

National Juvenile Detention Resource Center

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**Southwest
Florida
Juvenile
Detention
Center**

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

NATIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION RESOURCE CENTERS

Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center

January 1986

AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION

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NATIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION RESOURCE CENTERS

- **Berrien County Juvenile Center**

Deans Hill Road
Berrien Center, Michigan 29102-9706
(616) 471-2831

- **Jefferson County Youth Center**

720 W. Jefferson Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40202
(502) 625-6175

- **Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center**

2525 Ortiz Avenue
Fort Myers, Florida 33906
(813) 332-7070

INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION RESOURCE CENTERS

The juvenile detention center assumes guardianship of a youth at a time of crisis in his or her life. This brief experience with the detention facility and staff may determine the juvenile's future attitudes toward society and authority. In short, the detention process itself can have an effect on a juvenile's propensity for crime.

There are obviously tremendous benefits to be gained by making the detention experience a positive one. This monograph presents a profile of the Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center, Fort Myers, Florida, which has been selected as one of the national resource centers. The other two are: the Jefferson County Youth Center, Louisville, Kentucky, and the Berrien County Juvenile Detention Center, Berrien, Michigan.

The American Correctional Association (ACA), the nation's professional association for corrections, and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) have long recognized the need to ensure that juveniles in trouble receive their basic constitutional rights and have their physical and emotional needs met. To this end, national standards for the operation of detention centers have been developed. The standards provide guidance on such matters as administration of the facility, staff training, security and control, intake, admission and release procedures, juvenile rights, citizen and volunteer involvement, programs, and communications. By adhering to professional standards, juvenile detention facilities are better able to maintain uniformity of mission and operating policies with other agencies that perform similar and ancillary functions. Above all, by operating according to standards, the detention function is carried out in a climate of fairness, professionalism, and efficiency.

To assist juvenile detention facilities in developing and adopting standards, the ACA and OJJDP first developed and published *Guidelines for the Development of Policies and Procedures for Juvenile Detention Centers*. The guidelines are based on a collection of standards drawn from three sets of national standards: the ACA's *Standards for Juvenile Detention Facilities*; the National Advisory Committee for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's *Standards for the Administration of Juvenile Justice*; and the American Bar Association's approved standards for *Interim Status and Architecture of Facilities*. The *Guidelines* publication translates each standard into workable and adaptable statements of policies and procedures. It is designed to assist facilities in developing their own clear and complete sets of policies and procedures consistent with the goals of the juvenile justice system.

The second major step undertaken by the ACA and OJJDP to assist juvenile detention was the decision to establish three regional juvenile detention resource centers whose own written policies and procedures and operational practices closely resemble those in the *Guidelines*. The three resource centers are located throughout the country and are accessible to public transportation. The staff of each facility have received specialized training from ACA so that they can provide ongoing training and technical assistance for the staff of other detention centers.

NATIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION RESOURCE CENTERS (continued)

The centers chosen each have diverse management structures: one is operated by the state, one by the county, and one by the court. The centers also differ in their rated capacities.

The ACA and OJJDP believe that regional resource centers are an effective and efficient way to provide assistance to detention facility administrators and staff. Resource centers help facilities to help themselves, and they provide a mechanism for the facilities' continued growth and development.

Selection Process

All juvenile detention centers currently accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections, or those that had completed the correspondence status in the accreditation process, were eligible for consideration as resource centers. Applicants were required to submit a copy of their policies and procedures and a written narrative about their outstanding features. They were also required to allow a team from ACA-OJJDP to conduct an on-site review.

Resource centers were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Their policies and procedures had to closely resemble those in the *Guidelines for the Development of Policies and Procedures for Juvenile Detention Centers* developed by the ACA-OJJDP.
2. They had to exhibit evidence of proficiency in the following areas:

General Administration, Organization and Management	Citizen' Involvement
Fiscal Management	Security and Control
Personnel	Food Services
Training and Staff Development	Sanitation and Hygiene
Administration Information and Research	Medical and Health
Intake*	Care Services
Admission Procedures*	Juvenile Rights*
Records	Rules and Discipline*
Physical Plant	Communication: Mail, Visiting, and Telephone
Safety and Emergency Procedures	Release Preparation and Transfer

*Critical area

3. They had to be willing to commit the time and staff necessary to function as a resource center.

NATIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION RESOURCE CENTERS (continued)

The centers also had to be willing to commit staff time for the following activities during the first year:

1. Participate in a two-day on-site review before the final selection.
2. Attend a five-day ACA-OJJDP training program to provide staff with the skills to deliver training and technical assistance.
3. Develop and implement one three- to five-day training program for the staff of other detention centers.
4. Respond to requests for information and on-site visits (approximately 24) from other detention center staff.
5. Cooperate in a two-day on-site meeting to develop a technical assistance videotape of detention center operations.

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE
DETENTION CENTER**

**2525 Ortiz Avenue
Fort Myers, Florida 33906**

Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center

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SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

I. INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center "SWF Center" (was the first center in the Southeastern United States to be accredited under ACA Standards by the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections. The Center met more than 400 standards in all areas of juvenile detention operation, passing the audit with an overall compliance rating of 96.4 percent.

In its search for better ways to serve children and the community, the Center has actively developed cooperative relations locally with the juvenile court, state attorney's office, public defender's office, county school system, and local agencies of the state Department of Health and Rehabilitative Service.

II. LOCATION AND HISTORY

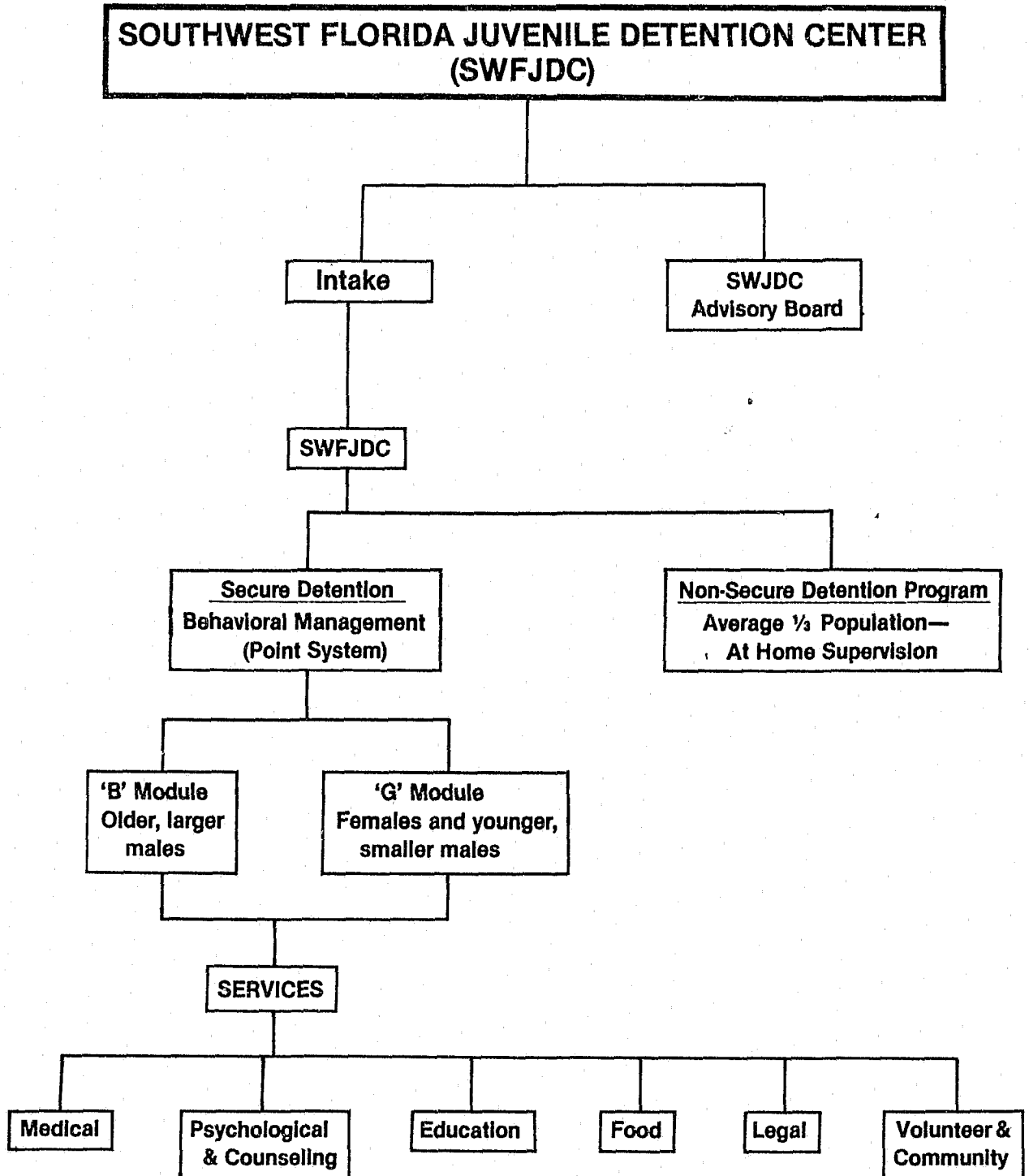
The Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center is located in Fort Myers, Florida, and services a five county area—Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, Glades, and Collier Counties, which coincides with the 20th Judicial Circuit. The Center is operated by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) under Florida statute.

Opened in late 1980, Southwest Florida was the seventh regional center to be built in Florida since the state assumed authority over local juvenile homes in 1974. The new center replaced Lee County's 14-year-old detention center in Harlem Heights, Florida, which was overcrowded, prone to escapes, and subject to rampant vandalism.

The new center is nearly twice the size of the old facility and has a sophisticated security system of electronic door locks, reinforced glass windows, and television and audio monitoring systems throughout the main building.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER (continued)

Program Diagram



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

(continued)

III. ADMISSIONS AND PROCESSING

Admissions

All youth placed at SWF are screened for admission by the delinquency intake staff of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (a separate legal entity not under the authority of the detention superintendent). The counselors are available 24 hours a day.

When a youth is arrested and the arresting officer decides detention is warranted, the officer calls HRS Intake to interview the youth and parents. The screening takes place at the law enforcement agency or the local HRS office. If the intake officer agrees that detention is warranted, all required paperwork is completed, and the youth is delivered to SWF. Intake screeners apply specific criteria in Florida Statute Chapter 39 in making the detention decision. Any prior referral history is reviewed during the screening process by using a statewide computer information system.

Processing

Upon admission to SWF, each youth receives a complete orientation to the facility's rules, policies, and procedures from a trained staff member. The detainee's valuables and personal possessions are secured, and clothing is issued. A medical assessment is conducted, and the youth showers and prepares to enter the program.

A film produced at SWF informs each new detainee about all phases of detention life; the detainee grievance procedure is also thoroughly discussed. A televised walk-through tour helps allay any fears the youth may have upon admission.

The youth is then classified according to the facility's operating procedure and assigned a room.

IV. NON-SECURE DETENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Approximately one-third of the youth detained at any time enter the non-secure detention program after a thorough screening by a non-secure program staff member, and with the approval of the court, state attorney's office, and the assigned HRS counselor. This is to ensure that the youth is not a danger to the community and will abide by the program rules.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

(continued)

A youth in the non-secure detention program remains at home under strict rules, which generally include a prohibition against leaving the home except in the company of the parent or guardian. The HRS counselor visits daily and assists the youth in complying with the non-secure detention agreement.

The program has been very successful, and has gained wide acceptance among the judges and other components of the juvenile justice system, for it allows some degree of regulation in determining the number of individuals in secure detention.

SWF employs another method of maintaining a manageable population. The ongoing review process—weekly meetings with delinquency intake supervisors from surrounding counties to review each child's case, progress in detention, and need for continued secure detention placement—often result in a youth's release or entry into non-secure detention status if approval is granted by the juvenile court judge.

V. SECURE DETENTION PROGRAM AND SERVICES

The Center provides 24-hour supervision and programming in a secure setting for detainees. Most youth in the Center are in pre-adjudication status awaiting judicial processing of their cases. After adjudication and disposition, the Department of HRS has five days in which to find an appropriate treatment program and place for each youth. The Center is primarily responsible for transportation after disposition.

A statewide detention manual provides general uniform guidance for all detention centers in Florida, yet each is free to develop its own policies and procedures in compliance with the state manual and ACA standards.

SWF houses detainees in two modular units—"B" mod for older or larger boys, and "G" mod for females and younger, smaller males. The males and females in "G" mod are separated by a temporary partition for sleeping, bathing, and toiletry needs. The total indoor area of the facility is approximately 20,000 square feet. It includes two classrooms in the main building, and an additional classroom across the outside recreation area.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

(continued)

SWF uses a behavioral management (point) system whereby youth earn points for good behavior and program participation. The points can be used to attend movies (held nightly), have extended curfew, enjoy extra snacks, or participate in other incentive programs. The staff composition of SWF includes: Superintendents, Secretaries, Detention Center Workers and Supervisors, Food Service Employees, Community Youth Leaders and Supervisors, and a Mechanic and Custodian.

Staffing is scheduled in three shifts—first shift from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.; second shift from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and third shift from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. A ratio of one staff member to eight detainees is maintained on the second and third shifts; the ratio is one staff to ten detainees during the first shift, when the youth are asleep.

Medical Services

A medical screening form is completed on each detainee upon admission to the facility. Within 24 hours, each youth receives a physical examination by a registered nurse. Through contractual arrangement, the Children's Clinic in Fort Myers, Florida, provides nursing services four hours each day, seven days a week; a doctor from the clinic is on 24 hour call. In addition to the contracted professional medical services, all SWF staff are trained annually in first aid and CPR.

Psychological Counseling Services

Counseling and consultation services are offered at SWF through a contract with the Lee County Mental Health Clinic. A mental health professional visits the Center each week to meet with youth referred by detention care staff. In addition, the counselor often meets with detention care staff informally to offer guidance in dealing with problem cases. The mental health clinic is also on call on a 24-hour basis for emergency situations.

The contract for 1986 will provide more formal training for staff in the mental health area, including such topics as suicide prevention, crisis intervention, stress management, and dealing with the depressed child.

Currently, the University of South Florida Mental Health Institute in Tampa, provides pre- and in-service training to detention care workers and supervisors, primarily in behavioral management techniques. SWF has worked cooperatively with the Institute to make these training programs as relevant to the detention situation as possible.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

(continued)

Education

SWF currently has four teachers and a clerical aide, employed by the Lee County School Board, who provide individual instruction to all detainees. The residents range from ages 10 to 18 and are at various levels of educational functioning. Each year, SWF negotiates a cooperative agreement with the county school board detailing the responsibilities of each party in the educational area. Generally, the teachers are free to design their own programs and schedule classes to meet the mandates of Florida statutes and the school board. Three of the teachers have Master's degrees and have been at the Center for at least five years.

Using a team teaching concept and a consistent philosophy, the instructors have developed several creative programs, including the yearly publication of *Unlocking the Pros and Cons*, a collection of short stories, poems, drawings, and cartoons developed by detainees. Excerpts from this book have appeared in *Counterpoint*, the annual publication of the National Juvenile Detention Association. Other innovative courses include the Life Management class, which provides detainees with daily living skills, and the Justice in America class, which encourages a better understanding of the justice system.

Food Services

Youth detained at the Center receive three nutritious meals daily. Meals for both the Price Halfway House, adjacent to the Center, and the Center itself are prepared at SWF. The portion to feed the Halfway House residents and staff are transported from the Center to that facility.

A licensed nutritionist under contract with SWF visits once a week to review menus, provide training, and offer other assistance as needed. The dietitian with HRS District VIII is also available for consultation.

SWF participates in the Federal School Lunch Program and complies with all applicable rules and regulations. The Center's food services program is inspected weekly by the superintendent or assistant superintendent, and the local health department monitors the program quarterly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture monitors the program annually for compliance with federal regulations.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

(continued)

VI. TRAINING

SWF was the first center in Florida to receive assistance from the University of South Florida Mental Health Institute in training staff in behavioral management techniques for dealing with detainees. All of the child care staff and supervisors attend 40 hours of pre-service training and 40 additional hours annually at the Tampa Institute. The training programs have been well received and have provided the staff with valuable techniques in understanding and managing detained youth.

VII. COURTS AND JUVENILE RIGHTS

The staff of SWF work closely with the public defender for the 20th Judicial Circuit to ensure that the rights of all detainees are protected. At the detention hearing, for example, each youth has the opportunity to sign a Notice of Juvenile Invocation of the Right to Counsel. The Center has also passed all ACA standards concerning juvenile rights.

The SWF Advisory Board reviews all unusual incidents to determine if the youth's right to humane and equitable treatment has been violated. The Human Rights Advocacy Committee of Health and Rehabilitative Services, District VIII, meets often at the Center, and also reviews every unusual incident in an effort to protect clients.

VIII. VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Volunteers play a very important role in the success of SWF. In 1983, 232 volunteers devoted several thousand hours of service to the Center. They work with individual detainees, conduct religious programs and church services, and participate in parties and social functions for the youth. A licensed beautician offers haircuts on request, and art classes are held for those wishing to participate. Volunteer programs also provide funding for special items.

The Center also provides 120 hours of instruction each quarter to practicum students from the local junior college. In 1984, a group of ten Master's-level students received part of their practicum experience as volunteers at SWF.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

(continued)

IX. ADVISORY BOARD

The SWF Juvenile Detention Center Advisory Board has been in existence since 1965. The Board is currently comprised of judges, attorneys, civic, religious, and educational leaders in the community. Board members inspect SWF each month to ensure that high standards are maintained.

The Advisory Board was instrumental in obtaining both the funding and the land for the new facility in 1978 and 1979. It has assisted the Center in acquiring two of the four teaching positions and worked hard to find volunteer funding for computers used in the classroom. The Board has also been active in developing community resources for juvenile justice. In 1982, the Board was primarily responsible for acquiring the School Resource Officer Program that is now active in the Lee County schools.

The Southwest Florida Juvenile Detention Center is proud to have been designated as a Juvenile Detention Resource Center and invites interested professionals to call or visit the Center at any time.