

2023 Cook County Temporary Detention Center Inspection Report

JOHN ALBRIGHT, CHIEF OF PERFORMANCE AND INNOVATION

DARRELL JOHNSON, CHIEF OF SECURITY

OMAR JAMIL, SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted the annual inspection of the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) on May 9 and 11, 2023, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b).

There were several areas of strength noted, many of which are indicative of juvenile justice best practices. In particular, the volume of medical and mental health services available to youth exceed county detention standards. The facility has 24-hour nursing coverage and excellent mental health resources. The physical cleanliness of the facility is excellent.

While there were many strengths noted, there are some areas of non-compliance noted. These areas are outlined in greater detail in the body of this 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 of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others. At no time should room confinement exceed 4 hours without administrators and/or mental health staff developing an individualized plan to address the behavior.
2602.50 Admissions Procedures	Following admission, a strip search may be administered only when there is an individualized, reasonable suspicion.

Methodology

Interviews Conducted

- Superintendent
- Deputy Executive Directors
- PREA Coordinator
- Hearing Officer
- 5 Youth Development Specialists
- Team Leader
- Assistant Team Leader
- 9 Youth
- 2 Caseworkers
- Mental Health Director
- Medical Program Director
- Divisional Nursing Director
- Principal – Nancy B. Jefferson
- Teacher – Nancy B. Jefferson

Documents Reviewed

- Nancy B. Jefferson School Schedule
- Policy 3.09.28 Searches and Control of Contraband – Residents
- Youth Search Records (6/2/22 – 5/9/23)
- Sample Behavior Intervention Plans
- Confinement Logs
- JTDC Resident Daily Schedules
- Youth Commissary Records
- CPR Training Records
- Youth Disciplinary Hearing Records
- Employee Roster
- 2022 Fire Inspection Report
- Handle with Care Training Lesson Plan
- Youth Grievance Log
- Sample Educator Credentials
- Employee Background Check Records
- Dietary Menus
- Recreation Schedules
- Resident Handbook
- Employee Training Calendars

Overview

The JTDC is a 498-bed facility in Chicago, Illinois. The facility operates in a “center-within-a-center” concept, with seven distinct centers that manage 3-5 pods each. Each center contains its own management structure, with a Team Leader and Assistant Team Leaders managing the day-to-day operations of the center. Each center is also staffed with Caseworkers, Recreation Specialists, Mental Health Practitioners, and Youth Development Specialists (YDSs).

Admission Policy and Procedures

The JTDC is the largest detention center in the state. All youth receive an initial medical screening upon arrival. Resident clothing is collected and logged in the facility Resident and Management Information System (RMIS). Youth sign off on the receipt. The storage room for resident clothing was clean and orderly. The facility has clear COVID-19 mitigation protocols for youth on intake and utilizes a phased system based on symptom monitoring and testing.

Youth on intake receive medical screenings, mental health assessments, and orientation delivered by caseworkers.

The JTDC continues to conduct wand, pat-down and strip searches of all youth upon entry to the facility during the admissions process (the JTDC uses the term “safety search” for a strip search). JTDC Policy 03.09.28 “Searches and Control of Contraband – Residents” states “Safety searches shall be conducted with residents upon admission to the facility.” Interviews with reception staff and youth affirmed that

strip searches continue to be conducted for all youth intakes. From 10/1/22 – 4/30/23, the JTDC conducted a total of 1,203 strip searches, finding contraband on zero occasions. There were only four documented cases since 6/1/22 in which contraband was found during any kind of admission search. The contraband was found during a wand or pat-down search in all four occasions.

The 2021 update to the County Detention Standards states, “Following admission, a strip search may be administered only when there is an individualized, reasonable suspicion.” The current practice of conducting strip searches for all youth without an individualized, reasonable suspicion upon intake is out of compliance with County Detention Standards.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.50 Admissions Procedures states “Following admission, a strip search may be administered only when there is an individualized, reasonable suspicion.”
 - Recommendation:
 - Change facility policy and practice to only conduct strip searches when there is an individualized, reasonable suspicion a youth may possess hazardous contraband.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

At the time of the audit, the facility housed 198 residents and employed a total of 513 employees, including 224 Youth Development Specialists, 23 Caseworkers, and 12 Recreational Specialists.

The facility has maintained a contract with Monterey Security to provide additional staffing coverage since October 1, 2021. Staff from Monterey Security are assigned to individual center teams and effectively work for the center as a line staff. The Monterey staff undergo the same pre-service training as a YDS, which consists of six weeks’ worth of training.

Individual living units are capped at 14 youth. There are two staff assigned to each living unit during waking hours. While there have been some occasions in which individual shifts have been short-staffed enough to cause rotating youth confinement, those occasions have been infrequent and the staff/youth ratio at the facility is well within the ratios required by the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The JTDC has several things in place to promote positive youth behavior and outcomes. The facility has a robust programming schedule, consisting of both facility-driven programs and programs provided by an extensive network of community volunteers and partnerships. External partners offer programming on things such as mindfulness, writing, and restorative justice programming. One internal program of note is the Ambassador Program. This program is available to youth via an application process. Youth who are accepted act as Ambassadors for the JTDC, representing the facility at times and guiding tours. There are a variety of incentives related to this program, such as receipt of a gold jacket to be worn during functions and access to the Ambassador Room, located in the school area of the facility. This room is equipped with items such as a ping pong table, karaoke machine, video games, and a foosball table.

Several youths reported a desire to apply for and become Ambassadors during interviews. The program has also received national recognition by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC). Over the past year, the facility has also partnered with Star Commonwealth to assess facility trauma-informed practices and make enhancement recommendations.

The facility continues to utilize a system called “B-Mod” as the primary method of managing youth behavior. The B-Mod program includes a point system that correlates to different behavior levels and privileges. Youth are graded in time-blocks during the day in categories of behavior, participation, and attitude. As youth earn more points and attain higher levels, they have access to increased privileges.

The B-Mod program also includes methods for addressing youth positive and negative behavior. Staff responses to minor behavior infractions occur in a continuum that include verbal redirection and processing to a timeout process in which youth can be assigned a short period of room time to cool-off, referred to as a “UTAH.” Over the past year, the facility has made changes to the UTAH timeout process to reduce the maximum length from one hour to 30 minutes.

The JTDC also utilizes a formal hearing process to address more significant youth behavior. When youth engage in harmful or destructive behavior, they can earn either a Major Rule Violation (MRV) or Extraordinary Circumstance Report (EC). When youth earn either a MRV or EC, most are placed on a “pending confinement” status until they receive a hearing. Most youth on “pending confinement” status are confinement in their rooms during the time period.

JTDC policy requires hearings to be conducted within four hours of the initiating incident (with time tolled during overnight hours). The JTDC Hearing Officers regularly meet this threshold. The facility clearly has a well-established procedure for getting hearings conducted in a timely manner. Hearing officers essentially fill two functions during the hearing process: (1) to determine guilt and (2) issue a suitable sanction in the event of a guilty finding. While Hearing Officers do conduct some informal mediation and counseling for youths during some hearings, the only formal sanction issued by Hearing Officers is room confinement, many of which are in excess of four hours. From 5/1/23 – 5/9/23 (the first date of the on-site audit), there were 70 occasions in which a youth received a sanction of four or more confinement hours (many of which were for a full 24 hours). In April 2023, there were 160 times in which a youth was sanctioned with more than four hours of confinement time, 68 of which were for 18-24 hours. This is a decrease from the 2022 inspection as the facility was sanctioning youth with 48-72 hours of confinement for select incident events. As indicated in the 2022 Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center Inspection Report, the use of confinement both as a fixed period of time and in excess of four hours remains in clear violation of the detention standards for confinement.

It should be noted that the facility has implemented some Behavior Intervention Plans for youth who are sanctioned with confinement time through the hearing process. These plans are developed by a center Team Leader or Assistant Team Leader and logged in the facility’s RMIS. Auditors reviewed the plans, which consist of identification of target behaviors and approximately nine different interventions that could be employed, such as referral to mental health and completion of a mediation (some of which are conducted by youth ambassadors). The implementation of these plans is definitely a positive step forward; however, they are not enough to bring the facility into compliance with this standard. In

the 70 occasions in which a youth had earned four or more hours of confinement from 5/1/23 – 5/9/23, there were only 20 cases in which a plan had been developed. Even if a plan had been developed on all occasions, the facility would still be out of compliance with the standard due the frequency at which youth are assigned fixed confinements times for such a long duration. In order to move into compliance with this standard, significant changes will need to be made to the hearing process to eliminate fixed confinement sanctions in excess of four hours.

It should further be noted that the JTDC does have an existing process for removing youth from confinement early. Center supervisory staff are required to check in on confined residents once per shift, at minimum. In practice, this occurs with much greater frequency based on interviews with youth, staff, and observations made during the on-site inspection. During those visits, supervisory staff can assess the youth to determine if the youth is able to be released from confinement early. However, the use of the early release was shown to be limited in the review of confinement documentation, as it was only utilized 31 times in the month of February 2023. Of those 31 times, 14 were for confinements that still lasted more than four hours. While it is good that the facility has a mechanism for releasing youth early from confinement, it is still not sufficient to mitigate the finding of non-compliance in this area.

The JTDC has two specialized pods dedicated to housing youth that demonstrate significant behaviors, called the “Reset Pod” and “Recovery Pod”. Youth are assigned to the Reset Pod when they are charged with an EC violation. Once youth complete their confinement time, youth remain on the Reset Pod up to a minimum of 10 days before returning to a general population pod. Youth can have days added while on the Reset Pod if they commit any addition MRV or EC violations.

Youth on the Reset Pod complete assignments from the Power Source Workbook by Bethany Casarjian. The assignments are similar for each youth assigned to the pod and monitored by mental health staff. Mental Health staff also conduct two groups on the weekends. At the time of the inspection, there were seven youth assigned on the Reset Pod, most of which were sitting individually in the dayroom working on school assignments. Youth do not physically go to the school while assigned to the pod; rather teachers come up to the unit to meet with youth, provide assignments, and gather them when they are completed.

The Recovery Pod is a pod utilized for youth that have earned multiple ECs and have shown little improvement on the Reset Pod. At the time of the inspection, there were four youth on the Recovery Pod, one of which had been there for 29 days. Like the Reset Pod, teachers come to the pod to provide educational services. Youth on the Recovery Pod are given a behavior plan that includes a collection of writing assignments and some re-entry stipulations into general population.

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 of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others. ...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:
 - Eliminate the use of fixed confinement.
 - Only utilize confinement as a temporary response to youth behavior and only until a youth is calm enough to rejoin programming.
 - Incorporate sanctions reflective of balanced and restorative justice interventions into the hearing process.

Medical and Health Care

The JTDC operates an active medical unit and is well-staffed with medical personnel. The facility provides 24-hour nursing coverage, with an average of 4-5 nurses present for day and evening shifts, and two nurses present for the overnight shift. A physician and dentist are on-site Mondays-Fridays during normal business hours and available on-call during off-hours and weekends.

All youth receive a medical screening upon initial intake and later receive a urine test for STIs. Nursing staff administer the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI - 2) to youth and provide a medical-specific orientation in which a Medical Services Guide is provided, and the sick call process is reviewed.

Youth who are detained for more than five days receive HIV and TB tests and a complete physical exam. Youth also receive a dental exam within 30 days.

The facility has a consistent sick call process. Sick call request forms were observed and available on all pods. Youth fill out the forms and place them in boxes available on the pod. Nursing staff do rounds each day and collect the forms and youth are seen.

The facility has a clean and reliable procedure for medication distribution. All medication is confirmed and prescribed by a medical doctor upon intake. Nursing staff handle all medication distribution at the facility. Youth identification is confirmed via a scan of a radio-frequency identification (RFID) chip in youth wristbands and there are strong security procedures in place for securing medication.

The JTDC has been found compliant through multiple NCCHC surveys since 2012. The medical services available to youth at the JTDC exceed the standards identified in County Detention Standards.

Mental Health Services

Mental health services at the JTDC operate under Cook County Mental Health. The facility is budgeted for 23.5 full-time mental health employees and has filled many vacancies over the past year, with only two remaining at the time of the audit. For a facility holding 198 youth, the ratio of nearly one mental health practitioner for every ten youth is excellent.

The mental health team administers a variety of assessments to determine treatment needs for youth. All youth are screened via the MAYSI - 2 within four hours of admission. The team has worked over the past year to get more meaningful results on this assessment by transitioning the delivery of the

assessment to the nursing staff and providing a script to use with residents to outline the importance of the assessment. All youth receive a face-to-face clinical interview within 72 hours of admission that includes a strengths assessment. Youth receive the Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends Trouble Assessment (CRAFFT), a substance abuse screening tool for adolescents, and the Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen (CATS).

Results from the clinical interview and assessments determine the youth's placement on a three-tiered mental health level. A youth's mental health level determines the frequency and intensity of services provided. All youth on the roster receive an individualized treatment plan, which constitutes approximately 60% of the total youth population.

The mental health team has utilized some grant funding over the past year for training opportunities and implementation of a SPARCS group curriculum. At the time of the audit, 87 youth were enrolled in SPARCS programming. Mental health staff facilitate one SPARCS or psychoeducational group per pod per week. In February 2023, the mental health team facilitated 40 groups consisting of 377 total youth attendees.

Youth with acute needs are admitted to a third specialized pod called Stabilization to provide more focused attention and intensive services to help them stabilize and transition back into general population.

In short, the breadth of mental health services available to youth at the JTDC far exceeds minimum standards.

Youth Grievances

The facility utilizes a step system to address youth grievances. Most grievances are addressed and resolved at the first step, which is managed by Center leadership. Youth have an option to appeal to higher steps if they choose. Youth reported they were familiar with the grievance process and knew how to obtain them if desired. Youth grievances were observed as available on all pods and each pod was equipped with a private grievance box. Grievances are picked up daily and tracked in the facility System (RMIS).

There are some opportunities for regular quality assurance to take place in this area. One youth reported to auditors that he had submitted two grievances that were never addressed. An evaluation of the grievance records in RMIS did show that the grievances had been submitted but not addressed. There were a few other occasions found in which a youth grievance had not been addressed. The primary gap was with youth who have switched living centers. Overall, these represent a small portion of the overall number of grievances submitted by youth. The facility is in compliance with standards overall, however, could benefit from implementing a regular quality assurance process to ensure all youth grievances are addressed in a timely manner.

Recommendations:

- Implement a quality assurance process to monitor youth grievances and ensure all are addressed in a timely manner.

Education

Educational services at the JTDC are provided through Nancy B. Jefferson School, a part of Chicago Public Schools. Youth attend school from 8:00am – 2:10pm. The school day is broken into four 75-minute periods. All core classes are taught by a two-person team with one general education teacher and one special education teacher. The team utilizes a direct instructional model. The school is equipped with a large library and computer lab. Youth visit the library at least once per week.

The school offered SAT testing in April, with approximately 30 residents completing tests. The facility also offers dual credit classes through the “I am College Bound” program with Kennedy-King College and a College and Career Readiness Program.

Additional Observations

There are several new portions of the County Detention Standards that reflect provisions of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). The JTDC has not pursued a formal PREA audit but does have well-established procedures that meet the PREA-related requirements in the County Detention Standards. The JTDC has had a PREA Coordinator in place for several years. The facility conducts background checks for both new and existing employees within requirements. Several employee files were reviewed, and all contained required screening documentation. The facility PREA Coordinator completes the risk for sexual victimization for all intakes, with center management staff acting as a back-up in their absence. The PREA Coordinator serves on the facility Transfer Committee that makes determinations on youth housing, and results from the risk assessment are included in placement decisions for youth.

PREA information is included in the Resident Orientation Handbook. All youth are shown a PREA information video during their orientation process with intake caseworkers. Youth interviewed were aware of PREA and were able to articulate ways to make an allegation. Youth have access to a neutral third party via the phone system on living units to make an anonymous allegation. The facility also has a Memorandum of Understanding with Resilience, a not-for-profit rape crisis center to provide additional support to youth if needed.

Over the past year the facility has started some facility upgrades intended to provide more privacy for youth in the pod bathroom and shower areas and update the flooring.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admissions Procedures – Non Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change facility policy and practice to only conduct strip searches when there is an individualized, reasonable suspicion a youth may possess hazardous contraband.

Discipline – Non Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminate the use of fixed confinement.• Only utilize confinement as a temporary response to youth behavior and only until a youth is calm enough to rejoin programming.• Incorporate sanctions reflective of balanced and restorative justice interventions into the hearing process.
Youth Grievances - Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a quality assurance process to monitor youth grievances and ensure all are addressed in a timely manner.