

# 2023 Lake County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

AUDIT TEAM

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## **Executive Summary**

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted the annual inspection of Hulse Juvenile Detention Center in Lake County on March 21, 2023, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The center was found to be fully compliant with the requirements of the 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602 County Juvenile Detention Standards (“County Detention Standards”).

## **Areas of Non-Compliance**

None.

## **Methodology**

- Interviews Conducted
  - Superintendent McMahan
  - Director Edwards
  - Assistant Director Zakaras
  - Deputy Superintendent Clark
  - Deputy Superintendent Miller
  - 1 Educator
  - 1 Nurse
  - 1 Mental Health Staff
  - 2 Juvenile Counselors
  - 5 youth
  
- Documents Reviewed
  - Crisis Intervention Policy
  - Handle with Care Training Materials
  - Room Time Policy
  - Behavior Modification Program Policy
  - Behavior Modification Program Training Materials
  - 2022 Restraint Report
  - Sample Incident Reports
  - Room Time Log
  - Grievance Policy
  - Grievance Report
  - Resident Handbook
  - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Training Records
  - Medical Licenses
  - Educator Licenses
  - Menus
  - Programming Schedules

## **Overview**

The Hulse Juvenile Detention Center in Lake County, Illinois is a 48-bed facility. The facility contains both the juvenile detention center and a residential treatment facility, called the FACE-IT Program.

At the time of the audit, the facility had 16 residents in the juvenile detention center and seven in the FACE-IT Program. Upon intake, youth are placed on a quarantine status for five days as part of the COVID-19 mitigation strategies recommended by the Lake County Health Department. At the time of the audit, two of the 16 youth were on a quarantine status.

Staffing levels at the facility were strong at the time of the inspection with only three vacant Juvenile Counselor positions. There have been occasions in which the facility staffing has been low on given shifts over the past year resulting in the use of rotating confinement for youth, however youth reported this was infrequent. The facility obtained a waiver from the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) to hire applicants that have completed three years of college and have “senior” status.

The facility has been assessed as fully compliant with Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standards through a formal audit process in November 2021. The PREA Audit Report, dated 2/20/2022, found the facility compliant with all 39 PREA standards.

The specificity and organization of the facility policy manual and training materials, particularly related to youth confinement, are exceptional.

## **Admission Policy and Procedures**

The facility has updated policies regarding searches of youth upon admission to the facility. Policy 2F “Searches of Residents” details procedures for determining the type of search to be conducted and affirms the need for reasonable suspicion of contraband and approval from the Superintendent or designee to conduct a strip search (referred to as a “visual search” in facility policy). Facility administrators reported the use of strip searches has been very rare over the past year. Youth interviews also indicated strip searches are not being conducted in a routine manner.

The Youth Orientation Manual is thorough and includes information on PREA and grievance procedures consistent with County Detention Standards. Youth reported they felt familiar with facility norms after they arrived and were aware of the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

## **Personnel, Staffing and Supervision**

The facility is budgeted for 49 total staff. Administrators have worked hard to maintain staffing levels, hiring a total of 29 new employees over the past two years. On the date of the audit, the facility only had three Juvenile Counselor vacancies, which is an improvement from eight vacancies at the time of the 2022 inspection. The staffing levels at the facility are more than sufficient to manage the youth population size.

## **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 are providing programming as well, namely pet therapy, music therapy and art therapy programs. Youth and staff described a short mindfulness group that is frequently conducted at the start of each day. Juvenile Counselors also facilitate regular cognitive-behavioral groups, usually on the second shift. Over the past year, the facility has implemented the use of Carey Group Guides for use in regular cognitive-behavior groups. The Carey Guides 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 utilizes a token economy system to promote positive youth behavior. Facility administrators have self-identified the need to make improvements to the behavior management program. Members of the administrative team attended a Facility Director/Superintendent Training and Technical Assistant Program hosted by the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) last year. The Lake County Team developed a capstone project plan designed to enhance the behavior management program at the facility and is participating in follow-up technical assistance calls with a cohort of other jurisdictions with similar capstone projects. The leadership team is actively researching alternative behavior management programs with the hope of implementing a new approach over the next year.

The current behavior management approach is compliant with County Detention Standards, but there are areas where these improvements will be beneficial. Currently, youth earn points based on behaviors throughout the day, which determine a youth's level (A Group, B Group, and C Group). Levels are calculated at the end of each day. Each level is associated with a different set of privileges standard to token economies, however there are some practices associated with the expectations for youth on each level that could use some enhancement. As noted in the 2022 Lake County Inspection Report, youth on the lowest level (C Group) are still required to wear orange jumpsuits and sit in chairs where they are not able to view the television. Dressing youth in such a way can have a shaming quality to it, and it is again recommended that the practice change. Furthermore, there is a rule in place that youth on C Group are not permitted to talk to other peers during free time. This rule is inconsistent with a Youth Developmental Model and should change as well.

The baseline permissions for items youth are allowed in their room, while compliant with standards, are limited in comparison to other juvenile detention centers. Youth rooms were very neat and orderly, however only contained a bed, mattress, pillow, and sheets and blankets. All youth are permitted to have a book in their rooms during the day, however only the youth on Group A are permitted to have a book in their room overnight. All other youth are required to turn in the book at 10:00pm "lights out." Youth are not permitted to have any other items in their rooms. Facility administrators indicated they are considering expanding these permissions, to perhaps allow things like photos and carpet squares. DJJ recommends moving forward with these ideas along with permitting other items, such as letters from friends and family, pencils, and paper to remain in youth rooms. The existing limitations are more reminiscent of a correctional model of care, rather than a developmental one.

Youth on Group A have access to other incentives, however these incentives are fairly limited. There appears to be only four incentives available to youth on Group A, which are:

1. One extra 15-minute phone call per week
2. Permission to stay out of their room during shift change
3. Access to weekend "Late Nights" in which youth can stay out until 10:30pm to play games and watch movies
4. Permission to keep a book in their room overnight

The facility does not have an active commissary for youth. Nearly all youth who were interviewed cited this as a change they would like to see going forward.

Facility Policy 13E "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 the immediate harm to the resident or others. The policy also places Unit Managers as the responsible part to ensure confinement does not last for more than four hours without the development of an individualized plan. There is a specialized training on the appropriate use of confinement that clearly articulates the requirements on the use of confinement.

The need for individualized plans has been rare over recent years, however, there appears to have been an increase in their use over the past year. In these cases, the facility convenes a multi-disciplinary team to develop a Specialized Individualized Programming Plan (SIPP) for the youth. At the time of the audit two youth were on a SIPP as a result of a fight the youth were involved in the week prior. Auditors reviewed the SIPP plans for these youth as well as sample plans from previous months. The plans themselves essentially consist of behavioral goals for the youth. Supervisory personnel make behavioral notes each day to indicate the youth's behavior while still on the SIPP. A working revision to the plan structure has been developed that includes a more robust framework for youth to complete assignments associated with the target behavior that triggered the plan, including use of the Carey curriculum. Furthermore, the time from the triggering incident to the time of the development of the plan could be reduced.

The facility utilizes Handle with Care as the method of physical restraint at the facility. The facility policy that governs restraints (Policy 21 "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, which amounted to approximately three per month in 2022, and the superintendent conducts a review after each use. These procedures are representatives of industry best practice.

It should be further noted that youth reported a great deal of consistency with the daily schedule. All youth interviewed reported they know what to expect every day and feel safe at the facility.

### Recommendations

- Eliminate the use of orange jumpsuits for youth on C Group.
- Eliminate the practice of restricting youth from speaking to peers during free time on C Group.
- Enhance the number of incentives available to youth.
- Increase the amount of items youth are permitted to have in their rooms.
- Reduce the length of time used to develop a SIPP when necessary.

**Medical and Health Care**

The facility contracts with Wellpath for medical services. There are two primary nurses assigned to the facility on-site 8am-6pm seven days per week. 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. Prescriptions are verified, prescribed by a medical doctor, and administered exclusively by nursing staff. The medical room at the facility is orderly and medications are stored appropriately.

**Mental Health Services**

The facility has a part-time therapist that provides approximately 20 hours of services per week. Youth are assessed using the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (CSSRS) upon admission to the facility. Treatment plans are developed for youth on an as-needed basis. 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 9B “Grievance Process”) describes a process that is consistent with County Detention Standards. The facility received 13 youth grievances in 2022. The facility maintains a grievance log for tracking purposes. Grievances were addressed in a timely manner and forms were observed as readily available during the inspection. All youth understood how to access one and had trust in the process.

**Education**

Education at the facility is managed by the Regional Office of Education. The facility had two teachers on-site the day of the audit, both of which are special education teachers. Youth were in school during the on-site inspection. Teachers interact with the youth’s home school in order to obtain classwork and participate in IEP meetings as needed. The facility is implementing use of the APEX online curriculum for credit recovery.

**Recommendations**

Section	Recommendations
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate the use of orange jumpsuits for youth on C Group.</li> <li>• Eliminate the practice of restricting youth from speaking to peers during free time on C Group.</li> <li>• Enhance the number of incentives available to youth.</li> </ul>

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