



# Gang Awareness

Gang culture has evolved immensely since its inception in the United States. With research indicating over 25,000 gangs in operation it is safe to say that this sub-culture is a nationwide problem, populating more than 600,000 members. With the growth rate of gangs continuing to increase it is imperative that we begin to educate ourselves of the rituals, signs, and customs of this rapidly growing culture in an effort to prevent it from taking over our communities. Gangs can be defined as a group of individuals who operate under the principles of unlawful behavior, violence, and obsessive commitment towards each other and the code of ethics of the gang. While there are many different reasons that one may join a gang, over time studies have shown that the main reasons include:

1. *Power*
2. *Money*
3. *Sense of Family*
4. *Security*
5. *Respect*



Additionally, being in a gang requires that young adolescents adapt and commit to gang rules and codes of ethics. Listed below are a few signs that may illustrate an individual's involvement with a gang:

1. Excessive money
2. Use of gang terminology
3. Excessive amounts of clothing in one to two colors
4. Graffiti written on books, clothing, and walls
5. A sudden decline in school performance

***As gang involvement and activity continues to increase, please utilize some of the resources that have been provided to help our youth stay away from the gang culture. In the event that your child, or someone you know is involved in the gang culture, please feel free to contact your local authorities for further assistance.***

Listed below are helpful links to various websites with information regarding "Gangs".

1. <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/faq/adviseparent.asp>
2. <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/e09050001.pdf>
3. [http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/GangsCard\\_FBI.pdf](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/GangsCard_FBI.pdf)
4. <http://www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/faqs/gangwise.htm>