

How can we prevent children from joining gangs?

Parents play a key role in preventing their child from becoming a member of a gang. It has been shown that teens who have involving and satisfying relationships with their parents are more likely to do well in school, have better social skills and have lower rates of risky/delinquent behaviors than their peers. Alongside parents, other significant adults in a child's life can also have a significant impact on the choices that a child makes.

(Information taken from: www.helpingamericayouth.gov)

The following are suggestions on what you can do:

- Talk with and listen to your child. Spend some special time with each child.
- Discourage harassing/bullying behaviors
- Put a high value on education and help your child do his or her best in school. Do everything possible to prevent dropping out. Talk to school officials frequently about school progress or lack of.
- Help your kids identify positive role models and heroes—especially people in your community.
- Do everything possible to involve your children in supervised, positive group activities.
- Praise them for doing well and encourage them to do their very best—to stretch their skills to the utmost.
- Know what your children are doing and with whom. Know about their friends and their friends' families.
- Talk to your child and discuss the consequences of being a gang member
- Seek advice from religious leaders or community mentors
- Report AND remove graffiti from your neighborhood
- Take action, LISTEN and COMMUNICATE with your child

Protective Factors (Information taken from: www.helpingamericayouth.gov)

Protective Factors are: factors that may protect youth against delinquency and substance abuse.

Protective factors include, but aren't limited to the following:

Individual:

Positive/resilient temperament

Healthy sense of self

High expectations

Positive expectations/optimism for the future

Family:

Good relationship with parents/bonding or attachment with family
Opportunities and reward for family involvement
Having a stable family
High family expectations

School:

School motivation/positive attitude toward school
Student bonding and connectedness
Academic achievement/reading ability and mathematical skills
High expectations of students

Peer:

Involvement with positive peer group activities and norms
Good relationship with peers
Parental approval of friends

Community:

Economical sustainable/stable community
Positive social norms
High community expectations
Neighborhood/social cohesion

(Information was found on the website: <http://guide.helpingamericasyouth.gov/programtool-factors.cfm>)