

For additional information or
help

getting your child out of a gang:

Call: 385-468-9773

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GANG TIP HOTLINE

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**CHOOSE
GANG FREE**



**GANG
PREVENTION
FOR PARENTS**



RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

The reason why kids join a gang are varied and complex. Being able to recognize the warning signs of possible gang involvement is critical. Parents should look for any drastic changes in their child's behavior, including:

- Using a different style of language.
- Associating with a different group of friends
- Desiring a great deal of privacy
- Acquiring new possessions without parent's knowledge
- Dressing in gang affiliated clothing
- Obsession with one color of clothing or logo
- Claiming gang affiliation
- Uses or practices hand signs
- Peculiar drawings or language (may appear later as tattoos or brands)
- Physical injury when child has no explanation

WHAT CAN I DO?

Discovering your child is involved in a gang can come as a shock and when a child joins a gang the entire family is affected. However, there are things you can do and help is available.

- Talk calmly with your child.**
- Ask if he or she is in a gang and why.**
- Ask questions to determine the level of involvement.**
- Actively listen in a caring and non-judgmental way.**
- Recognize that gang membership is not just the child's problem. It is the family's problem as well.**
- Do not try to tackle the problem by yourself.**

There are many agencies and community resources available to help you in removing your child from a gang's influence. Resources to consider contacting are:

- Local police gang unit**
- School resource officer**
- School Counselor**
- Social service agencies**
- Clergy**
- Counselors**

PARENTS ARE THE NUMBER ONE FACTOR IN REDUCING GANG MEMBERSHIP



Are there gangs in schools?

School Resource Officers are trained to deal with gangs. They are aware of the kids who are involved in gangs and monitor them while they are in school. Officers work closely with the Gang Unit and Community Policing Unit to ensure that gang activity in school is held to a minimum. Most gang activity happens outside of school

Why do kids join gangs?

Kids join for many reasons. Some reasons can include: excitement and fun, a sense of belonging, companionship, peer pressure, attention or status, financial gain, intimidation, protection, power, and failure to realize what being in a gang means. Living in an area that high in gang issues or having a family member in a gang increases the possibility of gang involvement.

How do kids join gangs?

Kids normally join gangs by either committing a crime or being "jumped in." "Jumped in" is an initiation that involves other gang members beating the potential member as a test of his or her courage and fighting ability.

Do girls join gangs?

Gangs used to be a concern for boys only. But now, many girls are joining gangs or hanging out with male gang members. While not all gangs allow girls to become members, of those that do, 1 in 10 members are female.

What's the difference between a gang and a just a group of friends?

A gang is defined as "three or more people who form an allegiance to the exclusion of others and who engage in unlawful criminal behavior." A group of friends who are together and not acting in criminal behavior are not considered a gang. The important thing is labeling a group of friends as a gang is based on their criminal behaviors. Groups who commit crimes together are gangs, no matter what they may look like.

What should I know about graffiti?

Not all graffiti is gang related and it doesn't necessarily mean your neighborhood is unsafe and may include random markings, initials or social commentary. Gang related graffiti can be dangerous as it is used by gang members to mark their territory, list members, or send warnings to rival gangs.