

Resources

<http://www.gangs.umd.edu/>

<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/>

<http://www.great-online.org/>

<http://www.safeyouth.org>



Signs of possible gang involvement

Simply dressing a certain way or listening to a particular type of music may be a result of today's culture and not necessarily an indicator of gang involvement. However, multiple signs from the list below should raise concern and warrant further investigation.

- ◆ *Showing interest in wearing clothing of one color*
- ◆ *Drawing gang symbols on backpacks, notebooks, art projects, walls*
- ◆ *Displaying gang tattoos (to include cigar burns), shaving parts of eyebrows*
- ◆ *Displaying gang symbols on belt buckles, belts, hats*
- ◆ *Using hand signs to communicate*
- ◆ *Carrying weapons*
- ◆ *Speaking in gang slang, writing in a secretive gang alphabet*
- ◆ *Socializing with known gang members*
- ◆ *Losing interest in family, school, friends, staying out later than normal*

Safety and Emergency Management, 191 South East Street Frederick, Maryland 21701
301-696-6808
safety.team@fcps.org



Frederick County Public Schools
Reach. Challenge. Prepare.

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Youth Gang Involvement

Frederick County
Public Schools, Safety
& Emergency
Management
Department

Gang culture has been glamorized in today's music, videos, television shows and even by some sports icons. Evidence of gang activity has spread nationwide to both urban and rural communities alike. It is important for parents, schools and communities to educate themselves about local gang activity so we can work together to address the problem.



Who Joins Gangs?

Gang members generally range in age from 12 – 24 years and come from all ethnic groups and income levels. Most gang members are male with approximately 10% female.

Risk Factors:

- ◆ *Low self-esteem*
- ◆ *Lack of involvement in school and community activities*
- ◆ *Living in an area of high gang activity*
- ◆ *Needing a sense of belonging*
- ◆ *Lack of parental supervision*
- ◆ *Exposure to media that glorifies gang violence*

Quitting a Gang

Leaving a gang is difficult. There is no easy way to separate from membership, but one method is to become less active. Use reasons such as restrictions by parents, the courts or a job.

Parents

- ◆ *Know your child's friends*
- ◆ *Be a positive role model*
- ◆ *Encourage your child to be involved in afterschool activities*
- ◆ *Discuss the danger of gangs with your child*
- ◆ *Encourage your child to do well in school*
- ◆ *Know where your child is at night*
- ◆ *Set limits for your child*
- ◆ *Report suspected gang activity to law enforcement.*



Schools

- ◆ *Photograph and remove graffiti as soon as possible*
- ◆ *Attempt to identify gang members and students at risk of becoming gang members*
- ◆ *Involve parents, counselors and school resource officers (SRO)*
- ◆ *Follow FCPS Regulation 400-87*
- ◆ *Encourage students to participate in school activities that will increase their sense of belonging*
- ◆ *Promote gang awareness for all school staff*

Local Gangs

- ◆ *Local gang names and symbols are always changing*
- ◆ *Local gangs are often sets or cliques of nationally recognized gangs*
- ◆ *Many times local gang names are taken from neighborhoods and nearby areas*

