

# Juvenile Residential Facility Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), 2020

In 2020, the National Institute of Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention introduced questions in the 2020 Juvenile Residential Facility Census (JRFC) survey to understand how facilities responded to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

Overall, 1,323 facilities participated in the JRFC that year. Facility response in relation to COVID-19 questions varied by topic, but response rates were generally high, ranging from 78% to 96%. Most facilities indicated that they increased phone or video communication to ensure residents were able to contact family members and their legal counsel. Fewer than half of facilities indicated that they reduced their population by either transferring or releasing residents early. Nearly all facilities indicated they screened entrants, staff, and/or visitors for symptoms prior to entry or upon arrival to the facility.

More than three-quarters of facilities (1,037 of 1,323 facilities) indicated they had access to COVID-19 testing. Of those reporting access to testing, 61% reported testing residents who presented with COVID-19 symptoms, and less than half tested residents who were exposed to confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19.

## Measures taken by juvenile residential facilities to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)

Total number of participating facilities 1,323

### Percent reporting social distancing measures:

Increased phone/video communication with family or legal counsel	94%
Restricted visitation/no visitors or non-contact only	94
Limited large group interactions	90
Added signage with 6-foot distance guidance	77
Isolated/quarantined persons confirmed positive or with symptoms	76
Discontinued classroom setting for instruction/used remote instead	62
Discontinued face-to-face counseling/used remote instead	62
Reduced population (transfer or early release)	45

### Percent reporting facility access procedures:

Screened all persons prior to entry	98%
Restricted entry of non-essential persons	97
Developed a formal plan of response to address facility access, social distancing, etc.	94
Allowed/required staff to work from home (if sick)	85
Restricted non-essential transfer of residents*	58
Restricted non-essential transfer of staff	55

Number of facilities that had access to COVID-19 testing 1,037

Percent of participating facilities that had access to COVID-19 testing 78%

### Of facilities that had access to COVID-19 testing, percent that reported testing:

All residents*	33%
Those with symptoms	61
Those exposed to confirmed/suspected cases	46
Those new to facility	21
Those returning to facility following public exposure	14

\*Residents include all persons in the facility on the JRFC reference date, not just youth who were held for an offense.

Note: The reference period for the COVID-19 questions was March 1, 2020, through October 28, 2020. This publication was prepared by Sarah Hockenberry and Charles Puzanchera, National Center for Juvenile Justice, under cooperative agreement #2019-JX-FX-K001 awarded by the National Institute of Justice with funding support from OJJDP. May 2023.

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