

GANG PREVENTION

A Parent's Quick Reference Guide



RECOGNIZING AND PREVENTING GANG INVOLVEMENT

It is important to recognize at the earliest possible stage when our children might be exploring a negative path and to know how to intervene. All parents can benefit from learning to recognize the signs of at-risk behaviours so they can help their kids get back on a positive path.

AS A PARENT ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- Does your child have multiple cell phones? (Usually 2-5 phones)
- Does your child go out for short periods (25 – 40 minutes) at all hours of the day or night?
- Is your child providing little or no information about new friends?
- Does your child prevent you from going in their room?
- Does your child have unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry?
- Does your child ask to borrow money from you or other family members and is vague about the reason why?

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

Withdrawing from family and engaging in antisocial behaviour

Change of interest in past hobbies, sports and long time friendships

Declining school attendance, performance and behaviour

Suddenly becoming more secretive about daily activities and vague about plans

Association with friends who engage in problem behaviour

Exhibiting signs of drug use and/or alcohol dependency

Either consistently breaking rules and/ or has been in trouble with police

Inability to explain physical injuries

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO PREVENT GANG INVOLVEMENT

- Encourage open and honest two way communication with your children.
- Educate yourself and ask for help when needed.
- Know your child's friends and their families.
- Be a positive role model and exhibit the behaviour you want your children to model.
- Get involved with your child's school and extracurricular activities.
- Teach your child coping skills (how to handle peer pressure, etc).



CURRENT RESEARCH

Findings from a study of 421 Surrey high school students suggest:

- Gratitude, self-esteem, humility, authenticity (being true to oneself) and parental monitoring are related to low involvement in violence.
- Kids who feel connected are less likely to become involved in gangs.
- Kids report higher life satisfaction when they have an adult at home who knows where they are, who they are with and what they are doing.
- Youth beliefs demonstrate the importance of dispelling the MYTHS associated with gangs.

RESOURCES AND WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

www.gangprevention.ca

Preliminary research from the "Powerful Teens" Study conducted by the Acting Together - CURA project at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey.