

## Warning Signs That Your Child May Be Involved in a Gang:

- Admits to “hanging out” with kids in gangs
- Shows an unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing, or a particular logo
- Has an unusual interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies or websites
- Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends
- Has specific drawings or gang symbols on school books, clothes, walls or tattoos
- Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fighting-related bruises, injuries to hands/knuckles)
- Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry
- Carries a weapon
- Has been in trouble with the police
- Exhibits negative changes in behavior, such as:
  1. Withdrawing from family
  2. Declining school attendance, performance, behavior
  3. Staying out late without reason
  4. Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy
  5. Exhibiting signs of drug use
  6. Breaking rules consistently
  7. Speaking in gang-style slang

Talk with your son or daughter about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement. Let your child know that you don't want to see him or her hurt or arrested. Explain to your child that he or she should NOT:

- Associate with gang members
- Attend parties or social events sponsored by gangs
- Use hand signs, symbols or language that is meaningful to gangs
- Wear clothing, including specific colors, which may have meaning to gangs in your area



### Medford Police Department

411 W 8th Street  
Medford, Oregon 97501

Phone: 541-770-4784  
Fax: 541-774-2570  
[www.medfordpd.com](http://www.medfordpd.com)



## WARNING SIGNS for Parents: Is Your Son or Daughter



## A Parent's Quick Reference for Recognizing and Preventing Gang Involvement

### Medford Police Department



541-770-4784

Now that you have identified a potential problem, what do you do about it?

Joining a gang is not “just a phase”, a normal part of growing up or something your child “will grow out of”. Joining or associating with gangs could endanger not only their academic career but their very life. Do not be afraid that you are overreacting. If you suspect gang involvement by your child, take action immediately. Here are a few suggestions of where to begin:



1. First and foremost, talk to your child and really listen to the answers. Tell them where you stand on gangs and other issues. Question and continue to question until you are satisfied with the answers.
2. Know where and with who your child is after school and in the evening. Insist that he or she check in with you on a regular basis when away from home. Insist on meeting and knowing your child's friends. Trust your instincts.
3. Communicate with local school personnel and your local law enforcement agency. Share your concerns and ask for advice and assistance.
4. Do not buy gang-related clothing, shoes or accessories for your child, or allow them to be worn. If you have questions regarding the validity of “it has nothing to do with a gang, it's just the style”, then contact your local law enforcement agency and ask. Set and enforce a curfew.
5. Set high standards. Listen to your child and emphasize their positive characteristics and talents. Find ways to build up his or her self-esteem and sense of belonging to the family group.
6. Encourage your child to become involved in after-school activities, such as music, sports, scouting, Boys and Girls Club, etc. Never be afraid to ask for help. Law enforcement personnel have a variety of resources at their disposal to assist you in getting help for your child and yourself.

## Questions and Answers:

**Q: What's wrong if my son or daughter associates with gang members as long as he or she does not become an actual gang member?**

A. The problem is not necessarily association with gang members, but the image your son or daughter projects to other gangs. If your son or daughter is seen with other gang members on the street, in a park, etc., other rival gangs do not and cannot tell the difference between your child and actual gang members. Your child may become the target for gang retaliations. In addition, members of the community, schools, and law enforcement may also be unable to make that distinction.

**Q: How does gang involvement affect my child's education?**

A. Most gang members don't achieve in school or graduate from high school. Gang members will also pressure their friends to accept their values and a “tough guy” attitude, which can promote confrontations. Gang influences can cause students to feel unsafe at school, due to the intimidation that gangs place on students. When students are influenced by gangs, they cannot concentrate on their education.