

2025 Knox County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of Mary Davis Home in Knox County on February 13, 2025, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). 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
2602.170 Discipline	Room confinement may be used only as a temporary response to behavior that threatens the safety of the youth or 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.
2602.90 Mental Health Services	Youth with significant mental health needs shall be assessed by a qualified mental health professional. A service plan shall be developed for each youth that includes: 1) Counseling or psychotherapy to be provided; 2) Behavioral management strategies and goals; 3) Medication; 4) Protocol for monitoring youth's progress; and 5) Needed adjustments to normal detention programs and procedures.
2602.230 Education	Qualified special education staff are assigned to youth with special education status and special education testing is available for youth in custody. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.
2602.110 Food Services	Dry stores such as flour, cereal, dried beans, peas, coffee and canned goods shall be stored in a cool, dry and well-ventilated area, screened or otherwise protected against insects and rodents. . . Fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products, meats and frozen food shall be refrigerated in accordance with Illinois Department of Public Health standards.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Director
 - Educators (2)
 - Youth (6)
 - Shift Supervisor

- Counselors (2)
- Mental Health Professionals (2)
- Nurse
- Cook
- Documents Reviewed
 - Use of Force Continuum Policy
 - Detention Tier Program Policy
 - Timeouts and Behavior Hold Policy
 - Client Grievance Policy
 - Youth Grievance Samples
 - Youth Grievance Response Samples
 - Detention Tier Program (DTP) Handbook
 - Youth Orientation Materials
 - Sample Incident Reports
 - Daily Programming Schedules
 - Dietary Menus
 - Nursing License
 - Educator License
 - Mental Health Screening Interview Template
 - Sample Youth File
 - Daily Programming Log
 - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Policies
 - Health Department Inspection Report (9/17/24)
 - Sample Medical Files
 - Sample Mental Health Assessments
 - Shift Logs
 - Behavior Hold Documentation
 - Resident Confinement Logs
 - Sample Risk of Victimization Assessments

Overview

Mary Davis Home is a 39-bed facility in Galesburg, Illinois. The primary programming space is a large common area that is centrally located between the four primary living units (referred to as Upper East, Lower East, Upper West, and Lower West). The facility has a gym space just off the primary programming space with a large window separating the two areas. A single classroom is off the main area as well.

The facility offers in-person visitation two nights a week. The visitation area is sizable and has some artwork, including a mural that was recently completed by a local community college. It is commendable that the facility has continued offering in-person visitation and has a welcoming space to host youth visits. The facility has video conferencing capability that it utilizes for court and professional visits. Video

conferencing is now offered for family visitation, especially for youth with families that live out of the area.

At the time of the audit, the facility had 12 residents in custody. For most of the past year, the facility has capped the population at 12 youth in an effort to work towards compliance with County Detention and AOIC standards.

Admission Policy and Procedures

Mary Davis Home offers 24-hour coverage for admissions. Youth property is collected, inventoried, and laundered according to standards. The facility made changes to their admission policies a few years ago to come into compliance with County Detention Standards by eliminating the use of strip searches as standard practice during the intake process; instead, only utilizing strip searches when there is an individualized suspicion of contraband. Youth intakes are searched via a wand and pat-down.

Mary Davis Home has implemented several policies related to the Prison Rape Elimination Act over the past year. Within a day of admission, all youth intakes receive a risk assessment for sexual victimization administered by the training supervisor, who acts as the facility lead on PREA matters. These assessments were present in youth files. An initial orientation is conducted by a counselor during the intake process, inclusive of youth rights related to the Prison Rape Elimination Act. Youth sign-off on receipt of the orientation was also observed in youth files. All interviewed youth were familiar with PREA. While the facility has implemented many of the PREA requirements incorporated into the County Detention Standards, a formal PREA audit has yet to be completed.

Medical screenings are conducted by the facility nurse, who consults with parents about medical history and medications. The nurse also inspects medications that youth bring into the facility and coordinates with a physician to approve prescriptions.

Recommendations:

- Complete a formal PREA audit.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

Facility staffing has improved over the past few years. In order to attract applicants, Mary Davis Home requested and was approved for a waiver to the bachelor's degree hiring requirement by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC). The facility now only requires 60 college credit hours or an associate's degree to qualify for employment. At the time of the audit, the facility employed 26 Counselors and five Supervisors, representing the highest staffing levels in two years. A typical shift includes five or six staff members (including a supervisor) which should be sufficient given the average size of the youth population within the facility.

New employees receive 20-24 hours of training remotely through the AOIC Relias System and AOIC Detention Basic Training. The facility has two certified Handle with Care trainers on staff who provide de-escalation and use of physical intervention trainings.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility has increased the amount of programming available to youth over the past year. The Youth in Christ community program comes on Friday afternoons for religious and sports programming. Counselors continue to facilitate groups four nights per week, and the Assistant Superintendent facilitates weekly Moral Reconation Training (MRT) groups once per week.

The facility utilizes a behavior program adapted from programs run at other county detention centers consisting of a “Tier System” with three behavior levels. Residents move to different levels based on a daily behavior point card, with additional privileges, such as Zoom visits associated with each level. The facility has instituted a commissary system. Youth earn “Mary Money” for exhibiting positive behaviors and can redeem Mary Money through the “Mary Mart” which consists of snacks and hygiene products that can be purchased daily. Youth can also purchase additional phone calls.

The facility continues to employ use of a “Special Group Status (SGS)” for youth who engage in significant behaviors in the facility. Youth on SGS work on special behavior plans approved by the superintendent or assistant superintendent. These plans include assignments from Carey Guides or other cognitive-behavioral assignments. Youth typically stay on this status for 3-7 days.

While the facility has made improvements to the amount of youth confinement over the past two years, the use of confinement remains out of compliance. The facility utilizes “behavior holds” as a short-term response when youth present immediate safety concerns. When a youth earns a behavior hold, they are confined to their rooms for fifteen minutes. Those times can be extended if the youth is still an active risk, with staff checking in on the youth every fifteen minutes until the youth has de-escalated and is released. Facility staff are supposed to document all behavior holds on a form, indicating the start time of the hold, time of each youth check, youth behavior at the check, and release time. The facility is required to maintain a log of all youth confinement and send these logs DJJ, AOIC, and the Ombudsperson’s Office. A review of behavior hold documentation and youth reports during interviews showed that the confinement tracking at the facility is not accurate. In July of 2024, facility administrators reported there had not been any confinements during the month, however a review of behavior hold documentation revealed there were at least four confinement instances lasting from 30-90 minutes that should have been reported. Administrators did update that submission when the auditor shared the finding. Additionally, a youth at the facility reported during the inspection that he had been confined for an entire day after being assigned to SGS after an incident in December. A review of video from that day showed that while the youth was not confined for the entire day, the youth was confined for four hours in the afternoon without any documented reason, as were two other youth who lived on the same living unit. The confinements for these youth were not documented at all in the shift log, on a behavior hold report, or in the monthly confinement summary. MHPs also shared that youth on SGS are detained in their rooms sometimes when they arrive to meet with them and have to have the youth pulled out for their mental health sessions.

The ability to accurately track and report on key indicators like confinement is critical to transparency and improvement. The facility needs to implement better internal quality assurance processes to ensure all uses of confinement are documented and reported accurately.

In addition to behaviorally driven confinements, the facility has also utilized confinement when they are short-staffed, choosing to rotate youth in and out of their rooms for recreation. While staffing levels at the time of the inspection were the highest they had been in several years and administrators had capped the youth population at 12, the use of operationally driven confinements was still observed. Youth reports, staff reports, and the facility logbook indicated rotating confinements had been utilized at least twice in the week prior to the inspection, including the day before.

The 2023 and 2024 inspections noted frequent times throughout the day that youth were confined unnecessarily. While the facility has reduced the number of times it occurs throughout the day, this was again observed during the 2025 inspection as youth are frequently moved in and out of their rooms during transition times such as after breakfast, before lunch, and at shift change. These frequent confinements are unnecessary to maintain normal operations and add up to unnecessary youth confinement. For the second audit year in a row, there were only 12 youth in the facility on the date of the inspection with plenty of staff available to manage transitions without the use of these confinements. The facility should stop all transition confinements.

The facility will remain out of compliance with the confinement provisions in the County Detention Standards until youth are only confined as a temporary response to behavior that threatens the safety of the youth or others and there is accuracy in confinement documentation and reporting.

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 or 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.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Allow youth to spend the entire programming day outside of their rooms during normal waking hours.
 - Adjust the SGS process to limit room confinement to being used as a temporary response to behavior until a youth is calm enough to rejoin programming.
 - Implement an internal quality assurance process to ensure every use of confinement is accurately documented and meets criteria set by policy.

Medical and Health Care

There is one nurse that works at the facility five days per week for four hours each day. The facility has a sick call process by which a youth can request to be added to the sick call list, which is maintained in the control room to be given to the nurse upon her arrival. All youth receive a physical within seven days of admission. A physician is on-site weekly as needed and available for consultations.

Mental Health Services

Upon intake, all youth are administered a Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI) by administrative staff. Scores on the MAYSI play a role in determining if youth are checked at a frequency of 10 or 15 minutes.

In 2022 the facility entered a contract with Advanced Healthcare Solutions (ACH) to provide youth 20 hours of mental health services per week. Hours are split between two mental health professionals (MHPs), who are typically on-site 3-4 days per week collectively. The MHPs conduct a mental health intake assessment for all new youth, copies of which were observed in youth medical files. In addition to meeting with new intakes, the MHPs typically prioritize seeing youth on any type of crisis status or SGS when they are on-site. At the time of the inspection, however, were not developing treatment or service plans for youth. County Detention Standards require the development of such plans to guide treatment, so the facility is out of compliance with this portion of the standards. In the time between the on-site inspection and publishing of this report, MHPs have begun utilizing treatment plans to guide services. This requirement is noted as non-compliant since it was not in place for the review period, but if the implementation of treatment plans is maintained this finding will be considered remedied during the next inspection.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.90 Mental Health Services states: “Youth with significant mental health needs shall be assessed by a qualified mental health professional. A service plan shall be developed for each youth that includes: 1) Counseling or psychotherapy to be provided; 2) Behavioral management strategies and goals; 3) Medication; 4) Protocol for monitoring youth's progress; and 5) Needed adjustments to normal detention programs and procedures.”
 - Recommendations
 - Develop service plans for any youth with significant mental health needs to guide treatment.

Food Services

Mary Davis Home has a kitchen on-site and employs one full-time cook and one part-time cook. This is an improvement from previous years, during which there was only one full-time cook employed. Even with the additional part-time cook, however, there are still days that line staff have to cover making meals (typically every Saturday and a few evenings during the week). While it is good that there is an additional part-time cook now, there should be enough staffing in dietary that security staff are not pulled to assist in meal preparation.

The facility had a required Health Department Inspection on 9/17/24 that found seven items of non-compliance in the following areas:

- Food in good condition, safe, and unadulterated
- Food-contact surfaces; cleaned and sanitized
- Proper date marking and disposition

- Single-use/single-service articles: properly stored and used
- Wiping cloths: properly used and stored
- Physical facilities installed, maintained, and clean
- Adequate ventilation and lighting; designated areas used

Some of these conditions were observed during the on-site inspection. The dry storage area had pest traps on the floor that were full of gnats and open fruit in the refrigerator was not dated.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.110 Food Services states: “Dry stores such as flour, cereal, dried beans, peas, coffee and canned goods shall be stored in a cool, dry and well-ventilated area, screened or otherwise protected against insects and rodents. . . Fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products, meats and frozen food shall be refrigerated in accordance with Illinois Department of Public Health standards.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Ensure the dry goods storage is free of insects.
 - Ensure fruits are properly stored and dated in refrigerators.
 - Hire additional dietary staff to prevent the need to utilize security staff for food preparation.

Education

For much of this school year, the facility has operated with one teacher. A second, full-time substitute was assigned to the facility approximately three weeks prior to the inspection. On the date of the inspection, facility leadership had the youth population separated into three groups due to conflicts amongst the youth. A group of four youth were in the classroom with the full-time teacher. Three youth were learning with the substitute teacher in one of the living unit dayrooms, and two youth were working on classwork in the common area. The remaining youth were either out at court or had refused to attend school that morning. While the addition of a second educator is definitely an improvement to educational services over previous years, it is still insufficient to meet County Detention Standards which mandate that each youth receive at least five hours of instruction per day. By dividing youth groups in this manner, the facility is not meeting that standard. To meet the standard, youth need to be directly receiving educational services under the supervision of a licensed educator for at least five hours.

The Assistant Superintendent acts as a liaison with youth home schools to obtain educational records and communicates attendance and grades after a youth is released. On the date of the inspection there were four youth with IEPs. While the primary teacher is a licensed special education instructor and had copies of the IEPs, the permanent substitute was not aware if any of the youth had IEPs.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “Qualified special education staff are assigned to youth with special education status and special education testing is available for youth in custody. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.”
 - Recommendations:

- Hire a sufficient number of teachers, including special education teachers, to ensure youth receive five hours of direct education each day.
- Ensure all educators are fluent with youth IEPs.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admission Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a formal PREA audit.
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow youth to spend the entire programming day outside of their rooms during normal waking hours. • Adjust the SGS process to limit room confinement to a temporary response to behavior until a youth is calm enough to rejoin programming. • Implement an internal quality assurance process to ensure every use of confinement is accurately documented and meets criteria set by policy.
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop service plans for any youth with significant mental health needs to guide treatment.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a sufficient number of teachers, including special education teachers, to ensure youth receive five hours of direct education each day. • Ensure all educators are fluent with youth IEPs.
Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the dry goods storage is free of insects. • Ensure fruits are properly stored and dated in refrigerators. • Hire additional dietary staff to prevent the need to utilize security staff for food preparation.