

# GANGS

## A Safe City

### Basic Awareness & Strategies for Parents

#### Warning Signs of Gang Involvement

Why Children  
Join Gangs  
Fad  
Media Influences  
Copy Cat Behaviors

Excitement

Family Issues

Fear/Protection

Notoriety  
To be somebody  
To be known

Peer Pressure

Sense of Belonging  
Not Part of the School  
Not Part of the Society

Sense of Power

Power in Numbers

What is a gang? It is often described as a group of three or more individuals with a common interest, bond, or activity characterized by criminal or delinquent conduct. Gangs usually have a group name or designation.

The following describes potential indicators of gang interest or involvement. Gang trends change and different areas of the country may be experiencing different indicators. Please use this list with great caution.

#### Defiant Behavior

Most youth express defiant behavior from time to time. Gang involved youth are extremely defiant of authority figures and will at times challenge authority or make threats against authority figures.

#### Change in Dress

Many gangs use colored clothing, sports team logos on clothing, a certain style of clothing accessories to denote gang membership. If the youth in question begins dressing in only one certain style or color,

parents and teachers should begin to take notice and ask why the youth is dressing differently. A child that likes a certain sports team and dresses with that team's logo is exhibiting normal behavior. However, if the child does not follow sports and still dresses in sports team logo further inspection is warranted.

#### New Friends

The child may begin to associate with a new group of friends and if these friends all dress in similar styles or colors, parents and teachers should begin to discuss why the child is associating with this new group of friends. If the new group of friends are gang members, then the chances for the child to be involved with a gang goes up significantly. Parents should not allow their child to associate with this group.

San Diego County Office of Education  
Safe Schools