

TIPS FOR PARENTS

A Checklist for Positive Parenting

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILD / PROVIDE POSITIVE ATTENTION

- Plan activities that the whole family can enjoy
- Also, spend time alone with your child
- Have a genuine concern and interest in the things that are important to your child
- Expose them to different places outside of your neighborhood, parks, museums, the beach, mountains, camping trips, etc.
- Remember to praise your child daily

PROMOTE POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

- Don't just talk "at" your child, but talk "with" them
- Listen and value what they have to say
- Encourage them to discuss all problems with you, large and small
- Do not trivialize or put them down when they discuss problems or concerns
- Set aside a given time each day to have a conversation with your child and discuss how their day went, etc.

SHOW AND SPEAK YOUR LOVE

- Many children seek out gangs to fulfill their need for love and family support, so let your child know that you care for and love them
- Give frequent hugs, especially after bad days
- Show your child that you are genuinely interested in their life
- Remember to "speak" your love for them, in addition to showing it by actions

BUILD HEALTHY SELF - ESTEEM

(Kids who have the proper self-image don't need to rely on gangs for recognition or status)

- Take time to let your child know that they are special
- Teach them to feel good about themselves
- Find the positive in your child and recognize it
- Be aware of the absolute power of your words - minimize the negative comments and maximize the positive comments
- Give them hope for a bright future

PROMOTE POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND VALUES

(A positive attitude towards self and others and a strong sense of ethical and moral values will enable children to make correct decisions in avoiding gangs and drugs)

- At an early age, teach your children to care for and respect themselves and others
- Teach them about what is right and wrong
- Allow them to believe in themselves
- Let them have hope for a positive future

- Stress a positive outlook on life and the future
- Stress good work habits in academics and employment
- Teach them that through hard work and effort, they can become anything that they want
- Be a good role model (we all know actions speak louder than words, and kids do watch what their parents do and say)

KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS

(Peers play an important role in your child's development. If your child hangs around gang members, then he/she has a strong chance of becoming a gang member, as well)

- Meet and get to know your children's friends
- Know how your child and his/her friends spend their free time and what type of influence they have over your child
- Become familiar with the families of your child's friends and learn how they feel about gangs and drugs
- Do not allow your child to hang around gang members or wannabes
- Do not allow your child to go to houses that have gang members living in them

PROVIDE GOOD SUPERVISION / OCCUPY YOUR CHILD'S FREE TIME

(Children are more apt to become involved in gangs and other delinquent behaviors when they are left alone)

- Give them responsibilities at home
- Keep your children active in positive alternatives
- Get them involved in supervised activities, such as after school programs, sports, clubs, scouting, church activities, or as community service volunteers
- Do not allow them to stay out late
- Always know where they are, where they are going, and with whom
- Check up on them periodically

DISCIPLINE IS NECESSARY / SET LIMITS

(Discipline and structure in the household will allow your child to develop self-limits)

- Discuss the house rules with your children
- Set realistic limits
- Teach them what acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are
- Write out the consequences of unacceptable behaviors
- Monitor their behavior and enforce the rules
- Be fair / Be firm / Be consistent!!

ENCOURAGE A GOOD EDUCATION / BECOME INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Take an active interest in your child's education
- Help them with homework assignments or studying for tests
- Read books with your child
- Visit educational places such as museums or the library

- Stress the importance of a good education and remind them of the opportunities that an education can give them
- Set high standards for your children
- Become active in your child's school (especially the middle school) - get to know the staff, become a PTA member, attend school events/activities

BECOME MORE INFORMED AND AWARE OF GANGS

(You can't fight what you don't see or change what you don't know)

- Organize or attend meetings that give a local perspective on what types of gang activities are occurring in your area
- Learn the names of local gangs and what their graffiti looks like
- Learn how gang members dress and act
- Always keep your weapons locked up in the house

TALK WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GANGS

Let them know why you think gangs are so dangerous:

- Constant threat of violence, either to gang members or to innocent bystanders
- Hatred of other groups for no reason
- Drug use, which leads to its own problems
- Greatly increased chance of being arrested
- Ruins young lives and futures

CREATE A ZERO TOLERANCE FOR GANGS

- Let your child know that anything associated with gangs is negative and self-destructive
- Let your child and their friends know that your house is an anti-gang home
- Do not allow anyone to bring gang paraphernalia into your home
- Do not allow your child to write gang names, initials or other gang-related graffiti
- Do not allow them to take a gang type nickname.
- Do not allow them to flash gang hand signs

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

(A strong united community will force gangs to move or disperse)

- Get to know your neighbors
- Form support groups and/or join neighborhood watch groups
- Discourage gangs from "kickin' it" in your neighborhoods
- Have graffiti removed as soon as possible
- Teach your children civic pride
- Attend community functions