

## WELCOME TO THE YOUTH STUDY CENTER

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The Youth Study Center (YSC) is the only secure youth detention facility in Philadelphia. Here, court-ordered juveniles between the ages of 13-18, who are alleged to have committed a felony type offense and are deemed by the court to be a serious risk to the safety of the community or risk of failure to appear at their scheduled court hearings, await their hearing before Juvenile court. All residents follow a strict schedule of activities that includes regular school sessions conducted on-site by the Philadelphia School District, individual and group counseling, and supervised outdoor recreation.

The 105-bed facility accommodates nearly 5,000 youth each year. The Philadelphia YSC is the only accredited juvenile detention facility in the state of Pennsylvania, as sanctioned by the American Correctional Association.

The YSC offers an array of services divided into the three categories: Residential Services, including direct supervision of juveniles; Support Services, including housekeeping, laundry, food service, transportation, building maintenance and security; and Program Services, including social work services, mental health and medical services, volunteer services, and data and population management analysis.

### *Mission Statement*

Consistent with the primary goal of providing secure and safe pre-trial custody of youth, the mission of the Youth Study Center is:

~ *To protect the community by providing a safe and secure temporary custody in a restrictive environment for alleged juvenile offenders in Philadelphia as ordered by the Family Court of Philadelphia, pursuant to the Juvenile Act of Pennsylvania, and provided by the Department of Human Services.*

~ *To provide a structured program designed to promote the positive growth and development of detained youth, including activities that encourage choosing alternatives that are conducive to appropriate behavior.*

~ *To consistently promote and advocate for a juvenile justice system with a full range of services that is responsive to the needs of youth, families, and their communities.*

## YOUTH STUDY CENTER

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*Division of Juvenile  
Justice Services  
Department of  
Human Services*

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DHS (215) 683-4DHS

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*Mayor, City of Philadelphia*

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*Commissioner, Department  
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City of Philadelphia  
Department of Human Services



We Make A Difference  
In The Lives Of Philadelphia's  
Children And Families

YOUTH  
STUDY  
CENTER



## YSC SERVICES

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- **Chaplain** - A Chaplain is on staff for religious counseling and numerous religious services that are held throughout the week and on weekends. If a resident is of a faith that is not represented at the Youth Study Center, the Chaplain can arrange for a person of that faith to be contacted.
- **Contracted Programming** – Utilized to supplement the regular services provided by the YSC, contracted programming allows for an expanded array of skill- building and other important services. Some examples are: Rights of Passage, Cooking Class, Mentoring Programs, Mental Health and Medical Programs.
- **Dental** – Each resident receives a dental screening upon admission by a registered nurse. Within a week of admission, each resident receives a dental exam performed by a licensed dentist. Dental care is also provided on an emergency basis.
- **Dietary** – All residents receive three well-balanced meals each day and a snack in the evening.
- **Drug and Alcohol Counseling** – A Drug and Alcohol counselor provides assessment and counseling for juveniles identified as being drug/alcohol dependent.
- **Education** – the School District of Philadelphia conducts regular schooling at the Youth Study Center. Basic subjects including English, Math, Social Studies, and Biology. Full credit is granted upon the residents' return to their school.
- **Medical** – All residents undergo an initial medical screening upon arrival at the YSC. Before the admission process is complete, a second medical screening is conducted to ensure that the YSC staff members are informed of any current illnesses or medication that the residents must take.
- **Mental Health** - Mental Health Services are contracted through the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). CHOP provides mental health services to any YSC resident in need of psychological or psychiatric intervention. Mental health staff includes a child and adolescent psychiatrist, a clinical and developmental psychologist, and Master's level clinical social workers. The services provided include crisis intervention, psychiatric evaluations, individual, group and family therapy, and medication where indicated. Services are provided Monday through Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m.

- **Recreation** – The recreation department provides a wide range of activities including weight training and outdoor sports. The recreation department also organizes special projects and entertainment by community groups.
- **Resource Development** - The Resource Development Department provides educational and recreational materials and activities for YSC residents. Organizations and individuals from the community are invited to the YSC to discuss leadership and possible opportunities for residents when they return home.
- **Social Services** - These services include: supportive counseling to assist residents with adjustments to detention, facilitating contact with appropriate family and legal resources, and assisting and educating residents and their families on navigating the juvenile justice system. Social workers also make referrals for additional supportive services (e.g. mental health, drug and alcohol counseling) when needed.
- **Statistician/Transportation Coordinator** – The Statistician/Transportation Coordinator facilitates the rapid movement of residents to placement. In addition, this office performs the critical function of quality control ensuring that each admitted child is accounted for and they are not mistakenly held when they are eligible for release.
- **Volunteer Services** - The Volunteer Program enables concerned individuals to assist the YSC by working with troubled youth in both an advisory and direct services capacity.

## HISTORY OF THE YOUTH STUDY CENTER

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The Youth Study Center was first established in 1909 as the House of Detention. This early facility, run by a Court appointed Board of Managers, sought to keep children whose delinquency was not of a serious nature, from appearing in formal court proceedings. The residents consisted mainly of status offenders and abused and neglected children. Status offenses were generally minor crimes such as truancy or curfew violation. The facility program consisted of an educational component and provided medical, psychiatric, and psychological evaluations.

On May 15, 1952, the present facility was opened at 2020 Pennsylvania Avenue, almost the exact geographic center of the juvenile delinquency pattern in Philadelphia at that time. The expansion of the facility, in addition to satisfying space requirements, reflected the prevailing social climate, which emphasized human relations, social responsibility and the need to deal with the increasing number of serious offenses being committed by juveniles.

The 1950's saw a continuation of the existing structure and programming at the Youth Study Center. A steady rise in the resident population and changes in juvenile regulations during the 1960's affected future detention standards at the facility. Laws passed during the 1970s forbade the housing of status offenders in secure detention facilities. This led to the development of the Detention Alternative Program (DAP), the forerunner to Community Based Detention Services (CBDS). This program served to divert status offenders and abused and neglected children from admission to YSC, and thus helped to control the census of the population at the facility and more appropriately serve children.

In 1982, the authority to operate the YSC was awarded to the City of Philadelphia, Department of Public Welfare, later to become the Department of Human Services (DHS). With the agency under the DHS umbrella, initiatives were instituted to better serve the needs of the residents.

The 1990's brought about an increase in community-based resources and a reduction and leveling off of the YSC population. The Youth Study Center's management system was restructured and the process of behavioral health integration began and has continued into the present. A multidisciplinary team consisting of DHS and Behavioral Health System (BHS) psychologists and social workers now meets twice weekly at the Youth Study Center to identify problem behaviors on the part of residents and offer practical intervention tools. In addition, the Youth Study Center now offers a variety of extra-curricular and specialized programs to address the individual needs of residents and their re-integration into the larger community.