

G.A.P.

REFERENCE GUIDE TO RECOGNIZE AND PREVENT GANG INVOLVEMENT

This quick reference guide provides common warning signs of gang involvement.

Look for multiple signs, as particular clothes or musical preferences can be common among youth not involved in gangs.

Also, be aware of graffiti which may indicate a gang presence.

Call police if you see it. Most important, seek help early and don't hesitate to contact school personnel, the police department, your school resource officer or faith leaders for additional assistance.

WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE INVOLVED WITH A GANG

- Admits to hanging out with kids in gangs.
- Shows unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing or a particular logo.
- Has an unusual interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies or Web sites.
- Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends.
- Has a specific drawing or hand symbol on school books, clothing or walls.
- Displays tattoos related to a particular gang.
- Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fighting-related bruises, injuries to hands/knuckles).
- Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry.
- Carries a weapon.
- Has been in trouble with the police.

Exhibits negative changes in behavior such as:

- Withdrawing from family.**
- Declining school attendance or performance.**
- Staying out late without a reason.**
- Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy.**
- Exhibiting signs of drug use.**
- Breaking rules consistently.**
- Speaking in gang-style slang.**

HOW TO PREVENT GANG INVOLVEMENT

To find out where to turn if someone you know is involved with a gang or to help prevent gang involvement call:

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Spend quality time with your child.
- Get involved in your child's school activities.
- Know your child's friends.

- Encourage good study habits.
- Encourage your child to participate in positive after-school activities (organized sports, youth groups, school-sponsored clubs).
- Take action in your neighborhood — start a Neighborhood Watch program and report crimes (including graffiti).
- Teach your child how to cope with peer pressure.
- Explain to your child the dangers and consequences of gang involvement. Let your child know that you do not want to see him or her hurt or arrested.

- Explain to your child that he or she **SHOULD NOT:**
 - Associate with gang members.
 - Attend parties or social events sponsored by gangs.
 - Use hand signs, symbols, language or wear clothing that may have meaning to gangs in your area