

2023 St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center 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, 2023, pursuant to [730 ILCS 5/3-15-2\(b\)](#). The Department observed some areas of strength during the review, including positive relationships between staff and youth and active community programming involvement at the facility. There were some areas of non-compliance observed as well. 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 following sections of this report. Each section of the report also includes policy and practice recommendations to either gain compliance or move towards best practices. Those recommendations are combined in a second table at the end of the report.

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. 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. |
| 2602.50 Admissions Procedures | Within 72 hours after the youth’s arrival at the facility and periodically throughout a youth’s confinement, the agency shall obtain and use information about each youth’s personal history and behavior to reduce the risk of sexual abuse by or upon a resident. Assessments shall be conducted using an objective screening instrument. . . Clothing and other garments shall be of an appropriate size and in a state of good, usable condition. . . Any medication in the possession of a youth at admission shall be labeled for identification and withheld until a medical doctor determines the disposition. |
| 2602.80 Medical and Health Care | A medical doctor shall be available to attend the medical needs of youth. . . General medical physician services shall be provided in accordance with one or more of the following procedures: on salary, in accordance with locally established personnel pay plan; a contract with a local physician or clinic for full-time coverage at specific hours and for emergencies; a contract with a local physician to conduct sick call, to be on call for |

emergencies and to examine newly admitted youth; arrangements with a nearby hospital to provide all needed medical services; and services rendered, without cost, by another agency or department or with costs prorated. All youth confined for more than seven days shall be given a medical screening by a medical doctor, registered nurse or physician assistant.

2602.230 Education

There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Mental Health Professional
 - Four youth
 - Three Corrections Officers
 - Supervisor

- Documents Reviewed
 - Confinement Policy
 - Resident Orientation Materials
 - Nursing Credentials
 - Mental Health Practitioner Credentials
 - School Attendance Records
 - Educator Credentials
 - School Schedules
 - Fire Drill Records
 - Food Inspection Report
 - Programming Schedules
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Medical Files

Overview

The St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center is a 53-bed facility located in Belleville, IL. The on-site portion of the inspection took place on October 6, 2023. The facility has eight living units surrounding a control room, gym, outdoor space, classrooms, and multi-purpose rooms. There were 19 youth detained on the date of the inspection.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The St. Clair County Juvenile Detention Center conducts intakes 24-hours per day.

The facility has an Orientation Sheet that is provided to youth. The sheet is only two pages long and is dated 2013. It explains rules youth must follow, confinement, visitation information, and grievance procedures. The orientation is lacking detail in areas of youth rights and Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards.

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. This is not yet in place at the facility. The facility has not identified a PREA Coordinator, and youth at the facility were not familiar with PREA standards.

The facility still utilizes a five-day quarantine for all youth intakes. This is inconsistent with current CDC guidelines and should be reduced or eliminated.

Facility programming and physical spaces have both strengths and weaknesses. On a positive note, youth at the facility were very complimentary of staff, with several youth reporting that staff care about them and take time to try and get to know them. There is also a strong community support system in place, largely driven by the local school district that has contributed several financial resources that have driven improvements to several physical spaces in the building. These include the conversion of an old living unit into an art space, the development of a “calm room” in the school area, and a music studio. The school district makes several programming contributions as well, driven by the East St. Louis Wraparound Program.

Other physical spaces and conditions in the facility are poor and not up to par with County Detention Standards. 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. The quality of youth clothing also needs improvement. All youth were dressed in correctional-style orange jumpsuits, and one youth was observed wearing a jumpsuit that was torn on the side. Another youth reported receiving dirty undergarments to wear. It is recommended the facility purchase new clothing and move to dressing youth in pants and shirts instead of jumpsuits.

The most recent update to County Detention Standards includes the addition of several requirements from the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). The facility has taken steps to implement some of these standards, including the addition of limited PREA education to resident orientation materials. The facility is not, however, completing an assessment on the risk of victimization for youth during the intake process.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.50 Admissions Procedures states: “Within 72 hours after the youth’s arrival at the facility and periodically throughout a youth’s confinement, the agency shall obtain and use information

about each youth's personal history and behavior to reduce the risk of sexual abuse by or upon a resident. Assessments shall be conducted using an objective screening instrument. . . Clothing and other garments shall be of an appropriate size and in a state of good, usable condition."

- Recommendations:
 - Implement the PREA Risk for Victimization Assessment for youth within 72 hours of admission and periodically throughout a youth's confinement.
 - Hire a PREA Officer to supervise facility compliance with PREA standards.
 - Purchase new clothing and ensure youth have daily access to clean clothing in good condition.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

Youth have access to several programs provided through community-based agencies, most of which are run through the East St. Louis Wraparound Program. There is a music program active at the facility that makes use of the on-site studio. A church group facilitates programming on Sundays and the facility has converted a living unit into an art studio. Art programming began the week following the inspection, facilitated by an art therapist. There is also a room that has been converted into a "Calm Room" with furniture, books, and art. Youth reported having access to that room.

As noted in the 2022 Inspection Report, the facility changed administrators in 2022. The new administration ended the previous behavior management and incentive system, but still has not replaced it with a new one. The 2022 Inspection Report noted, at the time of that inspection, the absence of a behavior management or incentive system to build skills and promote positive behavior amongst the youth. There has been no improvement on this item in 2023. The facility still lacks an active token economy system with any kind of positive reinforcement or commissary to reward youth. Facility leadership shared that the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) has recommended an incentive program used at many detention centers throughout the state. Administrators indicated they do not plan on implementing it because they feel it is too complicated and youth are not detained at the facility long enough for it to be effective. The incentive program in question is widely accepted as a best practice program and facilities that use it have a similar length of stay to that of the St. Clair County JDC. It is recommended that the facility move forward with implementing this program.

The facility continues to utilize a confinement-based approach to youth sanctions, typically in eight, 16, and 24-hour increments. The facility control room has several magnets that are placed outside of youth room doors to indicate when youth are on confinement. Both staff and youth indicated that 24-hour confinements are still in use at the facility.

The facility also utilizes administrative segregation when youth exhibit significant behaviors. Two youth had just been removed from this status at the time of the audit. Youth and staff reported they were on that status for a week, during which the youth started with a 24-hour confinement period. The rest of the week consisted of the youth only being permitted to program alone, including school. This approach to behavior management is out of compliance with County Detention Standards. In order to gain compliance in this area, the facility will need to eliminate the use of fixed confinement, incorporate

individualized plans for youth, provide the same amount of programming for all youth, and ensure all youth receive a full day of educational services.

The daily schedule is inconsistent. In addition to the frequent changes to the school schedule outlined later in the report, youth frequently split recreation time in the evenings. Bedtimes are largely determined by the supervisor working that day instead of being determined by a daily schedule or incentive program.

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. 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:
 - Implement a behavior management program that includes positive reinforcement for good behavior.
 - Develop and implement training materials for staff.
 - Incorporate information about the behavior management program into youth orientation materials.
 - End the practice of using eight-, 16-, and 24-hour fixed confinements for youth.
 - Develop and implement a policy that states room confinement may not be used for a fixed amount of time, requires supervisory staff notification, and ends as soon as the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming.
 - Develop a method for tracking all youth confinements, including the reason for the confinement, start and end times, approving supervisors, and documentation of youth behaviors impacting the decisions to maintain or release a youth from confinement.

Youth Grievances

Youth at the facility do not have access to a meaningful grievance process. Youth interviewed were unfamiliar with the process and did not know how to obtain a grievance. Staff in the control room were unable to find a grievance form.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- Recommendations:

- Ensure grievance forms and grievances boxes are available in all youth living units and programming areas.
- Document all youth grievances on a log, inclusive of the resident name, date of the grievance, response date, and outcome.

Medical and Health Care

The facility has two, part-time county nurses on-site approximately every other day. The amount of time the nurses are present is insufficient to meet County Detention Standards. Nursing staff complete a physical for youth after intake. However, a review of youth medical files revealed that medical assessments are not being conducted within seven days of admission with any consistency, as required by County Detention Standards. One youth was not seen for the first time until 15 days after his admission.

Last year, the facility had a local doctor on contract to provide services for youth when needed. That doctor has since retired and has yet to be replaced. At the time of the inspection, facility practice was to take a youth to the emergency room if they need to be seen by a doctor since one is not available to the facility.

Medication verification is conducted by a facility supervisor on intake (instead of medical staff) by contacting the prescribing doctor for verification. Facility staff then develop the medical sheets and package it up for a nurse to review the next time they are on-site. Medication distribution is managed by facility staff, but there is no process for conducting inventory of medications.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.50 Admission Procedures states: “Any medication in the possession of a youth at admission shall be labeled for identification and withheld until a medical doctor determines the disposition.”
- Section 2602.80 Medical and Health Care states: “A medical doctor shall be available to attend the medical needs of youth. . . General medical physician services shall be provided in accordance with one or more of the following procedures: on salary, in accordance with locally established personnel pay plan; a contract with a local physician or clinic for full-time coverage at specific hours and for emergencies; a contract with a local physician to conduct sick call, to be on call for emergencies and to examine newly admitted youth; arrangements with a nearby hospital to provide all needed medical services; and services rendered, without cost, by another agency or department or with costs prorated. All youth confined for more than seven days shall be given a medical screening by a medical doctor, registered nurse or physician assistant.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Ensure all youth medication is verified by a qualified medical professional.
 - Ensure all youth receive a physical within seven days of intake.
 - Hire or contract with a physician to provide medical services as needed.
 - Implement an inventory and control process for youth medication.

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.

Education

Educational services are offered through the East St. Louis School District and operate off the School District 189 schedule. Summer school is offered to youth as well. 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. The teachers maintain a thorough attendance record that indicates when youth are present in class and reasons for absences.

A review of the attendance documentation for the month of September showed a significant amount of youth absences. Interviews with youth, staff, and educators revealed two primary reasons for youth absences. One is directly related to staffing shortages at the facility, driven by the need for facility Corrections Officers to provide transportation for youth court. It is a frequent occurrence that the facility cancels school due to staffing shortages during these times. The day prior, there had been no school in the afternoon because of this. The schedule for the day of the audit was the same, as everyone already knew school was going to be cancelled in the afternoon because of the court schedule. On days when school is cancelled, the teachers leave the facility and report to the home community school.

The second reason driving school absences is the facility approach to handling youth conflicts. The facility regularly splits youth into different groups due to interpersonal youth conflicts. On the date of the audit, youth were split into three groups for educational purposes. Given the cancellation of afternoon classes, youth at the facility only received approximately one hour of educational services.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Implement balanced and restorative interventions to address youth conflict without solely relying on separation to prevent school absences.
 - Ensure all youth receive five hours of educational services each day.

Recommendations

| Section | Recommendations |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Admissions Policies and Procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement the PREA Risk for Victimization Assessment for youth within 72 hours of admission and periodically throughout a youth’s confinement. ● Hire a PREA Officer to supervise facility compliance with PREA standards. |

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|-------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase new clothing and ensure youth have daily access to clean clothing in good condition. |
| Discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a behavior management program that includes positive reinforcement for good behavior. • Develop and implement training materials for staff. • Incorporate information about the behavior management program into youth orientation materials. • End the practice of using eight-, 16-, and 24-hour fixed confinements for youth. • Develop and implement a policy that states room confinement may not be used for a fixed amount of time, requires supervisory staff notification, and ends as soon as the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming. • Develop a method for tracking all youth confinements, including the reason for the confinement, start and end times, approving supervisors, and documentation of youth behaviors impacting the decisions to maintain or release a youth from confinement. |
| Youth Grievances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure grievance forms and grievances boxes are available in all youth living units and programming areas. • Document all youth grievances on a log, inclusive of the resident name, date of the grievance, response date, and outcome. |
| Medical and Health Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all youth medication is verified by a qualified medical professional. • Ensure all youth receive a physical within seven days of intake. • Hire or contract with a physician to provide medical services as needed. • Implement an inventory and control process for youth medication. |
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement balanced and restorative interventions to address youth conflict without solely relying on separation to prevent school absences. • Ensure all youth receive five hours of educational services each day. |