

2025 Madison County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

JOHN ALBRIGHT, CHIEF OF PERFORMANCE AND INNOVATION
TIFFANY GHOLSON, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF
PROGRAMS

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the Madison County Juvenile Detention Center on September 18, 2025, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). There were several strengths noted, especially the volume of programming available to youth. There were two areas noted as non-compliant. The section 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.

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
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. . . 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	Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education and 1:8 for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). . . Qualified special education staff are assigned to youth with special education status and special education testing is available for youth in custody. . . 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 the Section 6 of the Illinois School Student Records Act [105 ILCS 10].

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendents (2)
 - Program Manager
 - Mental Health Professional
 - Supervisor
 - Detention Officer
 - Nurse
 - Youth (4)
 - Educators (2)
 - Cook

- Documents Reviewed
 - Confinement Records
 - Youth Grievance Records
 - 2024 Fire Alarm Inspection
 - 2025 Fire Department Inspection Report
 - Emergency Drill Documentation
 - 2025 Health Department Food Service Sanitation Permit
 - 2025 Dietary Inspection Report
 - Academic Schedule
 - Educator Licenses
 - Medical Licenses
 - Sample Incident Reports
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Medical Files
 - Youth Information Handbook
 - Dietary Menus
 - “No Outside/No Gym List”
 - Sample Employee Training Records

Overview

The Madison County Juvenile Detention Center is a 49-bed facility located in Edwardsville, IL. The on-site portion of the inspection took place on September 18, 2025, with 18 youth detained at the time of the audit. The facility has an abundance of programming space available given the size of the population. Youth visitation is available via Zoom daily and in-person three days per week.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The Madison County Juvenile Detention Center conducts admissions 24-hours per day. All youth are assessed upon intake using the MH-JJ Referral Screen to identify any acute mental health needs. Any youth who may have an injury or illness upon intake are assessed for fitness for confinement and referred for medical attention if needed. Youth receive a Youth Information Handbook and formal orientation that contains information about the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). The facility conducts risk for victimization assessments according to standards. Interviewed youth were familiar with PREA. While the facility is compliant in this area, it has not yet undergone a formal PREA audit by a certified PREA auditor.

Recommendations

- Pursue a formal PREA audit.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

At the time of inspection, the facility was budgeted for 20 direct care staff, 17 of which were filled with three additional applicants in testing. The facility also had five budgeted supervisory staff (four of which

were filled), three administrators and two cooks (one full-time and one part-time). The facility has moved to 12-hour shifts for detention officers; a move that administrators report has reduced the number of call-offs. There is a downside, however, as the facility has the same number of people working overnight as during waking hours, which is inefficient for maximizing coverage during youth waking hours. It should be noted that the facility has been approved for eight additional positions by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) for 2026, which should be helpful in maximizing coverage and youth programming.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, Confinement, and Education

The volume of programming available to youth continues to be a strength of the detention center. The facility is one of a few in the state that has an administrative program manager position responsible for managing volunteers and internal programming. As such, the facility has a contract and volunteer network that provides programming for youth, including things like a CALM (Compassion Approach to Learning Meditation), conflict resolution groups developed by the facility MHP, a GED program through Lewis and Clark Community College, an art therapist that provides services to individuals and groups, religious programming from Madison County Prison Ministries, reading groups provided by librarians from the Glen Carbon Centennial Library, and nursing students who provide health-related educational programming. Youth were very complimentary of the food at the facility, especially meals prepared by the full-time cook.

The facility is engaged in an active case management process. Staffings are conducted twice per week to review youth on close watch, individual programming, or otherwise in need of review. These staffings consist of administrative staff, the program coordinator, facility nurse, and occasionally the mental health counselor.

The Madison County Juvenile Detention Center operates a traditional behavior management program with a token economy called the Merit Program. Youth earn points throughout the day that are reflective of the behavior they exhibit. Points are translated to behavior levels that have increasing privileges attached such as additional gym time, snacks, and additional phone calls. Youth can also earn "Haller Dollars" that can be redeemed at lunchtime for candy or soda. When youth commit behavior infractions, staff utilize strategies such as re-direction, point loss and short-term room time.

Youth who exhibit egregious behaviors can be assigned to Individualized Programming Status (IP). Youth on this status must remain on their living unit "wing" during the day. These youth do not attend school with other youth; rather educational materials are brought to them to work on in their wing. Previous inspections had identified that there were no desks or furniture on the living unit wings, so youth had to sit on the floor to complete assignments. The facility placed desks on the units for youth to use this year. IP typically lasts a few days and includes requirements for youth to complete assignments such as thinking reports and victim impact letters.

The facility has taken steps to reduce the use of confinement for behavioral reasons, as youth are now confined for short periods until their behavior has fully de-escalated. This change is commendable and

an important step towards coming into compliance with the confinement provisions of the County Detention Standards.

The amount of operationally driven confinements continues to be of particular concern; a finding that is repeated from previous inspections. Youth are routinely confined throughout the week during times that are unnecessary, especially on Saturdays. On a daily basis, youth are confined from 5:30pm – 8:00pm. Administrators attribute this to visitation time, even though visitation is only offered three times per week. Youth are still confined during this timeframe on a daily basis even on days there is no visitation occurring. Youth on the lowest level are only out of their rooms for a total of 3.5 hours each Saturday, even if the facility is fully staffed. For youth on the lowest level, a typical Saturday schedule is as follows:

Time	Activity	Status
8:00am – 1pm	Facility Cleaning	Highest level youth conduct cleaning while all other youth are confined.
1pm – 3pm	Free Time	Youth out of rooms
3pm – 4pm	Shift Change	Youth are confined
4pm – 5:30pm	Dinner and Free Time	Youth are out of their rooms
5:30pm – 8:00pm	Visitation	Youth who do not receive visits are confined.
8:00pm – 11:00pm	Free Time	Level 1 youth remain confined. Level 2, 3 and 4 youth receive free time until 9pm, 10pm, and 11pm respectively.

There are enough programming spaces and staffing in the facility to sufficiently keep youth separated while offering programming without relying on the volume of confinement that currently exists. The facility should end the practice of frequently confining youth at predetermined times throughout the day unless an individual youth is exhibiting behavior that is a risk to themselves or others. It is noted that in between the time of the inspection and the publishing date of this report, the facility reports they are moving to a “pod-based system.” Instead of the minors being secured in their rooms during visitation time they will be out in the wing during that time

Auditors also observed the door to the control room propped open while youth were eating lunch only a few feet away. This door should be closed and locked at all times when not in use as propping it open represents a security risk for the facility.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 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. . . 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:

- Make use of alternative programming spaces in the facility to decrease the amount of operationally driven confinement.
- Assign shift staff to specific groups of youth to maintain supervision in separate programming areas.

Medical and Health Care

Since December 15, 2024, medical oversight of the facility has been managed via contract with American Correctional Healthcare effective. A registered nurse is scheduled to be on-site 20 hours per week. At the time of the audit, the agency was in the process of hiring a new nurse, as the former nurse left on 8/1/25. In the interim, the nurse practitioner was on-site once per week and available on an on-call basis. There is a process for verifying youth medications and obtaining prescriptions when needed. Medication distribution is managed by facility staff. The nurse conducts physicals for all new intakes when on-site.

Mental Health Services

A licensed Mental Health Professional (MHP) is on-site 20-hours per week via a contract with a local psychologist. The MHP conducts intake screenings (Columbia Suicide Screening) for youth admissions. She also provides cognitive-behavioral counseling to youth with identified needs and is active in additional program development. Additional services are provided via the MHJJ grant with Chestnut Healthcare. That MHP is on-site 16 hours per week and participates in youth staffings. She primarily sees youth who are court-ordered to do so or part of the MHJJ grant. Treatment plans are developed for youth in need of regular services. Psychiatric oversight is available through Chestnut.

Education

The education curriculum is managed by the Madison County Regional Office of Education. There are two full time teachers on-site. The school day is 5 hours long, consisting of direct classroom instruction and gym time. Deficiencies in communication exist between the facility and home schools. There is not an active, intentional process in place to reach out to youth home schools to obtain youth transcripts or send grades back to home schools when youth are released. Instead, educators only communicate with home schools if communication is initiated by the home school. There should be an active process implemented at the detention center to reach out to home schools when youth are admitted. This is a repeat finding from the 2024 Inspection Report. No certified special education teacher is present that regularly provides services on-site (rather there is one "on call"), and educators rarely see copies of a youth's IEP. While the number of general education teachers was sufficient at the time of the inspection given the number of youth (18), there are times the youth population is higher, putting the facility out of the 1:12 ratio as required by County Detention Standards. In order to come into compliance with County Detention Standards, the facility will need at least one more educator and someone with a special education teaching certification at the facility.

It can be noted that in between the date of the onsite inspection and publishing date of this report, the facility reports that as of October 2025 they have begun contacting the minor's schools upon admission

to gain access to schoolwork and IEP statuses. They also report they have partnered with the Edwardsville school district regarding a special education teacher to service those IEPs, and when they have an active IEP, they contact Edwardsville High School to send a special education teacher out. While the teacher is not fully on staff all the time, they are available as needed.

Areas of Non-Compliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “Teacher student ratios are at least 1:12 for general education and 1:8 for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). . . Qualified special education staff are assigned to youth with special education status and special education testing is available for youth in custody. . . 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 the Section 6 of the Illinois School Student Records Act [105 ILCS 10].”
 - Recommendations:
 - Develop a process to contact youth home schools to obtain work records and share student credits upon release.
 - Implement a quality assurance process to ensure the process is being completed.
 - Hire enough teachers to ensure compliance with teacher student ratios.
 - Hire a qualified special education staff person to work with youth on special education status.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admissions Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue a formal PREA audit.
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of alternative programming spaces in the facility to decrease the amount of operationally driven confinement. • Assign shift staff to specific groups of youth to maintain supervision in separate programming areas.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a process to contact youth home schools to obtain work records and share student credits upon release. • Implement a quality assurance process to ensure this is being completed. • Hire enough teachers to ensure compliance with teacher student ratios. • Hire a qualified special education staff person to work with youth on special education status.