

CHILDREN IN DETENTION CENTERS*

Children in City and County Detention Centers are 11 to 17 years of age, with an average age of 15. Sometimes children aged 17 or younger are certified as “adults” and put into the adult justice system. However, they are still detained in the juvenile center while awaiting their trial. Adult certification is determined by the juvenile court judge and is usually due to the severity of the charge against a child.

The State of Missouri’s “Raise the Age” legislation became effective 01-01-2021. It mandated that children aged 17 or younger are to be kept in the juvenile justice system. Before this mandate, a 17-year-old would automatically enter the adult system, but now that age is 18. (Contact the ECM (Episcopal City Mission) office for more information on the status of the Raise the Age legislation.)

Some examples of charges against the children that put them in detention are:

- Chronic truancy
- Violation of a court order or failure to appear
- Property damage
- Theft
- Possession of drugs
- Possession of a firearm
- Unlawful use of a weapon
- Burglary
- Assault
- Murder

City Detention

- Total population ranges from 30 - 50 kids.
- About 4 units, including one unit for girls if there are any in detention.
- A unit includes a cell for each child to sleep in at night or be detained at other times.
- Boys are typically divided into units by age.
- There is a public school in the City Detention Center which is part of the St. Louis City Public School District, and the children attend classes throughout the week.
- There is a “privilege room” that allows children who have “earned” during any week the right to go on a Friday evening to a room where they can play games, watch movies, etc.

County Detention

- Total population ranges from 30 – 50 kids..
- The center has 8 units that can hold up to 8 children in each unit, with one unit for girls.
- A unit includes a cell for each child to sleep in at night or be detained at other times.
- There is a school in this center run by the Special School District of St. Louis County. The school runs year-round, with days off each quarter.
- Children progress through various levels of privileges based upon meeting center behavioral expectations and goals. The mastery level is the highest level of privilege – additional time for phone calls, gym time, and gaming time, and other opportunities are enjoyed.

Average Daily Activities for Both Centers

- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner meals and evening snacks are served to each child. Meals and snacks are health conscious and special dietary needs are accommodated.
- School – All children go to class during the week for about 7 hours each day with a lunch break.
- Between School & Dinner – Children may meet with tutors to assist with schoolwork.
- Children participate in various programs/activities with program staff, volunteer groups or ECM chaplains.