

IMPACT OF GANG ACTIVITY ON FAMILY MEMBERS

The decision to join a gang or associate with gang members can have a very negative impact on the family. Simply “hanging around” with a gang or gang members increases potential exposure to alcohol, and other dangerous drugs, weapons and violence. Gang activity also increases the possibility of dropping out of school and incarceration.

Parents, other family members, and friends of active gang members could be affected in any one of the following ways:

- Fearing for their own safety, the safety of their family and neighborhood.
- Suffer damage to personal property; resulting from graffiti, other forms of vandalism or violence.
- Be subjected to financial liability for damage resulting from their gang-involved children.
- Face the potential for personal injury that could result in a permanent physical disability.
- Death.
- Suffer trauma, grief, confusion and depression over the injury or loss of a loved one.
- Incur hospital bills, funeral expenses or legal fees resulting from gang violence and substance abuse.

Additionally, a gang member who becomes involved in illegal activity, is in and out of jail, has difficulty obtaining and/or holding a job, and subjects the family to unnecessary financial and emotional burdens, should they become permanently disabled as a result of gang violence.

HOW TO DISCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN FROM GANG INVOLVEMENT

DISCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN FROM HANGING AROUND WITH GANG MEMBERS.

Meet your children's friends. Find out who they are, what influence they have over your children, and how they and your children spend their free time. If your children choose friends who are gang members, then your children are probably involved or will become involved in gang activity.

OCCUPY YOUR CHILDREN'S FREE TIME.

Give them responsibilities at home. Get them involved in constructive school, sports, city recreation, church, or other private organization activities.

DEVELOP GOOD COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

Good communication is open, frequent, and it takes on a positive tone. It allows your children to come to you to discuss any topic or problem. It does not condemn or put down. Good communication allows you to tell your children that you love them.

SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

Plan activities that the whole family can enjoy. Spend time alone with your children. Expose them to different places outside of your neighborhood, such as parks, libraries, museums, camping trips, etc. Give them attention.

DO NOT BUY OR ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO DRESS IN GANG STYLE CLOTHING.

If your children dress in gang style clothing they maybe expressing an interest in gangs and will attract the attention of gangs. They could be putting themselves in danger.

SET LIMITS FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

At an early age children need to know what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Don't be afraid to say no.

DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO STAY OUT LATE OR SPEND A LOT OF UNSUPERVISED TIME OUT IN THE STREETS.

DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO WRITE, OR PRACTICE WRITING, GANG NAMES, SYMBOLS OR ANY OTHER GANG GRAFFITI ON THEIR BOOKS, PAPERS, CLOTHES, BODIES, WALLS OR ANY OTHER PLACE. Teach them respect for other's property.

DEVELOP AN ANTI-GANG ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR HOME.

At an early age **clearly and continually** express to your children your disapproval of gang activity and of any family member joining a gang.

LEARN ABOUT GANG AND DRUG ACTIVITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Learn how gang members dress, how they speak, their behavior and their activities. Attend informational meetings, read articles about gang activity and become an informed parent.

PARTICIPATE IN THE EDUCATION OF YOUR CHILDREN.

Take an interest in your children's education by visiting your children's school, meeting their teachers, and attending parent/teacher meetings. Help your children with their homework. Set high standards for your children.

PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY

- Know your neighbors.
- Organize or join the City's Neighborhood Watch Program.
- Discourage gangs from hanging around your neighborhood.
- Remove graffiti from and around your property.
- Attend community functions.
- Teach your children civic pride.

BE A GOOD EXAMPLE. Become an active, not a passive parent.

To report gang activity or graffiti call:

Olathe Police Department 913-971-7500

For more information about this and other subjects, check out the Office of Juvenile Justice website at:

www.ojjdp.com

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**Provided by the
Olathe Police Department**

