

# Are you worried that your child might be involved with a gang?

## Here are some warning signs:

- ◇ Admits to "hanging out" with kids in gangs
- ◇ 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, or websites
- ◇ Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends
- ◇ Has specific drawings or gang symbols on schoolbooks, walls, or as tattoos
- ◇ Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fighting-related bruises, injuries to hands/knuckles)

- ◇ Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry
- ◇ Carries a weapon
- ◇ Has been in trouble with police
- ◇ Exhibits negative changes in behavior, such as:
  - ◇ Withdrawing from family
  - ◇ Declining school attendance, performance, or behavior
  - ◇ Staying out late without reason
  - ◇ Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy
  - ◇ Exhibiting signs of drug use
  - ◇ Breaking rules consistently
  - ◇ Speaking in gang-style slang

**Some of these indicators are common among youth who are not associated with gangs, so parents should look for multiple indicators as signs of possible gang involvement. If you are concerned about your child, seek additional information and assistance from school personnel, local law enforcement, faith leaders, and community associations.**

## What you can do to help prevent gang involvement:

- ◇ Spend quality time with your child
- ◇ Get involved in your child's school activities
- ◇ Be a positive role model
- ◇ 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
- ◇ Encourage your child to participate in positive extracurricular activities with adult supervision
- ◇ Work actively in your neighborhood to combat gang influence (report and remove graffiti, etc.)
- ◇ Talk with your child about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement. Tell your child that you don't want to see him hurt or arrested, so he should NOT:
  - ◇ Associate with gang members
  - ◇ Attend parties sponsored by gangs
  - ◇ Use hand signs, symbols or language associated with gangs
  - ◇ Wear clothing or colors with connections to gangs