 10]. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.
2602.50 Admissions Procedures	The agency shall also provide at least one way for youth to report abuse or harassment to a public or private entity or office that is not part of the agency and that is able to receive and immediately forward resident reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment to agency officials, allowing the resident to remain anonymous upon request.

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.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - 2 Educators
 - Supervisor
 - 4 youth
 - 1 Corrections Officer
 - Nurse
 - Mental Health Practitioner

- Documents Reviewed
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Detainee Handbook
 - Safety Check Policy
 - Use of Force Policy
 - Use of Force Training Materials
 - Room Restriction Policy
 - Youth Grievance Policy
 - Mental Health Screening Interview Form
 - Mental Health Treatment Plan Form

Overview

The Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center is a 40-bed facility with two close-observation rooms. The current rated capacity is 25 youth. On the day of the inspection, the facility housed 18 youth, four of which were admissions from the night before. The facility Superintendent, six Corrections Officers, and one Supervisor were present on the day of the inspection.

There have been some improvements to the physical plant and quality of items provided to youth since the 2022 inspection. The facility purchased new clothing for all youth, doing away with correctional-style jumpsuits and replacing them with sweatpants and t-shirts. The quality of the mattresses and bedding appeared to be improved as well.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

The facility Superintendent reported that maintaining sufficient staffing levels has been a significant challenge over the past year. At the time of the audit, the facility employed 20 Detention Officers (two of which are on an extended leave of absence) and six Assistant Superintendents (four supervise shifts; the other two have specialized roles, such as operations management and Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) oversight).

Staff take classes through the Relias online system through AOIC. There was ample documentation showing staff training attendance.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The facility has made improvements towards compliance with the PREA-related portions of the County Detention Standards. All youth receive an assessment for risk of victimization upon intake. However, there is no contract in place for youth to make confidential reports to a neutral third party.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.50 Admissions Procedures states: “The agency shall also provide at least one way for youth to report abuse or harassment to a public or private entity or office that is not part of the agency and that is able to receive and immediately forward resident reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment to agency officials, allowing the resident to remain anonymous upon request.”
 - Recommendation:
 - Contract with a third-party entity for youth to access in order to report abuse or harassment in a confidential manner.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

There has been significant improvement with respect to the volume and quality of programming available to youth over the past year. Much of the improvement has rested in leveraging community partnerships to provide programming in the facility. These programs include weekly sexual health and awareness groups facilitated by a local rape advocacy center (RACES), weekly Moral Reconciliation Therapy groups facilitated by a local youth assessment center, weekly physical education programming facilitated by Project Athletes, ethical decision-making groups facilitated by a local PhD student, anger management groups facilitated by the National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP), therapy dogs from the University of Illinois Police Department, mindfulness programming from the Families Stronger Together Program, spiritual/religious programming, and a gardening program.

Youth interviews indicated many of these programs have been maintained with consistency, and those with longer length of stays or prior stays at the facility noted that programming is much more robust than last year.

The facility recently made a change to the youth behavior management program. The system still works on a token economy system with youth earning points each day which are converted into behavior

levels. The facility also has a commissary that consists of food and hygiene items. Youth can purchase an additional phone call, visit, or earn a group movie night on weekends if they are on the highest behavior levels.

The 2022 Inspection Report found several areas of non-compliance related to youth confinement. Administrators indicated they are interested in making changes over the next year to move towards an incentive-based system and end their reliance on confinement. Some minor changes have been made since the 2022 Inspection Report, such as ending the lengthy quarantine process for all youth upon admission. There has also been a reduction in the length of behavioral confinements, however, many remain. Much of the day-to-day confinement cited in the 2022 Inspection report is still prevalent, however. Youth continue to eat most of their meals alone in their rooms. Administrators attributed this to low staffing numbers and conflicts with employee breaks. Dinner is served around 5:30pm and showers are completed afterwards. Youth are confined during this time until showers are completed. Formal bedtimes have been moved to 7:45pm for youth on the lowest level, so functionally some youth are confined from dinner time through the end of the night, with a small respite while showering.

The facility continues to utilize an Administrative Intervention status for youth who engage in serious behaviors. Youth on this status are separated from other youth for recreation and education for three to six days. Youth on this status have access to the gym once per day and work on schoolwork alone in their pod dayrooms during the day. At the time of the inspection, two youth were on this status. One was alone in his dayroom. He had just finished his assigned schoolwork (by 10:30am). Staff were providing him with cleaning supplies to clean the living unit, however he was to be alone in the dayroom at least until the end of the school day without access to additional educational materials or a television. The youth reported he did not have regular contact with a teacher while on the status. Steps need to be taken to ensure youth on this status receive the required five hours of educational services each day. This is outlined in greater detail in the Education Section of this report.

The facility offers family visitation three days per week; however, all visitation is non-contact despite the County Detention Standard requirement for visitation to be contact.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.110 Food Services states, “Meals shall be served and conducted in a group setting except when prohibited by security or medical needs.”
 - Recommendation:
 - Serve all meals in a group setting.
- 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. Supervisory staff shall be notified immediately when room confinement is used. At no time should room confinement exceed 4 hours without administrators and/or mental health staff developing an individualized plan to address the behavior.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Identify operational ways to complete regular tasks such as youth showers without requiring other youth to be confined.

- Develop individualized plans consisting of specific assignments, interventions, and incentives for youth placed on Administrative Intervention.

Youth Grievances

The facility has a youth grievance process in place. Youth were familiar with the process, and it is outlined in the Detainee Handbook. A grievance box has been placed in the common library area near the classrooms. Additional boxes should be placed in living unit dayrooms, so youth on Administrative Intervention Status have access to them. The facility maintains a log to retain copies of youth grievances.

Recommendations:

- Place locked grievance boxes in youth living units to provide youth with a private way to submit them.

Medical and Health Care

Nursing coverage is provided via a contract with Advanced Correctional Healthcare (ACH). Nurses are on-site from 8am – 11am seven days per week and on call 24 hours per day. A medical doctor is on-site once per week. Medical documentation had all required information, including the appropriate consents and referrals to the medical doctor and/or psychiatrist when needed. The facility has a method by which it monitors youth who are sick at the facility. Medication management was compliant with County Detention Standards

Mental Health Services

The facility entered into a contract with ACH in April 2022 for mental health services coverage, which replaced a prior contract with Wellpath. The new contract with ACH calls for eight hours of mental health services per week, an increase from the six hours in the Wellpath contract. The mental health practitioner (MHP) is typically on-site two days per week, on Sundays and Wednesdays. The MHP meets with all new youth to complete an initial mental health assessment and sees all youth in population at least once per week. Youth with identified needs have treatment plans developed to guide treatment.

While it is commendable that the facility entered into a contract for mental health services to be provided, eight hours per week is likely insufficient to cover the need. At the time of the audit, the facility housed 18 total youth, which is too many youth for one MHP to adequately treat in only eight hours. The improvements to mental health services made by facility leadership and the MHP are noticeable, however, an increase in the number of hours available to the MHP or addition of MHPs will be necessary to meet the needs of the youth.

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.”

- Recommendations
 - Increase the number of mental health hours provided to youth at the facility.

Education

Facility educators are employees of the Regional Office of Education. An additional teacher has been assigned to the school for this school year. Now, two full-time teachers are present five days per week, with a third teacher available Monday through Wednesday mornings. School was in session at the time of the audit, with youth present in two of the three classrooms. Five youth were not in school, two of which were alone in their living unit dayrooms due to being on administrative intervention status. Three additional youth had chosen to stay in their rooms.

The facility has made some educational improvements since the 2022 inspection. The classrooms were in better condition, as the facility has purchased new desks and had the classroom walls freshly painted. Youth are also attending full-day school with much greater consistency. This is largely attributed to the additional teacher that has been allocated and an organizational commitment towards having youth present in school without disruption. Administrative staff provide coverage at times in order to ensure youth are still able to attend school when staffing is short.

Despite these improvements, many areas still need to be addressed. The ROE lacks an effective process for obtaining youth education records, tracking attendance, or reporting grades and credits back to home schools. Both educators who were interviewed stated they have little access to youth educational records. Neither educator knew if any of the youth in custody had active IEPs, stating they rarely, if ever, receive copies of youth IEPs. There is no centralized method for tracking attendance, as each teacher did so in their own way; one tracked attendance in an excel document, the other made hand-notes on the daily youth roster. Both teachers stated they tracked grades, but rarely forwarded them to home schools.

The failure to obtain youth education records and IEPs is out of compliance with County Detention Standards. The ROE needs to implement a process to acquire these records and ensure they are available to educators in the facility. A centralized method for tracking youth attendance, which should indicate if a youth is present, absent, and the reason for any absence, should be implemented. The ROE also needs to ensure there is a clear method for tracking youth grades and credit achievement while in custody. Administrators do report that in the timeframe between the inspection and final publishing of this report they met with the Regional Office of Education’s Assistant Superintendent who has since provided the educators with the current IEPs of students in custody and has made plans to implement the program TeacherEase to track grades and attendance. She has also identified a person responsible as the liaison between the home school and the detention center. Administrators report they are meeting with her and other local school Superintendents within the county to discuss sharing records.

An additional area in need of improvement involves the access to educational services for youth on administrative intervention status. The two youth on this status were provided schoolwork to complete

in their pod dayrooms. The facility has plans to implement the use of tablets to address a variety of needs, including the ability for teachers to provide assignments to youth on such statuses. These youth should also have access to direct instruction. The facility has the ability to achieve this, as one of the teachers only teaches classes in the afternoon. This teacher could be employed to rotate amongst youth who are not present in the classroom to provide direct instruction.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “The educational authority must ensure that: IEPs are in place for youth with special education status. Teachers shall follow the IEP and document the progress. . . A youth's home school shall be immediately notified of the youth's detention status. Detention school attendance is credited on the youth's home school. . . attendance record. Facilities shall develop protocols to optimize the potential for youth to receive credit in their home schools for work in detention. . . There shall be a written policy for obtaining school records upon a youth's admission into detention and for sharing of school records when a youth leaves detention in accordance with Section 6 of the Illinois School Student Records Act [105 ILCS 10]. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.”
 - Recommendation:
 - Maintain a schedule for all youth to receive five hours of instruction each day, including youth on Administrative Intervention.
 - Implement a standardized method for tracking youth attendance.
 - Implement a process for notifying a youth’s home school, obtaining IEPs, and reporting credits.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admissions Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with a third-party entity for youth to access in order to report abuse or harassment in a confidential manner.
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify operational ways to complete regular tasks such as youth showers without requiring other youth to be confined. • Develop individualized plans consisting of specific assignments, interventions, and incentives for youth placed on Administrative Intervention.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a schedule for all youth to receive five hours of instruction each day, including youth on Administrative Intervention. • Implement a standardized method for tracking youth attendance. • Implement a process for notifying a youth’s home school, obtaining IEPs, and reporting credits.
Mental Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of mental health hours provided to youth at the facility.
Grievances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place locked grievance boxes in youth living units to provide youth with a private way to submit them.