

**Remember**, there are a wide variety of organizations to assist you with guiding your child in a positive direction. These organizations consist of youth church groups, family counselors, school counselors, athletic coaches, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Boy Scouts, youth-serving agencies, and community centers. Our Police Department also provides parenting classes for adults and an Explorer program for young men and women.



**Everyone can help prevent crime and stop gangs! Report all suspicious activity to the Police Department!!**

**Emergency Calls Dial 911**

**Emergency Calls from a Cell Phone 626-357-CELL**

**Non-Emergency and Business Calls at 626-256-8000**

Local agencies that can help point your child in a positive direction:

- Boys and Girls Club 626-305-5353
- YMCA 626-359-9244
- City of Monrovia Community Services 626-256-8246
- Monrovia Schools Healthy Start Program 626-471-3075

**HELP YOUR CHILD AVOID THE GANG LIFESTYLE**



**MONROVIA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## What are Gangs!

*Gang members are involved in criminal activity, often in the form of violent confrontations with rival gang members. When members are at home, school, a restaurant, party, concert, movie, or even a family picnic or neighborhood gathering, the potential for violent crime is far greater than for any other group of people. The violence often claims innocent victims; and the criminal acts range from individual assaults to shootings. Gangs will use violence and intimidation to enhance their reputation and notoriety. Graffiti is used to claim their territory.*

*It is unfortunate that many believe living with gangs in our community is just something with which we must live with. The fact is that we as a community do not have to tolerate gangs. We do not have to put up with the violence and devastation. We do not have to put up with the blight and graffiti that assaults our sense. It won't be easy to push gangs out. It will take a collaborative work of government, law enforcement, business, schools, faith-based organization, and community members to eliminate gang influences and finally decide that gang members will be given no quarter in our town.*

*Gangs are everyone's problem and working together, we can make a difference.*

## What Parents Should Know

Everyone (except gang members) wants a gang-free community. Parents stand to lose the most – the well-being or even the life of a child. Parents are key to preventing or reducing gang problems already in place.

Young people join gangs for different reasons.

- To belong to a group
- For excitement
- To get protection
- To be with friends
- TV and movies glorify the gang mentality
- Family tradition - there is a history of gang membership within the family and this is a way of life for them.

Gangs leave signs of their presence. Your child may adopt some of those signs.

- Special hand signals, shaved heads
- Wearing a specific color (Often red or blue) or emblem. Wearing baggy, sagging pants and T-shirts or plaid Pendleton shirt buttoned up to the collar several sizes too large.
- Truancy
- Alcohol and drug use
- Glamorizing gangs
- Defiant behavior
- Gang symbols on walls as graffiti or on books or clothing;
- Negative behavior changes, such as:
  - Poor grades
  - Staying out without good reason
  - Hanging out with known or suspected gang members
  - Carrying weapons

## Sharpen Your Parenting Skills

Many gang members say they joined because they felt support, caring, and a sense of order and purpose. If a parent is providing these things to their child, the less likely a child is going to look towards gang involvement.

- Spend quality time talking and listening to your child (Turn off the TV).
- It's okay to look at what is in your child's room.
- Put a high value on education and help your child through school.
- Help your kids identify positive role models.
- Do everything possible to involve your child in positive group activities.
- Praise them for doing well and encourage them to do their best.
- Know what your children are doing and whom they are with. Know about their friends and their friends' families.
- Supervise your children. When you are not present, have another trusted adult watching your child.
- Remind your children about "Guilt by Association." Even though your child may not be a gang member, his friends are. Rival gangs shooting from a speeding car do not make a distinction between a gang member and his associates.