Salt Lake Area Gang Project

A Multi-Jurisdictional Gang Intelligence, Suppression, & Diversion Unit

Participating Agencies:

Local Agencies:
Cottonwood Heights PD
Draper City PD
Granite School District PD
Midvale City PD
Murray City PD
Salt Lake County SO
Salt Lake County DA
SHOCAP
South Salt Lake City PD
Taylorsville PD
Unified PD

State Agencies:
Utah Dept. of Human Services--
Div. of Juvenile Justice Services
Utah Dept. of Corrections--
Law Enforcement Bureau
Utah Dept. of Public Safety--
State Bureau of Investigation

Federal Agencies:
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms, and Explosives
United States Attorney's Office
United States Marshals Service

Goals and Objectives

The Salt Lake Area Gang Project was established to identify, control, and prevent criminal gang activity in the jurisdictions covered by the Project and to provide intelligence data and investigative assistance to law enforcement agencies. The Project also provides youth with information about viable alternatives to gang membership and educates the public about the destructiveness of the gang lifestyle.

Organization

Governing Board: The Salt Lake Area Gang Project is administered by a Governing Board that is made up of police chiefs and administrative personnel from the agencies that participate in the project.

Community Advisory Board: The Community Advisory Board is comprised of community leaders from many different backgrounds. It serves as a link between the Governing Board and the community. This board is responsible for providing community input, supporting constructive legislation, and working to resolve community problems.

Gang Unit Personnel

Sworn Personnel
A Unified Police Department lieutenant serves as the Project Director and has over-all responsibility for the Project's operation. Three sergeants report to the lieutenant and the daily operation of the Project is their responsibility. Each sergeant commands a squad of detectives. The detectives duties include:

- Suppression and street enforcement
- Follow-up work on gang-related cases
- Collecting intelligence through contacts with gang members
- Assisting local agencies with on-going investigations
- Answering law-enforcement inquiries about gang members
- Providing presentations to community groups
- Disseminating gang-related intelligence to law enforcement personnel through the weekly gang newsletter

Civilian Personnel
The Project employs an office coordinator, a criminal analyst, a SHOCAP coordinator, a graffiti removal coordinator, and a community coordinator.

Publications and Services

Tattoo Removal: The Salt Lake Area Gang Project coordinates programs that provide free tattoo removal to individuals who were previously gang-involved. In order to qualify for these programs, individuals must no longer be gang-involved, nor have any association with gang members, and must have no criminal activity for at least twelve months.

Referrals: The Community Coordinator provides referrals for gang members and their parents to various community agencies that provide services such as substance abuse programs, recreational programs, support networks, and job training.

Publications: The Project has several brochures available free of charge. These publications cover a variety of topics such as graffiti, gang colors, club drugs, and advice for parents. Current gang-related crime statistics and historical trends in gang violence are also available.

Annual Gang Conference: The Project provides an annual conference open to service providers, law enforcement personnel, and the community. This two-day event, held in the spring, covers a variety of topics from Street Survival to Gang Prevention Programs for Schools.

Salt Lake Area Gang Project
3365 South 900 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119
(801) 743-5864

In an emergency, please dial 911. To report a gang-related crime please call your local law enforcement agency.

For additional information on gangs, or to request a speaker, please call (801) 743-5864.

Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

GANG NAMES & ALLIANCES

IN THE SALT LAKE AREA

Rivalries and in-fighting also occur between the sets listed in each category

Hispanic Gangs

NORTENOS

RPN-Rose Park Nortenos
VI (Vee-One)/ 6th Street
MLB-Mexican Latino Bloods
FVL-Familia Vatos Locos
FPS-Familia Por Siempre
Porterville Nortenos
27th Mafiosos
Diamond Street
21st Street

rivals

SURENOS

CAM-Crazy Ass Mexicans
Avenues (or Avenues 43rd)
Mexican Mafia (213)
VML-Varios Mexicanos Locos
VMS-Vilianos Mexicanos Surenos
VSK-Venomous Surenos Klique
CLK-Crown Latin Kings
TVR-Toonerville Rascals
Surenos 13
38th Street
18th Street
Florencia 13
ABG-Alley Boy Gangsters
Dog Town Surenos
LP-La Primera
T13-Tepa 13
Surenos Chiques
Colonia Chiques
SPV-Surenos Por Vida
Brown Side Gang
East Side Longo

INDEPENDENT HISPANIC GANGS

BDG-Big Dick Gang
VLT-Varrio Loco Town
O13-Ogden 13
QVO
La Raza
East Side Raskals
East Side Locotes

Blood/Crip Gangs

BLOODS

Rose Park Taliban/Iraqi Mafia Gang
POG-Piru Original Gangsters
BMG-Black Mafia Gangsters
KTB-Kearns Town Bloods
West Side Piru
MOB-Money Over Bitches

rivals

CRIPS

White
SLP-Salt Lake Posse
Lay Low Crips
West Side Crips

Samoan
PVC (PVCC)- Park Village (Compton)
SIA - Samoans in Action
SOS-Sons of Samoa
KAS-Krazy Ass Samoans

Tongan
TCG-Tongan Crip Gang
TSG-Tongan Style Gang
BR-Baby Regulators
RPF-Rose Park Family (Rose Park)

Asian Gangs

TOP-Tiny Oriental Posse
VF-Viet Family
TRG-Tiny Raskal Gang

rivals

OLG-Oriental Laotian Gang
AD-Asian Deuce (unaligned-younger version of VF)
LBC-Laos Boy Crips (independent)

Local Midwest-Influenced Gangs

FOLKS

KMD-King Mafia Disciples
Black Gangster Disciples
Gangster Disciples

rivals

PEOPLE

Latin Kings
Vice Lords

White Supremacists

SAW-Silent Aryan Warriors
American Peckerwood
SAC-Soldiers of the Aryan Culture
4R-4th Reich
KV-Krieger Verwandt
Aryan Brotherhood

Extremist Gangs

SXE-Straight Edge
Juggalos
Young African Killers

updated 2/11/2011

Colors

Gangs often use colors as a means of identifying themselves and their rivals. Arguments have been started over nothing more than the color of one's shirt. Loyalty and pride are often shown by wearing the "right" colors.

A gang member might wear just a belt or shoelaces in his gang's colors. Or, he may "dress down" with a coat, shirt, shoes, and hat--all in his gang's colors.

Gang members will often have a bandanna in their gang's color. When this hangs from their pocket, or when a gang member wears it around his head it's often referred to as "flying one's colors."

Additional gang information is available at our website, www.slsherrif.org

BLUE
Punchito Crip Gang
PVCC - Park Village Compton Crips
RPF - Rose Park Family
SIA - Samoans in Action
SOS - Sons of Samoa
DSK - Doin' Something Krazy
TCG - Tongan Crip Gangsters
TCR - Tongan Crip Regulators
DTC - Doomstown Crips
Locoville Crips
Surenos 18th Street
Surenos Avenues
Surenos Ultimate Desire Boys
Surenos Gardenia 13
Surenos 13
Surenos 38
Surenos Varios Mexicanos Locos
Surenos Alley Boys
Surenos Chiques
Surenos Florencia
Vilianos Mexicanos Surenos
Westside Crips
OLG - Original Laotian Gangsters
OP - Oriental Posse

RED
BMG - Black Mafia Gangsters
KTB - Kearns Town Bloods (55th St.)
North Side Piru/West Side Piru
801 Piru
3rd World Piru
POG - Piru Original Gangster
Big Town Piru
Bounty Hunter Blood
Dead Mafia Bloods
8 Ball Posse
Tiny Oriental Posse
FPS - Familia Por Seimpre
209
MLB - Mexican Latino Bloods
AMG - Armenian Mafia Gangsters

PURPLE
KMG - King Mafia Disciples
BMG - Black Mafia Gangsters

YELLOW
OBS - Oriental Boys Society
some Oriental gangs
some White Supremacist groups

GREEN
La Raza
Boys in the Hood
VLT - Varrio Loco Town
Dope Boy Posse

BROWN
Brown Brotherhood
Brown Pride
QVO
Big Dick Gang/Big West Side
FPSC - Familia Por Sempre
Cesnor

WHITE or BLUE
OLG - Original Laotian Gangsters
OP - Oriental Posse
VH - Viet Hung
Laos Boys

BLACK
Diamond Street
21st Street

*Some Hispanic gangs choose professional sport's team logos like the LA Radiers, Kings, Bulls, etc. Dark clothing seems to be popular with most Hispanic gangs, although some Hispanic gangs on Salt Lake City's northwest side claim to be "nortenos" and claim red as their color. Some gangs will wear black as a neutral color.

Salt Lake Area Gang Project
3365 South 900 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119
(801) 743-5864

Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

TAGGING

What? Tagger crews primarily do graffiti. They usually consist of no more than three individuals, who are more interested in street art than violent criminal activities. Taggers are the predominant source of graffiti within Salt Lake County. They typically will not cross out the graffiti of other tagging crews or street gangs. “Battles” or wars, waged between groups of taggers, can create thousands of dollars worth of damage in a single night as tagging crews compete to put up the most graffiti.

Why? Graffiti is the tagger’s voice. They do graffiti for fun, to gain status with other tagging crews, and because they become addicted to the adrenaline rush they get when they tag. Taggers gain status with in their crews for putting up graffiti that stays up for a long time, for tagging in areas that are difficult to get to (on buildings above the second story, on highway overpasses, and on busy streets, for example), and for graffiti that is particularly artistic or done in a recognizable style by a particular person. In order to gain recognition, they will often “sign” their graffiti with a moniker, or nick name. Tagging can be very dangerous when taggers attempt to do second-story tagging or when they tag a wall that a street gang claims as their own .

Who? Tagger graffiti appears even in the most affluent neighborhoods and business districts. Community members are often confused when they see tagging in their neighborhoods, fearing that street gangs are present. Taggers, however, are not members of traditional street gangs. They are usually less violent, although they may carry weapons. They often come from affluent, two-parent homes, and may be intelligent and successful in school. In most cases, local graffiti is created by local kids, so if there is tagger graffiti in your neighborhood, it is likely that you have taggers that live in your neighborhood.

What can I do? First, never confront someone who is doing graffiti, even if you think they’re just taggers. If you can, obtain information on the culprits unobtrusively and pass it on to the law enforcement agency in your area. Clothing and car descriptions, license plate numbers, and any other information that would be helpful in identifying a suspect would be appreciated. Always paint over graffiti as soon as possible. Studies done in California indicate that this is the one best way to prevent repeat graffiti. Encourage your neighbors and businesses in your neighborhood to do the same. Immediate removal takes away a tagger’s ability to show off his work to others. You might also want to consider planting ivy or thorn bushes near a wall that has been a constant problem. If you’re building a new fence, consider the materials being used. Some fencing materials may discourage graffiti, while others may send an invitation

Identifying a tagger: There are signs parents can look for which might indicate that their child is a tagger. The urge to tag is very strong, so the tag name will often be written on everything he or she owns. Their tag may be written somewhere in their room. Sketch books containing practice graffiti art often indicates tagging behavior. Parents sometimes find a collection of various types of aerosol spray paint cans, surgical gloves, loose spray can tips, large markers, stickers, and photographs and videos of graffiti. Youth who are involved in tagging may have paint or marker dye on their hands, under their fingernails, or on their clothes. Other items a tagger might have include large coats with hoods, military jackets, backpacks for carrying paint cans, baggy pants with large pockets, and clothing with paint manufacturers names on them.

SALT LAKE AREA GANG PROJECT
(801) 743-5864

Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

GRAFFITI

What?

Graffiti has sometimes been called the newspaper of the streets. Graffiti is used by gangs to claim territory, to make threats, and to challenge rival gangs. When gang members write graffiti in your neighborhood, they are making a statement that the neighborhood belongs to them. Gang members will often do graffiti to show their loyalty to their gang, and to enhance the reputation of the gang.

Who?

Graffiti falls into two categories: tagger graffiti and street gang graffiti. Much of the street gang graffiti reflects rivalries between gangs. Graffiti that includes gang names such as TCG, SUR, CHI, AVES, OLG, VLT, LLC, KTB, or QVO is indicative of street gangs. This graffiti may also include numbers such as 13, 14, 17, 33, 18, or 38, or threats such as CK (Crip Killer), BK, DK, AK, QK, or 187. It may also contain crossed-out letters or letters that have been written upside-down. Surprisingly, street gang graffiti is often easier to read than tagger graffiti, which tends to be more intricate and artistic. Although tagger graffiti is no less destructive, it is usually put up by individuals who consider themselves artists and have no interest in violence.

Where?

Graffiti is placed on every surface imaginable in every area of Salt Lake County. Gang members use spray paint, wide-tipped markers, printed stickers, nametag stickers, and will even etch glass with sharp objects. Graffiti can usually be covered by repainting the affected area. In the case of porous surfaces, such as bricks and cement blocks, high-pressure washers, which blast the area with an intense stream of water, will usually remove the graffiti. You can contact your local police department or sheriff's office for information about graffiti removal programs in your area.

How Do I Read It?

Gang graffiti usually includes several common elements:

Names: Gang names are usually abbreviated to two or three letters, but may include the name of the gang as well as gang slogans.
Monikers: These are the nicknames of the gang members, and may include names like Smiley, Goofy, Casper, Shy-Dog, or other similar names. Often these names may be written, roll-call fashion, as a list of the gang's membership.
Territory: The area of town where most of the members live. Typically, this may be a directional locator, such as east side (E/S) or west side (W/S), as well as the number of their street (for example, 33 for 33rd South, claimed by the Lay Low Crips).
Threats and Challenges: Graffiti may include threats and challenges to rival gangs. A gang may cross out the graffiti of rival gangs, or write "187" (a threat to kill) next to it. Often gangs will write "killer" in conjunction with a rival gang's name, sometimes abbreviating it to "K" or "killa."

Help?

For information about graffiti removal in your area, contact:

Salt Lake County	743-5906	Salt Lake City	972-7885
Murray	264-2614	Sandy	568-2900
West Valley	963-3289	Draper	576-6517
South Salt Lake	483-6002	Taylorsville	963-5400

SALT LAKE AREA GANG PROJECT
(801) 743-5864

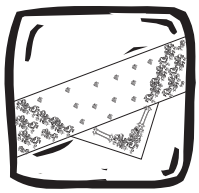
Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

DRESSING DOWN

TAKING A RISK
Since 1995 gang-related clothing has incited at least five shootings, two of which were fatal. Parents should be aware that allowing youth to dress in gang-style clothing, either at school or in the community, might have dangerous consequences. While it is not the intent of companies listed herein to market their products to gang members, many items have acquired meanings in the street gang culture which make them dangerous.

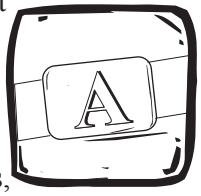
Street gangs in Utah are influenced by California gangs like Crips, Bloods, Surenos, and Nortenos. Additionally, some Utah gangs mimic the Folks- or People-affiliated gangs that originated in the Chicago area. Some gang members, especially those who are hoping to profit from the sale of illegal drugs, will no longer "dress down: because they do not wish to draw the attention of authorities. Even so, there are still many gang members who will wear clothing items to show their gang affiliation.

THE "LOOK"
Gang affiliated youth may wear over-sized pants that sag well below the waistline. Brands which are popular with gang members include Dickeys, Ben Davis, Counties, Frisco Jeans, and other, over-sized brands. In the summer, gang members may cut their pants below the knee and pull up their white socks to the pant line. Sometimes, only the top button will be buttoned on long-sleeved shirts. Many stores carry brands of clothing which could be considered gang-related. Some clothing lines manufacture T-shirts and sweatshirts that feature gang themes.



BANDANNAS:
Bandannas are the "flag" of the street gang culture, and virtually every color can be used to claim gang affiliation. Bandannas are typically worn hanging out of pockets or from the waistband. They are sometimes draped over a shoulder or tied around the head.

BELTS:
Belts (usually webbed, military-style belts) are used as a way of "showing one's colors," and are excessively long so that the belt tail can be left hanging down the pant leg. They may be a variety of colors (red, blue, white, black, or green) and gang initials, numbers, or names are often written or embroidered on these belts. Belt buckles may also include letters or numbers. For example: "A" for Avenues, "S" for Surenos, "13" for Surenos, etc.



SHOES:
Popular shoes with gangsters include the black nylon Nike Cortez running shoe which has a white swish stripe, and the white leather Cortez running shoe with the black swish stripe (called "G" Nikes). In addition, British Knights "BK stands for "Blood Killer") are popular with Crips.

SPORTS CLOTHING:
Gang members may wear clothing items from professional or college sports teams if their colors are the same as the gang's. Hats and Jackets which have been altered with extra letters, names, numbers, or symbols are especially suspect. Some gang members may dye their pocket linings (usually blue or red). Then they can pull the pocket linings out during a confrontation to show their colors. Gang members also may wear large football jerseys with numbers that symbolize their gang.

Gang members will often wear sports teams' apparel based on color:
Crips:
Michigan, Nortre Dame, North Carolina, Georgetown, Dallas Cowboys, and other blue teams
Bloods:
Chicago Bulls, Cincinnati Reds, Kansas City Chiefs, Redskins, 49ers, and other red teams
Surenos:
Oakland Raiders, Chicago white Sox, Los Angeles Kings
Nortenos:
New York Yankees

CUSTOMIZED CLOTHING:
Gang members commonly have T-shirts or hats customized by local T-shirt shops that reflect the wearer's gang affiliation. Often, Old English-style letters, words, or phrases are added to clothing to identify a gang.

TATTOOS:
Tattoos are frequently used as a gang-identifier, and are typically located on the face, hands, neck, stomach, arms, and back. The most common gang tattoo is three dots arranged in a triangle which stands for "Mi Vida Loca" (My Crazy Life). Other common gang tattoos include the initials of the gang, a gang moniker, or happy and sad faces (meaning, "smile now, cry later"). Folk gang members may have tattoos with a six-pointed star, the number six, or an upward-pointing pitchfork. Members who affiliate with People gangs may have tattoos with a five-pointed star, the number five, or a pitchfork pointed down.

STRAIGHT EDGE:
Straight Edge members typically wear the big, baggy pants and will frequently shave their heads or cut their hair extremely short, and grow large sideburns or a goatee. They often tattoo themselves with their symbol, the "X." If they wear sports apparel, their favorites are the New York Yankees and Syracuse. Hardline Straight Edge members (militant vegans) will not wear leather. Common Straight Edge slogans include "Poison Free," "Drug Free," and "One Life, One Truth." Hardliners have embraced the animal rights movement, and many have been involved in terrorist actions. They may use "XXX" or the phrase "Hardline" to identify themselves.

OTHER IDENTIFIERS:

5	People affiliates utilize the number 5 or a 5-pointed star
6	Folks affiliates use the number 6 or a 6-pointed star
6 or VI	Represents 6th North Nortenos
9	Represents 9th West or the Big Dick Gang
13	Indicates Surenos affiliation
14	Indicates Nortenos affiliation
15	Represents 15th Street Crips
801	Utah's area code, sometimes used by gangs
213, 310, 714	California area codes are sometimes used by gangs
17	Used by Varrio Loco Town
18	Used by 18th Street, a Surenos gang
21	21st Street, a local gang
33	Represents Lay Low Crips
38	Surenos 38th Street
187	A California Penal Code number, which stands for homicide
CK	Crip Killer
BK	Blood Killer
QK	QVO Killer
SK	Surenos Killer

Salt Lake Area Gang Project
3365 South 900 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119
(801) 743-5864

Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Getting Out of Gangs **Staying Out of Gangs**

Most Gang Members Will Grow Out of Gangs For most gang members, gangs meet a need. When they learn to meet their needs in a better way, they will decide to stop being a gang member. However, for many gang members, the issue is not if they will grow out of being a gang member. The issue is whether they will live long enough to make that decision.

Getting Out When gang members decide that they want to get out of the gang, there are a few simple steps that they can begin to follow:

- Never tell the gang you want out. You may be beaten or even killed.
- Begin spending your time doing other things. Instead of spending time with your gang friends, find something else to do during that time. Look around. There are possibilities everywhere: sports, rec centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, arts programs, drama, school activities, and even spending time with your family.
- Try to stop looking like a gangster. For many gang members, dressing down makes them feel safe because other people are scared of the way they look. As you begin to believe in yourself, you will find that you don't need to make other people feel afraid in order to feel good about yourself. Stop wearing the clothes that you think are gangster clothes.
- Stop talking like a gangster, acting like a gangster, and hanging out with gangsters. Find other things to say, other things to do, and other people to hang out with. (HINT: this is much easier if you stop dressing like a gangster first.)
- Get good at making excuses. Your parents can probably help you with this, but if not, try asking a tecaher for help or maybe just an older friend. Some former gang members have said that when they started trying to get out, they stopped taking phone calls from their gang, and had their family tell friends they weren't home.

Find People Who Support You and Believe in You Getting out of gangs isn't easy, but it can be done. Find people, especially adults, who think that you are special, and will keep telling you that. Begin believing in yourself. Gangs are a dead-end street. No matter who you are, what you have done, or where you live, you deserve better.

Salt Lake Area Gang Project, 3365 South 900 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84119-4101
For confidential help to get out of a gang, call us! (801) 743-5864

Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Kids and Gangs: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

What is a gang?

A gang is defined as "three or more people who form an allegiance to the exclusion of others and who engage in unlawful, criminal behavior." Gang members frequently use symbols, names, letters, or colors to show their affiliation. The primary street gang affiliations in the state of Utah are Surenos, Nortenos, Crips, Bloods, Folks, People, and Skinheads. Each of these affiliations is like a giant umbrella with specific sub-sets, or gangs beneath them. Other groups, like Straight Edge, have been classified as a gang because of their criminal involvement. Gang members come from every type of neighborhood, race, religion, culture, age, and economic level. The most important factor in labeling a group as a gang is based on the behavior of its members. Groups who commit crimes are gangs, no matter what they look like.

How can I tell?

Law enforcement officers use specific criteria to identify gang members:

- The subject admits he/she is a gang member
- The subject has gang-related tattoos, wears altered clothing that is only associated with certain gangs, or uses known gang hand signs.
- The subject has been arrested while participating with known gang members
- Information obtained from a reliable informant places the subject with a gang
- The subject has close association with known gang members.

Parents should look for any drastic changes in their child's behavior, including a new group of friends, a different style of language, excessive secrecy or withdrawal from family, acquisition of new possessions, or gang-related clothing.

What can I look for?

Everyone wearing "Raiders" clothing or baggy pants is not a gang member. While it is true that some gangs will wear clothing from professional or college sports teams, some non-gang youth wear them simply as a fashion statement. Of special concern to parents would be clothing items that have been customized with extra letters, words, phrases, numbers, or symbols. Sports clothing, including hats, may be altered, with gang names and phrases written on the inside or outside of these items. Another popular item is football jerseys. The number on the jersey, or the color, often indicates a particular gang affiliation. Parents should not allow their children to wear clothing that glorifies gangs, violence, or drug use. All colors of bandannas can be used to identify gang membership, and can put a child at risk. Cloth belts with metal buckles which have a letter stamped on them also can be used as gang identifiers. If parents choose to allow youth to wear these items, the belts should be worn in belt loops, instead of hanging down the leg, and belt buckles should be plain. Young people should not dress in only one color. Gang-involved youth may also write graffiti at home on notebooks, homework, walls, and other items.

What can I do?

If you suspect that your child is a gang member, don't deny your suspicions; after all, you have known this child longer than anyone. When a child joins a gang, it can turn their family upside down. Don't try to deal with your child's gang membership alone. There are many agencies, support groups, and even school programs that can work with your child and the rest of your family to provide support, encouragement, and gang intervention. You can contact the Salt Lake Area Gang Project for referral to groups that can help you.

Salt Lake Area Gang Project
3365 South 900 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119
(801) 743-5864

Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Kids and Gangs: PROTECTING YOUR CHILD

Whether you realize it or not, your children can be at risk to join gangs. The reasons that kids join gangs are complex and varied. However, as a parent, you have a lot more power to keep your kids from joining gangs than you may think. The time to begin is now, whether your child is 5, 10, or 15 years old.

Your Children Need Good Social Skills

Children and teens who have good skills to deal with other people are less likely to join gangs or be involved in negative behavior. To build self-confidence and respect for others in children, parents need to teach them the following:

- **Honest communication**. They need to learn how to express feelings such as anger, joy, love, and fear. They must believe it's okay for them to do so without being teased or punished. Since children learn by example, you must also express your feelings honestly. Be a good listener. This helps teach your children to be good listeners, too.
- **Cooperation.** They must learn to cooperate, negotiate, and put themselves in another person's shoes. Practice by talking about what TV programs to watch or where to go on vacation. Praise your children for cooperating, especially when they don't get what they want.
- **Personal responsibility.** Teach your children to be responsible for their actions. Give them family jobs for which they are responsible. Make sure they are able to handle the tasks. Gradually increase their responsibilities. Let them know that even if they don't get it right at first, what counts is that they are trying hard and learning from the experience.
- A**bility to make decisions.** Instead of solving problems for your children, give them chances to think about solutions for the problem. Help them think about the choices they have, and the consequences for each choice.
- **Ability to give and receive unconditional love.** Love your children for who they are, regardless of how well they do in school, sports, or other activities. Even if you are angry at them, let them know that you still love and respect them. Help your children learn they can feel angry at someone and still love them.

Your Children Need a Balance Between Love and Discipline

Children may join a gang to gain a sense of belonging that they don't feel in their family. To show your children that they are loved and valued:

- **Spend time alone with each child**. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as it helps you to get to know each other.
- **Plan family time.** Make time for your family to play, eat meals together, and take trips together (even to local parks or activities), keep family traditions, and have family meetings to talk about plans, feelings, and complaints.
- **Listen to your children and ask their opinions**. Help your children talk with you, without fear of punishment. Even five-year-olds have a lot to offer if you give them a chance. Do not talk down to your children. Even though adults are older, children's thoughts and feelings deserve respect.
- **Talk to your kids about ways to deal with pressure from friends.** Help your kids make up some simple ways to respond to peer pressure. For example, If they are challenged by a peer who says, "If you are my friend, you would..." Your child can respond, "If you were my friend, you wouldn't ask." Then, they should walk away.
- **Set firm limits with your children and teens.** Kids need to know exactly what is expected of them, and the consequences for acting otherwise. Do not rescue your children from the consequences of their actions.

Teach Your Children About Gangs

Learn about gang activity in your area. Talk to your children about the negative things that gangs do, and how they can affect your child, their friends, your neighborhood and your family.

- **Do not allow your children to dress in gang-style clothing.** Explain to your children that these clothing items can put them in danger, and that you will not purchase them or allow them to be worn.
- **Point out violent messages on television and in movies.** Violence is not a solution for problems. Talk to your children about ways that they can solve problems without fighting or violence.
- **Get to know your child's friends and their parents.** Be aware of their attitudes towards drugs, alcohol, and gangs. When children feel pressure to use drugs or join gangs, it usually comes from their friends.
- **Start educating your children at an early age**. While five-year-old kids may not understand about the effects of joining a gang, they can learn how to say "no" to negative behavior. Give your kids consistent messages about the negative consequences of gang activities. Encourage your children to participate in recreational activities that they might enjoy, as well as hobbies and other interests. These things can replace gangs as something to do.

Information adapted from "Drug Free Children & Teens" by the National PTA

Salt Lake Area Gang Project 3365 South 900 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119 (801) 743-5864

SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO

- Try to learn more about gangs in your area
- Get involved with Neighborhood Watch or Mobile Neighborhood Watch through your local police or sheriff's department
- Report any suspicious activity to the police
- Volunteer to tutor a young person one hour a week at a local school
- Coach in a youth recreation league
- Paint over graffiti or organize a graffiti clean-up project
- Join your local Parent Teacher Association
- Call your local elected officials on behalf of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs and legislation
- Attend your child's back-to-school night
- Leave your front porch light on to deter crime in your neighborhood
- Read to your child
- Read to another person's child at a local school, day care, recreation center, or library
- Attend a parenting class
- Organize and sponsor a parent education program at your local school, religious institution, or community center
- Become a mentor to a young person through a local organization like the Village Project, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, or the Boys and Girls Clubs
- Hire a local neighborhood youth to help you with cleaning, yard care, or babysitting

  Share babysitting duties with a single parent family in your neighborhood
- If you are at home during the day, try to spend time outside while kids are walking to and from school
- Encourage your company to hire and train a high-risk youth
- Encourage your children to discuss their day; phrase your questions so that they'll answer in sentences instead of single words

For more information about ways you can get involved, contact the Salt Lake Area Gang Project at (801) 743-5864

How Teachers Can Intervene with Gang-Involved Students

- **Develop an Anti-Gang Environment in Your Classroom and School.** If your school does not have a policy regarding gang activity or dress, determine if current school policy will sufficiently cover gang incidents. If not, assist in getting your school policy updated and parents informed. Enforce school policies consistently and fairly, and make sure that all students understand.

- **Obtain the Latest Information on Gang Awareness.** Gangs are constantly changing. Obtain regular updates from your local law enforcement agency on the type of gang activity in your area. Learn the newest gangs in the area, their hangouts, graffiti, clothing trends, activities, rivals, etc.

- **Share Gang Information with Local Law Enforcement.** Contact your local police department and request that they assign on officer to your school to act as a liaison between the school and the police department. (In many areas, school resource officers are assigned full-time in a school and are available to assist surrounding schools. Find out who that person is). Meet with the officer on a regular basis and share your concerns.

- **Make Frequent Contact with Parents of High Risk Students.** Parents are often the last to know about their child's gang involvement. If you notice sudden changes in attitude, grades, and dress of a student, alert their parents. Never assume that the parent already knows and just chooses to do nothing about it.

- **Assign Mentors to Students Who Are Having Difficulty in School.** Many youths are drawn to gangs because it provides them with a support structure and feeling of belonging. Students who are struggling in school need to feel that they are successful. A mentor can give a student a feeling of importance – that someone cares about them.

- **Learn About Community Resources Available in the Area for Students.** Teachers can often steer their students toward positive activities that can reduce their likelihood of becoming gang-involved. There are also many community resources available for families that are struggling with gang members in their family

- **Teach Kids Anti-Violence and Problem Solving Skills.** Many students will turn to gangs to solve problems for them or to provide protection. Teaching your students problem-solving skills and behavioral skills training can reduce the number of violent incidents on campus. Students will also feel more in control and confident of their abilities to "stand alone." The need for a gang is reduced.

- **Do Not Glorify Gang Activity, But Do Not Ignore It Either.** Students will often discuss recent gang activity among themselves and may glorify the gang members that are involved. While such discussions should be discouraged it is helpful for youth to discuss the activity with the teacher serving as a facilitator so that the issue can be dealt with in a realistic manner and used as a learning experience for students.

Salt Lake Area Gang Project
3365 South 900 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119-4101
(801) 743-5864

Preparation and printing of this document financed by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice