
A
Parent's
Guide
to
Gangs



Concerned?

Gang activities constitute not only a serious problem in the community but a great danger to your child. If your child is in a gang, the child is at risk of becoming a criminal or likely a victim of gang violence. If you see signs that your child is becoming involved with gangs, you need to act immediately – setting boundaries to deal with the problem or call your school counselors or the listed organizations to get help.

Working together

Everyone (except gang members) wants a gang-free community. Parents stand to lose the most - the well being or even the life of a child - if gangs take or keep hold. But gangs are often violent and intimidating. What can you do in the face of this?

First, develop positive alternatives. Are there after-school and weekend activities kids can enjoy? Can the school offer its facilities? Can parents organize clubs or sports? Can older kids tutor or mentor younger ones? Can the kids themselves help with ideas?

Second, talk with other parents. For one thing, you'll find out what everyone else's parent really said. For another, you can support each other and

share knowledge that will help spot problems sooner than you can on your own.

Third, work with police and other agencies. Report suspicious activity, set up a Neighborhood Watch or a community patrol; let the police know about gang graffiti, get (and share with other parents) the facts on the gang problem in your community, find out what local services - nonprofit as well as government - will work with communities against gangs.

Fourth, get organized against the gang organization. Use your neighborhood association or a new group. Get help from a variety of sources right in your community. Work with these organizations in addition to the police, priest or minister, family counselor, community association, school counselor or principal, athletic coach, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA / YWCA, Scouts, drug abuse prevention groups, youth-serving agencies, and community centers - just to name a few.

Warning Signs

The warning signs of gang involvement include the following:

- lack of interest in school
- is in fights frequently
- changes in hairstyle and dress
- changes in friends
- tattoos

- new nicknames
- graffiti on clothing and personal items
- changes in personality
- staying out late at night
- hanging out with known gang members and in known gang areas
- possession of more money than you give for allowance

Barrio Station (Mid City)	(619) 238-0314
Casa Familiar (San Ysidro)	(619) 428-1115
Harmonium (North City)	(858) 566-5740
Social Advocates for Youth San Diego	(858) 565-4148
San Diego Urban League	(619) 263-3115
Mid-City Resource Center	(619) 283-9624
South Bay Community Services	(619) 420-3620
Union of Pan Asian Communities	(619) 232-6454
The Choice Program	(619) 594-2525
Tariq Khamisa Foundation	(858) 565-0800
San Diego County Office of Education	(858)292-3500

When Graffiti is Not Art

Graffiti is vandalism when done without permission of the property owner. Furthermore, San Diego Municipal Code Section 54.0405 requires that property owners keep all walls, buildings, fences, signs and other structures and surfaces visible from the public right-of-way free of graffiti.

New City Ordinance

In November 2000, the San Diego City Council amended the City's Graffiti Ordinance to revise the official definition of "graffiti" as follows:

"Graffiti means any unauthorized inscription, word, figure, picture, or design that is sprayed, marked, cut, posted, pasted or otherwise affixed, drawn or painted on any surface of public or private property."

Report Graffiti

To report graffiti please call 9-1-1 and/or visit the Reporting Graffiti Web page for details on rewards for reporting graffiti.



Victims of Violent Loss

Survivors of Violent Loss Program c/o
First Avenue Counseling Centre
2333 First Ave, Suite 204
San Diego, CA 92101
Phone: 619-685-0005, Fax: 619-685-0042

"The average American child with pay cable TV or a VCR in the home will enjoy 32,000 murders, 40,000 attempted murders, and a quarter million total acts of violence by age 19."

Thomas Radecki, MD

Gang Hotline

Do you have information about gang activity in your community and are afraid to call the police? Please call **(619) 533-6511**. This is an anonymous line and your name will be kept confidential. Your information will be passed on to appropriate authorities. Thank you for your concern and help.

City of San Diego
Commission on Gang Prevention
and Intervention
1200 Third Avenue Ste. 1300
San Diego, CA 92101

Phone: 619-533-6511
Fax: 619-533-6515
Web: www.sandiego.gov/gangcommission