

Ten Tips for Parents

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1. Remember that children want, need, and expect clear limits on their activities.
 - Establish clear, fair, and reasonable boundaries, rules, and expectations.
 - Set consequences for violations.
 - Do the right thing for your child, even if it hurts you to do so.
 - Do not yield to protests such as “But, Mom, *everybody* gets to do that!” (Answer: “Then *you* will be the exception.”)
 - Make the call; *you* are the parent.
 - Stick to your decisions.
 - Do not try to be the “nice guy”; it makes a mockery of your disciplinary efforts in your child’s eyes.
 - Do not allow children to attend or host unsupervised activities, especially parties.
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2. Give your child a touchstone rule by which to live and judge situations when you are not present to guide him, such as:
 - Be *where* you are supposed to be,
 - When* you are supposed to be,
 - With whom* you are supposed to be,
 - Doing *what* you are supposed to be doing.
3. Develop open lines of communication with your child.
 - Talk and listen frequently, openly, and positively.
 - Use humor whenever possible.
 - Spend time with your child; keep him busy and occupied.
 - Assign home responsibilities.
 - Involve him in after-school activities.
 - Eliminate “just hanging out” time with friends.
 - If your child attends an activity, know when, where, what, and with whom he will be at all times.
 - Be certain that reliable adult supervision is present at activities.
 - Take him to church, children's, and youth activities.
 - Help him find, work at, and learn from an after-school job.
 - Participate in your child’s education; attend his events.
 - Emphasize that school and grades are important.
4. Considering your child’s level of *maturity, responsibility, and truthfulness*, establish a reasonable curfew for weekend and holiday evening activities, such as:
 - No later than 9:00 - 10:00 for children under 16.
 - No later than 10:00 - 11:00 for children under 17.
 - No later than 11:00 - 12:00 for children under 18.
5. Know your child's friends.
 - Meet his friends, especially if he does not want you to meet them.
 - Find out what they look like, talk about, how they spend their free time.
 - Try to ascertain what influence they have over him.
 - Meet and interact with their parents.

6. Discourage your child from any involvement with gangs by:
 - Discussing the negatives of gang affiliation.
 - Stressing that gangs are dangerous.
 - Convincing him that he is an important part of the family.
 - Teaching him your values.
7. Ask questions about gang activity.
 - Do you know what gangs are, and what they do?
 - Are there any gangs at your school or in the community?
 - Do you know any gang members?
 - Has a gang ever approached you in any way?
 - Are you in a gang?
8. Teach your child what to do if gang members approach him.
 - Do not respond to gang contacts.
 - Do not make eye contact.
 - Do not be around gang members or in gang areas at any time.
 - Best response is just to walk away.
9. Warn your child he must not:
 - Attempt, even in jest or play, 'false flagging' (display by non-gang member of any kind of gang signing, language or symbol).
 - Wear gang-related clothing.
 - Draw, write, or practice gang writing, gang names, or graffiti; especially on or in:
 - Books
 - Notebooks
 - Paper
 - Clothes
 - Book bags
 - His own body
 - Other belongings
 - Rooms
 - *Anywhere!*
10. Watch for changes indicating gang involvement.
 - Behavior
 - Has diminishing grades, poor attendance, and behavior problems.
 - Drops out of family, school, sports, church, and other activities.
 - Shows interest in gangster-influenced music, behavior, writing, talking.
 - Imitates or affects gang attitude, writing, symbols, signs, behavior, clothes.
 - Shows signs of use of alcohol and other drugs.
 - Has an abrupt change in personality, behavior, and overall attitude.
 - Demonstrates violent behavior or threatens violent behavior.
 - Develops an interest in guns and other weapons.
 - Carries a weapon, or is obsessed with weapons.
 - Begins to develop streetwise vocabulary, behavior.
 - Evidences hatred of other groups or persons for no apparent reason.
 - Develops unusual desire for privacy and secrecy.

- Rearranges room or living quarters to create more privacy.
- Is arrested, or friends or associates are arrested.
- Does everything to the left or right ('orientation').
- Says he is "hanging around," but does not explain.
- Possesses gang literature.
- Possesses photographs showing gang games, gang slogans, gang insignias, or gang activities.
- Becomes defiant toward authority, often violent toward parents, teachers, others.
- Brags about or struts about his new gang status.
- Eager to gain reputation of being "bad"; fights willingly, unnecessarily.
- Often is not where supposed to be.
- Sneaks out of house.
- Often spends evenings away from home without permission
- Symbols
 - Wears personal property with gang symbols.
 - Has gang tattoos
 - Has new haircut with stripes or patterns cut into hair
 - Writes or draws gang graffiti on notebooks or belongings.
 - Has gang photographs, books, posters, and graffiti in bedroom, especially on bedroom walls.
- Dress
 - Seems obsessed with just one or two particular colors of clothing; will wear no other colors.
 - Wears gang clothing, styles, colors.
 - Wears belt buckle or other accessory with initial not his own.
 - Favors one particular professional team logo or uniform.
 - Wears sagging pants.
 - Affects gang dress.
 - Wears all clothes, jewelry, and other accessories "repping" to the left or the right.
 - Wears head covering, hood, bandana, etc., with gang colors or repping to one side
 - Has gang symbols inside cap or on underside of brim.
 - Wears belt buckle, sometimes military style buckle, with initial not his own.
- Money, Jewelry
 - Wears excessive jewelry with distinctive designs or with gang symbols.
 - Wears beads in same color as clothes.
 - Affects right or left orientation in jewelry, colors, other items. (Does everything to right or left.)
 - Suddenly possesses unexplained cash, clothing, jewelry, and other items.
 - Showers wealth on friends, family.
 - Has newly acquired or unexplained wealth, often showered on or shared with friends.
 - Frequently requests to borrow money.
- Physical Changes
 - Has unexplained physical injuries (such as being beaten), or lies about events surrounding the injuries.
 - Has injuries to body, but not to face. (Injuries inflicted during gang initiations are often deliberately on the recruit's body so they will be less obvious than injuries to the face and other exposed areas.)
 - Appears proud of injuries.

- Has peculiar drawings or language on personal belongings or on body.
- Has a tattoo or 'brand.'
- Affects a particular hairstyle common to a few.
- Has gang signs cut into hair.
- Head shaved, bald, or hair extremely short.
- Has slashes cut into eyebrows.
- Shows changes in physical appearance.
- Often drowsy, eyes red, swollen, speech blurred.
- Family
 - Withdraws from family.
 - Becomes increasingly defiant.
 - Breaks family rules.
 - Refers to new friends as 'family.'
- Friends
 - Undesirable friends and associates replace previous desirable friends and associates
 - New friends either do not visit or are secretive when they do
 - Are usually males with unusual, unexplained first names
 - New friends all wear same colors, sports clothing; indicate gang affiliation in other ways.
 - Attend functions sponsored or attended by known gang members.
 - Loiter, ride, meet, or hang out with gang members
 - Have undesirable influences with/from unknown sources, have negative role models
 - Are streetwise, anti-social, hostile, aggressive
 - Lack respect for parents; break parental and school rules consistently.
 - Have loose family ties, inadequate family attention and supervision
 - Are victims of abuse or neglect
 - Often are from economically/socially deprived backgrounds
 - Have low or diminishing grades, poor attendance, or are dropouts