

## Warning Signs Continued...

- Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends
- Has specific drawings or gang symbols on school books, folders, note books, book bags, clothes, walls, or tattoos
- Has social web page such as MySpace or Facebook which displays gang influenced materials. Also may have photos of himself or herself alone or with other gang members displaying hand signals, holding weapons, or alcohol/ drugs
- Is addressed by his or her friends by a moniker (nickname or street name)
- Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fighting-related bruises, injuries to hand/ 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, performance, behavior
  - Staying out late without reason

- Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy
- Exhibiting signs of alcohol and/ or drug use
- Breaking rules consistently
- Speaking in gang-style slang

## Why Kids Join Gangs

- To gain a sense of belonging and sense of attachment
- To escape intolerable situations at home
- To emulate admired persons—older Siblings, mother, father, tough guys In the neighborhood
- To escape poverty
- Forced in membership (through threats and intimidation; peer Pressure)
- To become rich and powerful
- To “Get Back” at society
- To experience adventure and excitement
- To be “Somebody” or gain respect
- Environmental survival
- Learning difficulties and trouble with academics in school; mindset that it is better to be thought of as “Bad” rather than “Stupid”

# PREVENT GANG INVOLVEMENT



## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO PREVENT GANG INVOLVEMENT *AND* WARNING SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE INVOLVED WITH A GANG

Provided Courtesy of:  
**LaPorte Police Department**  
1206 Michigan Av., LaPorte, IN  
Ph: (219) 362-9446

A Community Oriented Policing based agency

## What Parents Can Do

- Spend quality time with your child
- Get involved in your child's school activities
- Be a positive role model and set the right example
- Know your child's friends and their families
- Encourage good study habits
- Teach your child how to cope with peer pressure
- Help your child develop good conflict resolution skills (See [www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/conflict.asp](http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/conflict.asp))
- Encourage your child to participate in positive afterschool activities with adult supervision (recreation centers, organized sports, youth groups, school sponsored clubs)
- Take action in your neighborhood (create a neighborhood alliance, report and remove graffiti)
- Talk with your child about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement. Let your child know that you don't want to see him or her hurt or arrested

- Monitor your child's computer activity. Many gangs are now using popular social websites such as MySpace and YouTube to recruit new gang members. These make gang life seem exciting and cool to lure kids in.

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, or language that is meaningful to gangs
- Wear clothing, including specific colors, or logos that may have meaning to gangs in your area



## Information Resources for Parents

- [www.gangsorus.com/parents.html](http://www.gangsorus.com/parents.html)
- [www.knowgangs.com](http://www.knowgangs.com)
- [www.gangstyle.com](http://www.gangstyle.com)
- [www.gangsreal.com/parents.html](http://www.gangsreal.com/parents.html)
- [www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)

## A Parent's Quick Reference Guide

### *Recognizing and Preventing Gang Involvement*

This quick reference guide provides common warning signs of gang involvement, but may not be all-encompassing. Parents should look for multiple signs to indicate possible gang involvement because some of these indicators alone, such as clothes or musical preferences, are also common among youth not involved in gangs. Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with local gang symbols, seek help early, and consider contacting school personnel, local law enforcement, faith leaders, and community organizations for additional assistance.

## Warning Signs That Your Child May Be Involved with a Gang

- Admits to "hanging out" with gang members
- Shows an unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing or a particular logo.
- Has an unusual interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies, video games or web sites