



City of Houston

Mayor's Anti-Gang Office

The Mayor's Anti-Gang Office provides prevention programs for at-risk youth, intervention services for gang involved, delinquent and adjudicated youth, training for youth service professionals to develop comprehensive responses to gang activity and juvenile delinquency, and education and awareness presentations to community members to identify warning signs and indicators of delinquency.



Mission Statement

The mission of the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office is to assist youth, families, and community stakeholders in the preven-



What You Can Do if You Suspect Gang Involvement/Activity

Educate yourself on gangs and gang culture so you can recognize the warning signs. The Anti-Gang Office can assist with awareness information and training.

- Discuss the dangers and consequences of gang involvement with young people.
- Don't allow gang related behavior or displays of gang affiliation.
- Contact law enforcement to learn about the levels of gang related crime and activity in your community and at your student's school.
- Contact youth service providers or school counselors for referrals to organizations that have experience in addressing gang and other delinquency related issues.



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GANG 101



What You Should Know About Gangs





Definition of a Gang

Three (3) or more individuals having a common identifying sign, symbol or identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

Texas Penal Code Sec. 71.01(d).

Gangs recruit males and females of all ages, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds.



Risk Factors for Gang Involvement

Risk factors are characteristics, situations, or variables that if present, may increase the likelihood that a young person will become involved with a gang. They may be due to personal characteristics such as aggressive behavior or low self-esteem, family situations such as divorce or separation, a poor attitude towards school or academic failure, or living in a neighborhood that has high crime or gang activity. However, for every negative risk factor there are also protective factors that prevent and deter youth from becoming involved in gangs or delinquent behavior.



Reasons Youth Join Gangs

There are many reasons why youth join gangs. They often appeal to young people because they believe the gang will meet needs they have that aren't being fulfilled. This includes a need for family, friends, and sense of belonging to something.

Other reasons young people join gangs:

- They want respect.
- They want status and recognition.
- They have friends who are in a gang.
- They feel they need protection from bullies or rival gangs.
- They think being in a gang will be cool and exciting.
- They want access to drugs, alcohol, weapons, and sex.
- They can make money by selling drugs, robbing, stealing, or committing other crimes.
- They live in communities or come from families where gang involvement is expected.



Warning Signs of Gang Involvement

- Use of an unfamiliar nickname and/or hand signs
- Carrying and caring for a bandanna
- Favoring certain colors or color combinations while avoiding others
- Graffiti or tattoos depicting gang names, initials, numbers, crowns, pitchforks, stars or other symbols
- Signs of physical abuse; drug and/or alcohol use
- Discipline problems at home and/or school
- Truancy and/or poor grades
- Unexplained money, clothes, jewelry



How to Deter Youth from Joining Gangs

Most gang members say they joined their gang because no one was paying attention to them or seemed to care what they were doing until it was too late. Parenting isn't always easy and young people can be challenging, but the most effective way to keep youth from joining gangs is to be involved with them. If parents don't spend time with their kids, the gang will.

- Talk to youth and let them know you're there for them. Listen too.
- Encourage their participation in positive activities.
- Establish rules and be consistent with discipline.
- Limit unsupervised time.

Signs and Symbols

Pitchfork Up	Pitchfork Down	6-Point Star	5-Point Star	3-Point Crown	5-Point Crown	Roman Numeral 13	Teardrop	Tres Puntos "My Crazy Life"
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