

The four centers house a total of 588 youth and provide a number of services from counseling to sex offender treatment. The typical student of a Youth Development Center has failed at several community placements, is likely to have committed a violent offense toward another person, and may have mental health problems or other specialized needs. Many students have substance abuse problems, mental retardation, or exhibit sexually defiant behaviors.

John S. Wilder Youth Development Center

Wilder Youth Development Center is located in Somerville, Fayette County, and has a capacity of 144 male students. This program serves students primarily from west Tennessee. Wilder is one of three regional facilities positioned in each grand region of the state. The facility's staff is actively pursuing the vision of a high-performance organization: service, empowerment, professionalism, and teamwork are their "watchwords."

Students attend the institution's fully accredited school, and those who have completed their high school education are employed full-time on campus. In keeping with the facility's strong emphasis on treatment, counseling staff is on duty until 9:00pm daily, conducting group and individual counseling. Contracted psychological staff provides group and individual counseling.

One of Wilder's most successful programs is the Behavior Management Unit that houses students with the most pronounced behavior problems. Students in this program have special mental health needs and are unable to control their behavior and adjust to the regular treatment program. The unit uses a structured environment, in both its dormitory and classroom settings, to promote a positive peer culture where both confrontation and commendation are consistently applied.

Wilder also has two violent offender units employing Aggression Replacement Training for students who are either committed for violent offenses or who have displayed particularly violent behavior at the facility. In the Independent Living Skills unit, older students learn basic living and job skills, including grocery shopping, cooking, checkbook maintenance, and interviewing skills. A responsibility and impulse control module is used to help