

*Indiana Department of Education*

# Youth Gang Awareness



**Indiana  
Department of Education**  
Glenda Ritz, Superintendent of Public Instruction

# WHY DO YOUTHS JOIN GANGS

- Social Discrimination & Rejection
- Absence of a Family & its Unconditional Love
- Lack of Positive Role Models
- Lack of Proper Discipline
- Lack of Positive Free-Time Activities
- Fear, Abuse, Lack of Security
- Economic Deprivation
- School Failure and Delinquency
- Low Self-Esteem
- Pathological Offenders' Needs
- Influence of Migrating Gang Member

# INDIANA SEEING SHARP RISE IN YOUTH VIOLENCE

*Indiana Youth Institute Statistics as presented in the 2015  
Indiana Kids Count Profile of Child Wellbeing*

- Dramatic increase in homicides among children and teenagers.
- **Gang membership** may be one cause, it's **up 11 percent among teens with many kids being recruited at age 14.**
- Teenagers committing murder is rising.
- Nearly a fifth of high school students regularly carry a weapon.
- Homicide as cause of death in youth 15-24 years of age:
  - **#1 among Blacks**
  - **#4 among whites and Hispanics**

# INDIANA SEEING SHARP RISE IN YOUTH VIOLENCE

*Indiana Youth Institute Statistics as presented in the 2015 Indiana Kids Count Profile of Child Wellbeing*

- Firearms were used in three quarters of homicides by youth under age 18 in Indiana (76% between 2008 and 2013), followed by knives, personal (hands, fists, feet) and blunt objects.\*
- 7 in 10 kids have witnessed violence.
- 29 percent of Indiana high school students were involved in a physical fight at least once in the past year.
- Youth who have had contact with the Indiana juvenile justice system have higher mortality rates than the general population, regardless of sex or race

# HOW GANGS AFFECT A SCHOOL

46 percent of students in public schools reported the presence of gangs and gang members at school<sup>+</sup>

Most youth gang activity occurs at school<sup>\*</sup>

- More violence at school
- More guns at school
- Increase of drugs on campus
- Class disruptions, taking learning time away while teachers have to deal with behavior issues
- Lower attendance
- Higher dropout rate
- Increased workload on teachers, school resource officers, other school staff, law enforcement, judicial system

# SCHOOL RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH GANG INVOLVEMENT

- Poor school performance
- Low educational aspirations
- Negative labelling by teachers
- High levels of anti-social behavior
- Few teacher role models
- Educational frustration
- Low attachment to school
- Learning difficulties
- Low involvement in extracurricular activities

# EXAMPLES OF GANG-RELATED BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- The use of certain hand signals or gestures that may, in any way, be linked to a gang or gang-related activity or behavior.
- Graffiti that may, in any way, be linked to a gang or gang-related activity or behavior.
- Identifying oneself as a member of a gang.
- Recruiting or soliciting membership in a gang or gang-related organization.

## EXAMPLES OF GANG-RELATED BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, symbol, or any other attribute indicates or implies gang membership or affiliation with such a group.
- Initiation, hazing, intimidation, and/or related activities of such group affiliations that are likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to students or staff.



## EXAMPLES OF GANG-RELATED BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Threatening to commit, or actually committing, any crime with the purpose of terrorizing another, causing the evacuation of a school system facility or school bus, causing disruption to the orderly operation at any school system facility
- Using, employing, or relying upon gang membership or affiliation to threaten, intimidate, or to harass students and/or staff.

# BEHAVIORAL CHANGES THAT MAY INDICATE GANG INVOLVEMENT

- Withdrawing from family activities and planned events.
- Changed academic performance or declining school attendance.
- Defiant or confrontational behavior, such as talking back, verbal abuse, name-calling, and disrespect for teacher/parental authority.
- Staying out late without reason.
- Angry outbursts, excessive aggression.
- Excessive worry about safety; constantly surveying surroundings for danger.
- Sudden negative attitudes about law enforcement or adults in positions of authority (school officials or teachers).

# BEHAVIORAL CHANGES THAT MAY INDICATE GANG INVOLVEMENT

- Change in attitude about school, church, or other normal activities or change in behavior when attending these activities.
- Drastic changes in personal style.
- Withdrawal from longtime friends and forming bonds with an entirely new group of friends.
- Suspected use of drugs, such as alcohol, inhalants, and narcotics.
- Possession of firearms, ammunition, or other weapons.
- Non-accidental physical injuries (such as evidence of being beaten or injuries to hands and knuckles from fighting).
- Unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing, video games, or jewelry.

# INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE

- Past violent victimization
- Early aggressive behavior
- Poor behavioral control/hyperactivity
- Antisocial behavior
- Lack of guilt or empathy
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Exposure to family conflict and violence
- Exposure to violence in media
- Having been a victim of bullying
- Difficulty controlling feelings, especially anger
- Major mental illness
- Parental substance abuse or history of crime

# FAMILY RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE

- Low parental involvement
- Low emotional attachment to parents
- Inconsistent disciplinary practices
- Poor parental supervision and monitoring
- Large family size
- Presence of firearms in the home

# COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE

- Association with delinquent peers
- Peer rejection
- Low school commitment/involvement
- High-crime neighborhoods
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods
- High concentration of lower socioeconomic groups
- Gangs and easy access to firearms

# BASIC OBSERVABLE GANG IDENTIFIERS

- Social Media Content/Cellphone Communication
- Symbols, Numbers, Colors, Drawings
- Graffiti
- Hand Signs

# MONITORING SOCIAL MEDIA/TEXTING CONTENT

- **Social media and texting are the primary means of communication between youth gang members**
- Gangs gain access and recruit youth for their Homegrown Local Youth Gangs and for regional gang affiliates for the purpose of drug sales, armed robbery, prostitution, beat downs, to claim turf and maintain dominance in schools
- **Monitoring social media and phone activity is the best way to gain awareness into your child's social life**



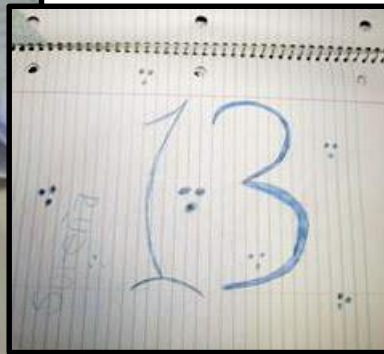
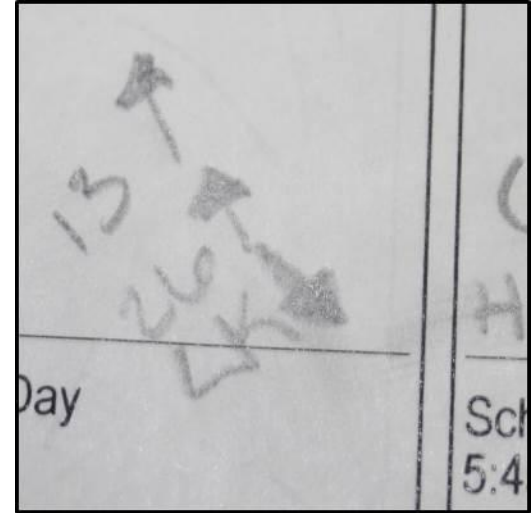
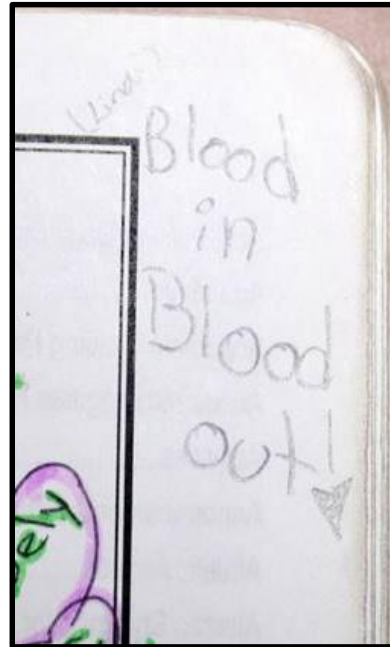
# YOUTH GANGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA



# YOUTH GANG WRITINGS, DRAWING, SYMBOLS

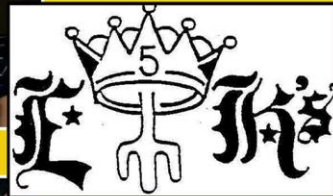
- **Monitor writings, drawings and any unidentifiable symbols**
- Review notebooks, sketchbooks – look in school backpack
- If unsure of the content/meaning of a drawing, unfamiliar symbols used with numbers or specific color combinations used with regularity – research their meaning online, ask for assistance at your local law enforcement office, or school resource officer
- **Be diligent in your awareness of what your students/children are writing/drawing about – Be present**

# YOUTH GANG WRITINGS, DRAWINGS



# LATIN KINGS

## Gang Identifiers



# Norteños

## Gang Identifiers



# GANGSTER DISCIPLES

Gang Identifiers



# INDIANA WHITE SUPREMACY

Identifiers





# SYMBOLS OF HATE\*

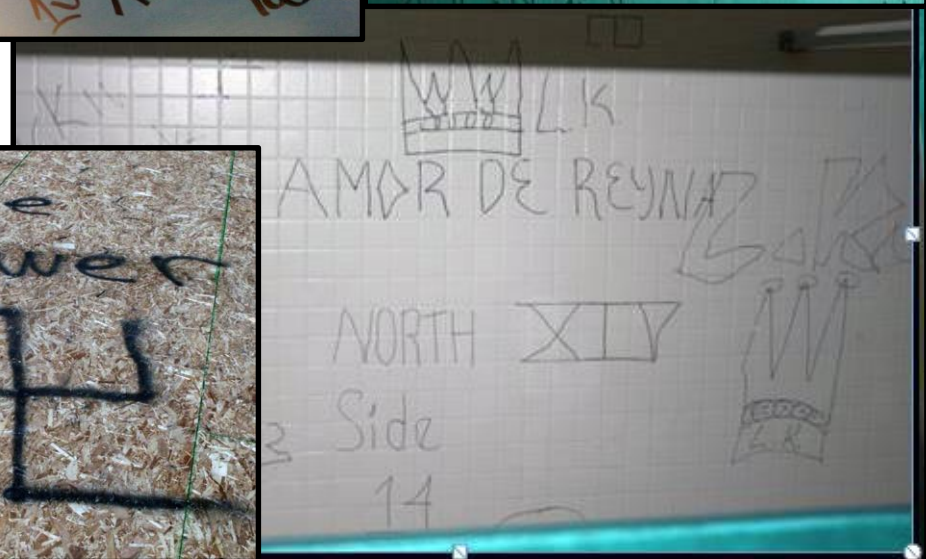
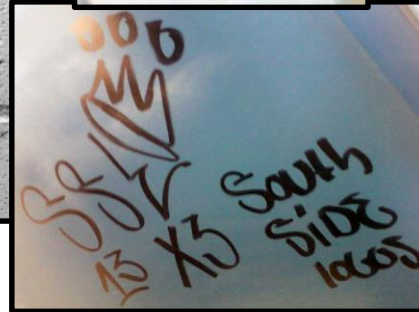
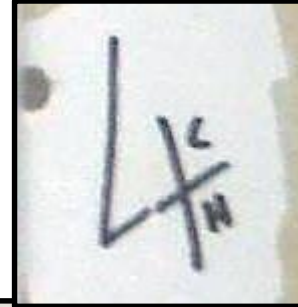
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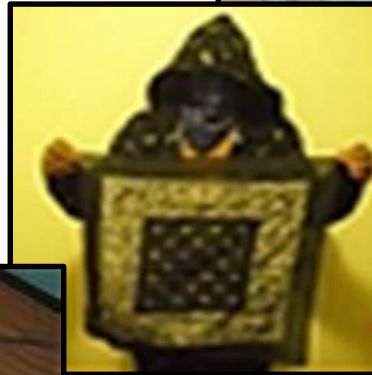




# YOUTH GANG GRAFFITI IN SCHOOLS/PARKS



# YOUTH GANG CLOTHING, ETC.



# PARENTS

Talk to your child about the negative consequences of gang behaviors and ways to avoid them

- Be clear that you disapprove of gangs and do not want to see your child hurt or arrested.

Be firm in your expectations that your child should NOT:

- Associate with any gang-involved individuals.
- Hang out where gang members congregate.
- Attend any party or social event sponsored by gangs.
- Use any kind of hand or finger signs that may be meaningful to gangs, especially in pictures (even as a joke).
- Wear clothing that may have meaning to gangs in your area.
  - (Explain to your child that these clothing items can put him or her in danger and that you will not purchase them or allow them to be worn.)

# PARENTS

## Get to know your child's friends and the friends' parents

- Be aware of their attitudes toward drugs, alcohol, and gangs.
- When children start to feel pressure to use drugs or join gangs, it usually comes from their friends.

## Familiarize yourself with the Internet, popular slang terms, and your child's online activity

- Communicate with your child about the potential negative consequences of online activity, including what he or she may post online.
- Spend time online with your child.
- Ask your child to show you his or her favorite online activities, sites, and online contacts.
- Keep the computer in a common area and utilize the computer's and Web sites' parental controls to limit the child's access to Web sites and social media.

# PARENTS

## Talk to your child about ways to deal with pressure from friends

- Help your child practice simple ways to respond to peer pressure.
  - For example, if your child is challenged by a peer who says, “If you were my friend, you would,” your child can respond, “If you were my friend, you wouldn’t ask.” Then, he or she should walk away.

## Limit interaction with gang-involved individuals

- One of the strongest risk factors for joining a gang is living in the same house as someone who is involved in gangs.
- If your child has older siblings or other relatives in your home who are associated with gangs, be very watchful of the influence they have on your child, and intervene immediately if your child starts to copy their dress, attitudes, and/or behaviors.

# PARENTS

## Set firm limits with your child

- Children and teenagers need to clearly know what is expected of them and the consequences for acting otherwise.
- When your child misbehaves, be sure to use fair and consistent discipline, while demonstrating unconditional love and support for your child.

## Plan family time

- Make time for your family to play, eat meals together, take trips (even to local parks or activities), keep family traditions, and have family meetings to talk about plans, feelings, and complaints.

# TEACHERS

## Develop an Anti-Gang Environment in Your Classroom and School.

- If your school does not have a policy regarding gang activity or dress, determine if current school policy will sufficiently cover gang incidents.
- If not, assist in getting your school policy updated and parents informed.
- Enforce school policies consistently and fairly, and make sure that all students understand.
- Obtain the latest information on Gang Awareness.



# TEACHERS

## Gangs are constantly changing.

- Obtain regular updates from your local law enforcement agency on the type of gang activity in your area.
- Learn the newest gangs in the area, their hangouts, graffiti, clothing trends, activities, rivals, etc.
- Review your school and school corporation policy

**Add your school or school district policy here**

# TEACHERS

## **Make Frequent Contact with Parents of High Risk Students.**

- Parents are often the last to know about their child's gang involvement.
- If you notice sudden changes in attitude, grades, and dress of a student, alert their parents.
- Never assume that the parent already knows and just chooses to do nothing about it.

## **Assign Mentors to Students Who Are Having Difficulty in School.**

- Many youths are drawn to gangs because it provides them with a support structure and feeling of belonging.
- Students who are struggling in school need to feel that they are successful.
- A mentor can give a student a feeling of importance – that someone cares about them.

# TEACHERS

## Learn About Community Resources Available in the Area for Students.

- Teachers can often steer their students toward positive activities that can reduce their likelihood of becoming gang-involved.
- There are also many community resources available for families that are struggling with gang members in their family.

## Teach Kids Anti-Violence and Problem Solving Skills.

- Many students will turn to gangs to solve problems for them or to provide protection. Teaching your students problem-solving skills and behavioral skills training can reduce the number of violent incidents on campus. Students will also feel more in control and confident of their abilities to “stand alone.” The need for a gang is reduced.

# TEACHERS

## **Do Not Glorify Gang Activity, But Do Not Ignore It Either.**

- Students will often discuss recent gang activity among themselves and may glorify the gang members that are involved.
- While such discussions should be discouraged it is helpful for youth to discuss the activity with the teacher serving as a facilitator so that the issue can be dealt with in a realistic manner and used as a learning experience for students.

# GANG IDENTIFIER CARD

## INDIANA

### Gang Identifier Quick Reference

#### Recognizing and Identifying A Gang Presence

This quick reference guide provides some of the common of gang identifiers for the more prominent gangs that reside and operate in Indiana. This guide is strictly intended to help determine whether graffiti, hand gestures, apparel or tattoos may be a representation of gang activity. The following identifiers are based on the most common and recognizable attributes of each particular gang.

\* The following gangs are categorized by their affiliation with the Folk Nation, People Nation, Independent Allegiance or White Supremacy.

#### Folk Nation

##### Identifiers

- Pitchfork Pointing Up, Six-Point Star
- The Number 6
- Bent Eared Bunny, Swords, Devils



##### Gangster Disciples

###### Identifiers

- Blue and Black Colors
- Raised Pitchforks
- The Numbers 4, 7
- The Initials GD, GDN
- 6 Point Star with the initials GD



##### Two Six Nation

###### Identifiers

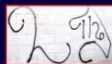
- Black and Tan Colors
- The Numbers, 2, 6, 18, 26
- The Initials "TSN"
- Dice with "2" on one die and "6" on the other



##### Latin Dragons

###### Identifiers

- Black and White Colors
- The Numbers 2, 6, 26
- The Initials "LD", "LDN"
- Dragons
- Diamonds (4 and 5 pointed) with 6 dots



#### People Nation

##### Identifiers

- Pitchfork Pointing Down; 5 Point Star
- The Number 5
- Straight Eared Bunny



##### Latin Kings

###### Identifiers

- Gold and Black Colors
- Downward pitchforks
- The Number 5
- The Initials "LK", "ALKN" or "ALKQN"
- 5 Point Crown
- Lions



##### Vice Lords

###### Identifiers

- Red, Black, Gold Colors
- Downward Pitchfork
- The Initials VL, CVL, VLN
- Pyramid with Crescent Moon
- Top hat, Martini Glass, Cane, Money Sign



##### Black P Stones

###### Identifiers

- Black and Red or Green Colors
- The Number 7
- The Initials "BPSN", "BPS"
- Pyramid, with 21 blocks
- Crescent moon, Eye



#### Independent Gangs

##### Sureños

Associations: Mexican Mafia (La EME)

###### Identifiers

- Blue and White Colors
- The Numbers 3, 13
- Initials SUR, Letter M
- Pitchfork Pointing Up, Six-Point Star
- Bent Eared Bunny, Swords, Devils



##### Norteños

Associations: La Nuestra Familia

###### Identifiers

- Red and White Colors
- The Number s/Numerals 14, XIV or X4
- The Letter N, "Norte"
- Sombrero, Machete, "Huelga Bird"
- Brown Pride



##### MS-13 (Mara Salvatrucha)

###### Identifiers

- Blue and White
- The Number 13
- The Letters M, S, Initials "MS"
- Heavily Tattooed



##### 18th Street

###### Identifiers

- Gray and Black Colors
- The Number 18, "99", "666"
- Numerals "XVIII" or "XV3"
- Rivals of MS-13 and Ally of Sureños



#### White Supremacy

##### Indiana Aryan Brotherhood



##### Indiana Hammerskin Nation



##### Indiana Saxon Knights



##### Tippecanoe County Project Safe Neighborhoods:

<http://www.tippecanoe.in.gov/PSN/>

##### Gang Cops Online (Law Enforcement Secure):

<http://www.gangcopsonline.com/>

##### GANGS OR US:

<http://www.gangsor.us/>

##### Teachers Against Gangs:

<http://www.teachersagainstgangs.com>

##### Students Against Gangs:

<http://www.studentsagainstgangs.com/>

#### Law Enforcement Only



**TIPPECANOE COUNTY PROSECUTOR**

**PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS**

RENTAL PROPERTY OWNER AND MANAGER TRAINING PROGRAM  
WETIP HOTLINE Anonymous Illegal Activity Reporting  
WETIP SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAM & HOTLINE  
ANTI-GANG INITIATIVES



©May, 2010; Tippecanoe County Prosecutor, Project Safe Neighborhoods Anti-Gang Initiatives  
Kathryn J Redd, TCPSN Anti-Gang Initiatives Director; kredd@tippecanoe.in.gov  
US Gang Activity: TCPSN Twitter, TCPSN YouTube, TCPSN Facebook

# LOCAL RESOURCES

- Local Law Enforcement
- School Resource Officer
- School Counselor
- School Administrators
- Youth Probation
- Prosecutor
- Indiana State Police

# ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Indiana Department of Education**
  - **Indiana Model Policy to Address Criminal Gangs and Criminal Gang Activity in Schools:** <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/safety/indiana-model-policy-address-gangs.pdf>
- **Hammond, IN Police Department Gang Suppression Unit**
  - **Gang Education: English:** <http://www.hammondpolice.com/gangsuppressionENG.htm>
  - **Spanish:** <http://www.hammondpolice.com/gangsuppressionSPA.htm>
- **Indiana Department of Health**
  - **VIOLENCE PREVENTION RESOURCES for School, Youth and Gang Violence:** <http://www.in.gov/isdh/25391.htm>
- **Indiana Youth Survey, Indiana University**
  - <http://www.inys.indiana.edu/resources>

# ONLINE RESOURCES

- **National Gang Center**

- **Why Youth Join Gangs Video:**

- <https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/HTML/Why-Youth-Join-Gangs/>

- **Parents' Guide to Gangs**

- **English:**<https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Parents-Guide-to-Gangs.pdf>

- **Spanish:**<https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Gu%C3%ADa-sobre-las-pandillas-para-los-padres.pdf>

- **Frequently Asked Questions About Gangs:**

- <https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/About/FAQ>

- **Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice**

- **Changing Course: Preventing Youth From Joining Gangs (book):**

- <http://www.nij.gov/publications/changing-course/pages/welcome.aspx>





**IMAGINING**

the possibilities.

MAKING THEM HAPPEN.



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**IN**  **Gang  
Network**

**GANG GUNS DRUGS**