

Gang Crimes Bureau

Gang members will try to hide their involvement from parents and other adults. They may tell adults that they are involved in social settings, sports clubs, dance teams or rap groups, in an attempt to avoid being labeled as a gang member.

Here is What to Look For:

- A new group of friends.
- Change in dress habits—Gang members will wear the same type of clothing all of the time (*colors or particular jackets or designers*).
- Change in physical appearance, such as the use of bandanas, hats or wave caps, unusual hairstyles, shaved slits in eyebrows & certain tattoos affiliated with the group.
- Secretiveness about their activities.
- Use of nicknames.
- Unexplained money or possessions from unknown sources (*gang members will have money from criminal activity*).
- Extreme changes in behavior and disciplinary problems at home and school.
- Use of strange hand signs.
- Loss of interest in school, truancy and significant drop in grades.
- Appearance of graffiti on personal articles such as school books, notepads, backpacks, shirts, hats and belt buckles, etc..
- Contacts with local police.

DON'T FORGET TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT GANGS BEFORE THERE IS A PROBLEM. TELL YOUR CHILD THAT. . .

- You disapprove of gangs and you don't want to see your child hurt or arrested.
- You see your child as special and worth protecting.
- You want to help your child with problems.
- Family members don't keep secrets from each other, and you and other parents are working against gangs.

Join With Others to Make and Keep Your Community Gang Free

- Know your neighbors; organize or join neighborhood watch groups.
- Report crime and suspicious activity.
- Remove gang graffiti from around your home.
- Attend community functions.
- Teach your children civic pride.

What Can I Do if I Find Out My Child Is In a Gang or Their Friends are In Gangs?

LVMPD in partnership with other organizations CAN help! There are community outreach specialists, gang prevention and intervention programs that you and your child can be referred to. There are special seminars and classes for parents to learn the warning signs that lead up to youth gang involvement.

Most importantly, recognizing early warning signs can prevent future gang involvement, which leads to crime and violence.

DON'T THINK THAT BECAUSE SOMEONE IS ON THE VERGE OF JOINING A GANG OR IS ALREADY A GANG MEMBER THAT IT IS TOO LATE TO ESTABLISH POSITIVE, NON VIOLENT AND HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES!



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What *You* Need to Know



Kids and Gangs

What *You* Can Do!

**Gang Crimes Bureau
702.828.3309**



Gang crimes and violence affect our community every day. We see boys and girls as young as the age of 8 being recruited into criminal street gangs. This brochure is designed to help parents and caregivers learn about gangs and signs of gang activity in order to prevent kids from joining gangs.

What is a Gang? In Nevada, we use the following Definition:

“A Group of 3 or more persons who unite under a common identifier (name, logo or style of dress) and engage in a pattern of criminal activity.”

THE BACKGROUND

Gangs are territorial. Each gang has its own turf and graffiti marks its boundaries. Many gangs adopt names that have significance in relationship to their neighborhoods (streets, parks, hills, valleys or housing projects). Anyone who does not belong to the neighborhood or who resembles a rival gang member may become the subject of attack.

Gang members adopt nicknames that tend to fit the individual's physical or psychological characteristics.

Most gang members, especially youngsters, are proud of their gang and freely admit their membership and dress in a style identifying their particular set. Their personal belongings are frequently covered in gang graffiti.

Graffiti impacts our neighborhoods in many ways. Violence associated with gang graffiti is dangerous to the entire community. Innocent people are often subjected to gang violence by the mere presence of graffiti.

“Shoot signs” which are hand and finger gestures are used by gang members to identify their gang.

Why Do People Join Gangs?

Many gang members say they have joined because the gang offered them support, caring, and a sense of order and purpose -- all the things that most parents try to give their kids. ***The better you meet those needs, the less likely your kid will want to be in a gang.***

There are Different Reasons for Different Kids

- Feeling of caring and attention in a gang, it almost becomes a family to them.
- Looking for respect, power and the need to feel important.
- To make money—to help out at home or to have nice clothes and things.
- Parties, girls and drugs.
- Self-protection because they are picked on by other gang members.
- Some grow up in a neighborhood where it is almost a way of life.
- Most have some real or imagined problem at home that makes them prefer the streets.
- Some gang members are addicted to drugs. The problems at home can become worse because parents don't know how to cope with their addiction.
- Lack of parental involvement.
- Peer pressure.
- Low self esteem and lack of identity.
- Companionship and sense of belonging they do not receive in their own families.

There are groups called “PARTY CREWS.” In our experience, party crews can become as dangerous as youth gangs. Be aware of your children's affiliations with such groups.

Pop Culture, Technology and Gangs

The recent glorification of gangs in popular culture presents challenges. Television, movies and music display “gang culture” as glamorous. Gangs also use up-to-date social networks for recruiting purposes. Youth exposed to these images do not realize the dangers of the gang lifestyle until it is too late.

The Gang World

Gangs are more than just kids being socially active and hanging out. ***They are violent.*** They will beat soon-to be gang members up to give them membership and court them for a while, convincing them to commit crimes. Once in a gang it is more difficult to leave, as loyalty is expected. Young teenage girls who associate with boys in gangs place themselves at risk for physical violence and sexual assaults.

Also, there are groups called “PARTY CREWS.” In our experience, party crews can become as dangerous as youth gangs. Be aware of your children's affiliations with such groups.

Sharpen Your Skills as a Parent

- Meet their friends, their friend's families and know your child's whereabouts.
- Kids need to stay busy. Do everything possible to involve your children in supervised positive group activities.
- Help your kids identify positive role models and heroes; especially people right in your community.
- Develop good communication with your children and spend time with them.
- Do not allow your children to dress in gang style clothing. If they dress in gang style clothing they are expressing an interest in gangs and will attract the attention of gangs.
- Teach respect for others' property: do not tolerate graffiti.
- Periodically inspect your child's room, closets, clothing, e-mail, text messages, and any internet websites such as MYSPACE & FACEBOOK.

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