



Parents' Guide to Gangs Part 2

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

Talk to your child about the negative consequences of gang behaviors and ways to avoid them

Be clear that you disapprove of gangs and do not want to see your child hurt or arrested. Be firm in your expectations that your child should NOT:

- Associate with any gang-involved individuals.
- Hang out where gang members congregate.
- Attend any party or social event sponsored by gangs.
- Use any kind of hand or finger signs that may be meaningful to gangs, especially in pictures (even as a joke).
- Wear clothing that may have meaning to gangs in your area. Explain to your child that these clothing items can put him or her in danger and that you will not purchase them or allow them to be worn.



Get to know your child's friends and the friends' parents

Be aware of their attitudes toward drugs, alcohol, and gangs. When children start to feel pressure to use drugs or join gangs, it usually comes from their friends.

Familiarize yourself with the internet, popular slang terms, and your child's online activity

Communicate with your child about the potential negative consequences of online activity, including what he or she may post online. Spend time online with your child. Ask your child to show you his or her favorite online activities, sites, and online contacts. Finally, keep the computer in a common area and utilize the computer's and websites' parental controls to limit the child's access to websites and social media.

Talk to your child about ways to deal with pressure from friends

Help your child practice simple ways to respond to peer pressure. For example, if your child is challenged by a peer who says, "If you were my friend, you would," your child can respond, "If you were my friend, you wouldn't ask." Then, he or she should walk away.

Limit interaction with gang-involved individuals

One of the strongest risk factors for joining a gang is living in the same house as someone who is involved in gangs. If your child has older siblings or other relatives in your home who are associated with gangs, be very watchful of the influence they have on your child, and intervene immediately if your child starts to copy their dress, attitudes, and/or behaviors.



Set firm limits with your child

Children and teenagers need to clearly know what is expected of them and the consequences for acting otherwise. When your child misbehaves, be sure to use fair and consistent discipline, while demonstrating unconditional love and support for your child.

Plan family time

Make time for your family to play, eat meals together, take trips (even to local parks or activities), keep family traditions, and have family meetings to talk about plans, feelings, and complaints.

For additional gang-related resources, please visit the National Gang Center at www.nationalgangcenter.gov.



"Adapted from *Parents' Guide to Gangs*, National Gang Center"

www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Parents-Guide-to-Gangs.pdf, 2015