



Additional Resources and Information:

To Report Gang Activity

Emergencies call 9-1-1
Non-emergency call 982-7043

Involving your child in positive youth development activities is a good way to keep them away from negative people and behavior. The programs listed below offer a variety of positive activities.

City Corps call 385-8081
PAL (Police Activities League) call 385-8230
Recreation Department call 385-7995
Other Community Programs call 2-1-1

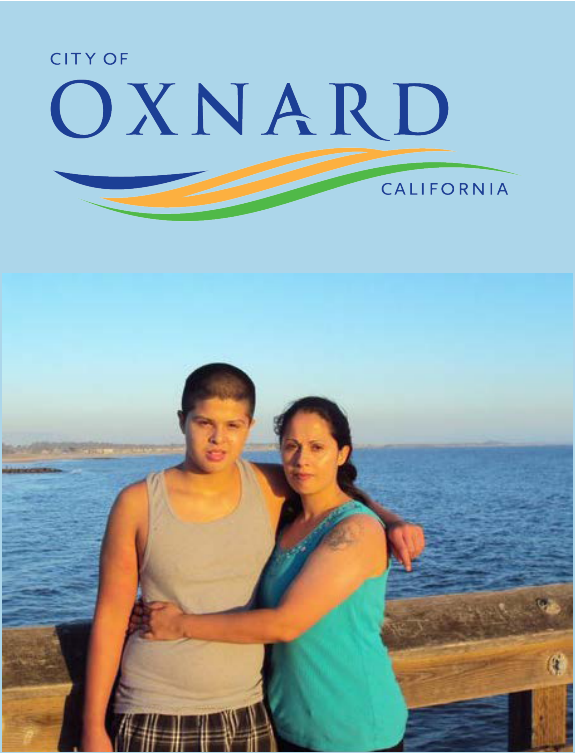
To learn more about gang indicators, how to get help for your child and family, and other programs and activities in the community visit

www.EndGangViolence.org

If you have questions about your child’s possible involvement in gangs, call the Gang Reduction Coordinator at 486-6290.



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Parents’ Guide To Gangs

This guide is designed to provide parents with information in order to recognize and prevent gang involvement.

A Message to Parents

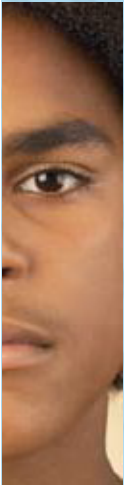


Research indicates that you, as a parent, play a vital role in keeping your child out of gangs. Negative influences within the family—including domestic violence, child abuse, harsh or inconsistent parenting practices, and/or drug/alcohol abuse by family members—can increase the risk that your child will join a gang.

You can protect your child from gang activity through taking positive actions, such as monitoring your children’s activities, maintaining a close relationship with them, and using positive discipline strategies. This brochure contains information about gangs and what you, as a parent, can do to help your child avoid them.

Behaviors Associated With Joining a Gang

The early adolescent years (12–14 years of age) are a crucial time when youths are exposed to gangs and may consider joining a gang. Youths who are becoming involved in a gang may exhibit the following behaviors:

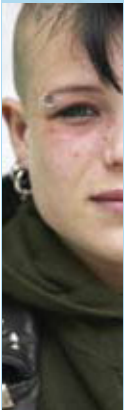


Negative changes in behavior, such as:

- ✓ Declining school attendance, performance, or behavior.
- ✓ Staying out late without reason.
- ✓ Unusual desire for secrecy.
- ✓ Confrontational behavior, such as talking back, verbal abuse, name calling, and disrespect for parental authority.
- ✓ Sudden negative opinions about law enforcement or adults in positions of authority (school officials or teachers).
- ✓ Change in attitude about school, church, or other normal activities or change in behavior at these activities.

Unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry.

Unusual interest in a particular type of clothing or a particular logo.



Use and practice of hand signals to communicate with friends.

Peculiar drawings or gang symbols on schoolbooks, clothing, notebooks, or even walls.

Drastic changes in hair or dress style and/or having a group of friends who have the same hair or dress style.

Withdrawal from longtime friends and forming bonds with an entirely new group of friends.

Suspected drug use, such as alcohol, inhalants, and narcotics.

The presence of firearms, ammunition, or other weapons.

Non-accidental physical injuries, such as being beaten or injuries to hands and knuckles from fighting.

Interest in gang-influenced music, videos, and movies

Common Gang Identifiers

Gang-style clothing and dress:

Gang members may use a particular style of dress to identify with a particular gang, set, clique, or crew. This might include clothing or bandanas worn only in certain colors that are representative of a gang.

Other clothing that might be worn by gang members could include pants worn well below the waist (sagging); gang-themed T-shirts with pictures of gang members, prison scenes, graffiti, or slogans; sports clothing of specific teams; or colored fabric belts, occasionally with a metal buckle that includes the initial(s) of the gang.

Symbols and numbers:

Some symbols and numbers may have special significance within the gang culture. In the Oxnard area letters and symbols that contain CH, X13, or XIII indicate gang involvement. The below symbols are examples:

- X13, XIII, Sureno "M"
- COCH, COL, CO, ES
- LW, LWCH, LWCH13
- SS, SSCH
- LOMA, LF, WSLF, LFXCH, Hill St
- Squires, SDCH
- ER, WEXTST
- STXCH, VST, SXT, ST

Hand signs:

Some gangs use specific hand gestures to communicate their affiliation with the gang and issue threats or challenges to rival gangs. These gestures usually include trying to shape the fingers into the letters representative of the gang.

Gang clothing trends change so clothing alone may not be enough to indicate a child's affiliation with a particular gang, though it can be a clue. For current information on clothing and other gang identifiers, call a gang investigator at 486-6297.

Sports items:

Letters, colors, or symbols may have a specific gang meaning in local street-gang culture, such as Dallas Cowboys (CO=Colonia) or White Sox (SO=South Oxnard). Sports items may be purchased in a nontraditional color to correspond with the gang's colors or may be altered with graffiti or extra symbols or writing. Here are some examples of sportswear that have been adopted by Oxnard area gangs: Dallas Cowboys, Chicago White Sox, Oakland Raiders, Carolina Panthers, Detroit Lions, and San Diego Chargers.

Graffiti:

Gangs use graffiti to mark their territory, brag about their reputation, mourn fallen members, and threaten or challenge rival gangs. For this reason, graffiti can be very dangerous and should be removed as soon as possible. Youths who are participating in graffiti may have items such as spray paints, spray-paint plastic tips, wide-tipped markers, or sketchbooks with graffiti works in progress and may have paint on their clothing, backpacks, or other items.

Tattoos:

Tattoos are used to show an individual's loyalty to his/her gang. These tattoos often include the name, initials, or symbols of the specific gang and may be found on the hands, neck, face, chest, or arms.

Gang-influenced music and movies:

Gangsta/gangster rap is a style of rap music characterized by violent, tough-talking lyrics that glorify street-gang culture. Many popular movies also focus on street gangs and their activities. Youths may show their interest in gangs through fascination with music and movies that portray street-gang culture.

What You Can Do As a Parent



Talk to your children. A LOT.

Especially about uncomfortable issues like drugs and gangs. Be very clear that you will not tolerate either. Constantly remind them of your love for them and that drugs and gangs will get them hurt.

Do not let your children:

- Associate with any gang members.
- Hang out where gangs congregate.
- Attend any party or social event sponsored by gangs.
- Use any kind of hand or finger signs that may be meaningful to gangs.
- Wear clothing that may have meaning to gangs in your area.

Explain to your children that these activities will put them in danger and that you will not allow it.

Get your children involved and know what they are doing.

Children and teenagers are most vulnerable after school hours until dinner time or until they are home with a family member. Know where your children are during that time period and find activities to keep them busy.



Spend time together.

Gangs offer a substitute for what is missing in "family". Avoid this by strengthening your family relationships. Give your child attention. Talk as a family. Play as a family. Have traditions. Be together.

Get to know your children's friends and the friends' parents.

Be aware of their attitudes toward drugs, alcohol, and gangs. When children start to feel pressure to use drugs or join gangs, it usually comes from their friends. It is very important that you know their friends.

Talk to your children about ways to deal with pressure from friends.

Help your children practice simple ways to respond to peer pressure. For example, if your child is 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, he/she should walk away.

Set firm limits with your children and teens.

Children and teenagers need to know clearly what is expected of them and the consequences for acting otherwise. Don't rescue your children from the consequences of their decisions. Don't avoid arguments and resistance. Stand your ground and hold them accountable. Don't be afraid to say no.

