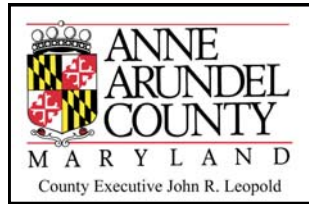


**John R. Leopold  
County Executive**



**Colonel James Teare, Sr.  
Chief of Police**



# **GANGS 101**

## **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

### **WARNING SIGNS**

You should be concerned if your child:

- Admits to gang involvement; is obsessed with one particular color of clothing or shows a desire for a particular logo over and over;
- Wears sagging pants (this in and of itself is not indicative of gang activity);
- Wears excessive jewelry with distinctive designs and may wear it only on either the right or left side of the body;
- Is obsessed with gangster-influenced music, videos and movies to the point of imitation;
- Withdraws from family with an accompanying change in demeanor;
- Associates with undesirable and breaks parental rules consistently;
- Develops an unusual desire for privacy and secrecy and may completely rearrange living quarters to create privacy;
- Uses hand signs while with friends and practices them at home;
- Or there is evidence of the appearance of:
  - Physical injury (such as being beaten) and then child lies about the events surrounding the injury;
  - Peculiar drawings or language on school books (may appear later as tattoos or brands);
  - Unexplained cash or goods, i.e., clothing or jewelry;
  - Possible use of alcohol and drugs with attitude change.

## **ADVISE YOUR CHILDREN THEY SHOULD NOT:**

Associate with any gang members or “wannabe/gonnabe” gang members; identify or communicate with gangs; hang out near or where gangs congregate; approach strangers in cars who appear to want information or directions; wear gang related clothing where gangs are known to gather or traverse; wear initialed clothing such as BK – British Knights – a/k/a “Blood Killer” in high crime areas; use words like “crab” or “slob” (localized lingo may develop) anywhere gangs may be, e.g., malls, sporting events, etc.; attend any party or social event sponsored by gangs or their associates; take part in any graffiti activity or hang around where graffiti is present; or use any kind of finger or sign language in a public place.

## **TIPS FOR PARENTS**

- Impress upon your child the importance of school and good grades
- Spend quality time with your children
- Get involved in your child’s school activities
- Establish rules, set limits and be consistent, firm and fair in punishment
- Encourage good study habits
- Respect your child’s feelings and attitudes and help them develop self-esteem
- Watch closely for negative influences
- Improve your own self-esteem so your children can model themselves after the most important *role model*: **YOU**.

## **TIPS FOR PARENTS/EDUCATORS**

- Help children develop self control
- Help children deal appropriately with problems
- Get involved in community oriented prevention and intervention programs. Urge others to become involved. Volunteer at your child’s school. Gangs are a community problem and their influence does not stop at any particular boundary.
- Listen to your children. Communicate with them about their concerns and fears.

## **Other Resources**

<http://irr.com/nygc/faq.htm> National Youth Gang Center/Institute for Intergovernmental Research

<http://www.gangs.umd.edu/index.aspx>

<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org>

<http://sanantonio.gov/sapd/pdf/awareness.pdf> Gang Awareness Handbook