

## Clark County resources

**211info** is a help line offering information and referrals for local services such as parenting programs and substance abuse providers. Dial 2-1-1.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington** are a fun and safe place for 1st–12th graders to go after school for just \$20/year. Call 360-313-5670.

**Vancouver PAL** offers low-cost after school options for youth including boxing, football, basketball, and literacy programs. Call 360-487-7487.

**Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation** offers year-round enrichment activities for all ages. Scholarships are available for youth. Call 360-487-8311.

**Clark County Mentoring Round Table** provides information on local mentoring programs. Call 360-891-8382 or visit [www.clarkcountymentoring.com](http://www.clarkcountymentoring.com).

**Sea Mar** provides medical, dental and behavioral health services and is now taking referrals for gang-involved youth. Call 360-566-4432.

**Tattoo removal** is available through Project Erase in Portland for \$25 per visit. Call 503-535-3902 to apply.

[www.nwgangs.com](http://www.nwgangs.com) is a site with information about local gangs.

**Safe Communities Task Force** coordinates gang prevention and intervention in Clark County. Call 360-600-4143 or visit: [safecommunitiestaskforce.org](http://safecommunitiestaskforce.org)

**All local police departments** including the Vancouver Police Department (360-487-7400) and the Clark County Sheriff's Office (360-397-2000).



## Parent's Guide to Youth Gangs in Clark County



## Who joins gangs and why?

Youth are most likely to consider joining a gang between the ages of 12 and 14; however, children can be drawn towards gangs at younger ages as well. Boys are more likely to join gangs than girls, but there are still a significant number of girls who join gangs. In fact, out of 601 Clark County students who reported being gang involved on the 2010 Healthy Youth Survey, 38 percent were girls. At highest risk are children who have difficulties in school, lack of parental supervision, use alcohol or other drugs, or tend to “follow the pack”.

Adolescence is a time when children begin to define their own identities. During this time, many seek out new peer groups as a means of gaining acceptance. For some, gangs can meet this need. Gangs can also provide structure, money, food, activities, companionship, and even love – things that may be lacking in other areas of the child's life. Kids don't run toward gangs – they run from something else and find gangs. Parents can help prevent gang involvement by ensuring all their children's needs are met in some other way.



## Gang involved? How can you tell?

Youth who are becoming involved with a gang may exhibit the following behaviors:

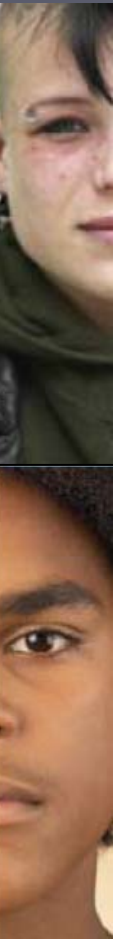
### Negative behavioral changes:

- ▶ Withdrawing from family and family activities.
- ▶ Increased truancy or school discipline.
- ▶ Declining school performance.
- ▶ Staying out late without reason.
- ▶ Unusual desire for secrecy.
- ▶ Confrontational behavior including disrespect for parental and school authority.
- ▶ Sudden negative attitudes toward police.
- ▶ Changes in attitude about usual activities including school, church, or sports.



### Additional warning signs:

- ▶ Unusual interest in one or two colors of clothing or a particular brand or logo.
- ▶ Interest in gang-related music or movies.
- ▶ Gang-type drawings or gang symbols on schoolbooks, clothing, notebooks, or walls.
- ▶ Withdrawal from longtime friends and forming of a new peer group who wear the same colors, numbers, or symbols.
- ▶ Use of unusual hand signals to communicate with friends.
- ▶ Sudden changes in the style of dress.
- ▶ Possession of firearms or other weapons.
- ▶ Suspected use of drugs or alcohol.
- ▶ Unexplained injuries, such as being beaten or hand/knuckle injuries from fighting.
- ▶ Unexplained cash or goods such as clothing, jewelry, cell phones, etc.



# Common identifiers

Gangs use common colors, numbers, and symbols to identify members of their group. Parents should be aware of these identifiers, as they may provide the first clues of gang involvement.

Parents should *not* make conclusions about gang membership based on only one indicator. Gang-like clothing is a popular style that many youth wear, and can change continually. However, even youth who are not gang-involved should be discouraged from wearing items that could be interpreted as gang-related for safety reasons.

## Colors:

Fascination with one color or refusal to wear another color is one clue that a young person may be gang involved. Most gangs in Clark County use either red or blue as their primary color. These colors may be represented on anything from shoelaces to hats and everything in between.

## Numbers and symbols:

Common symbols include stars, crowns, pitchforks, and three dots in a triangle. Common numbers include 13, 14, and 18 and may be written in many ways. For example, the number 13 could be written as 13, XIII, X3 or even as one dot for the "1" next to three dots in a triangle for the "3". Sports jerseys with a gang's number are a popular way for youth to represent their gang.

## Where to look:

Gang colors, numbers and symbols can be found in hats, shirts, pants, belts, beads, jewelry, shoes, shoelaces, tattoos, sports jerseys, hand signals, graffiti, homework, notebooks, drawings, etc. To avoid trouble at school or with the law, gangs may hide their affiliation in creative ways. Unusual changes to appearance or any coordinated group appearance (such as everyone wearing a plain white shirt on the same day) should be questioned.

# Local gangs

**Norteños:** A California-origin street gang associated with the Nuestra Familia prison gang. Rivals with Sureños.

- ▶ Red bandanas and red clothing or team wear, such as Blazers or 49ers apparel
- ▶ Letter "N" or "ene" and number 14 (may be X4 or XIV)
- ▶ Huelga bird (also used by the Farm Workers Movement)
- ▶ May cross out any "S" or "13" to disrespect Sureños

**Local Norteño affiliates include:**

Rosemere Varrio Norteños      Fruit Valley Norteños

**Bloods:** A California-origin street gang. Rivals with Crips.

- ▶ Red bandanas and clothing
- ▶ Boston Red Sox hats (for the letter B)
- ▶ Five-point stars, pitchforks pointing down
- ▶ May cross out the letter "C" in writing
- ▶ Graffiti includes "CK" for "Crip Killer"

**Local Bloods affiliates include:**

Unthank Park Bloods      Woodlawn Park Bloods  
Carlson Block Bloods      Wolfpack Bloods  
Lincoln Park Bloods      West Side Piru

**White Supremacy Groups:** Includes racist skinheads, neo-Nazis and prison-based groups like Aryan Brotherhood and European Kindred. Rivals with all non-white groups.

- ▶ Nazi icons, such as swastikas and "SS" thunderbolts
- ▶ May embrace Nordic mythology, Odinism or Celtic icons
- ▶ Numbers 666, 88 (for HH = Heil Hitler), 23 (for W = white), 100% (pure white)

**Local White Supremacy affiliates include:**

Bomber Boys (Skinheads)      European Kindred  
Hakenkreuz Skinheads

**Sureños:** A California-origin street gang associated with the Mexican Mafia prison gang. Rivals with Norteños.

- ▶ Blue bandanas and blue clothing or team wear, such as Cowboys or Seahawks apparel
- ▶ Letters "S", "M", or "eme" and number 13 (X3 or XIII)
- ▶ May reverse the letter "N" to disrespect Norteños

**Local Sureño affiliates include:**

South Side Locos      18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Mexican Vatos Sureños      Tepa 13  
Florencia 13      Brown Pride Locos

**Crips:** A California-origin street gang. Rivals with Bloods.

- ▶ Blue bandanas and clothing
- ▶ Six-point star and pitchforks pointing up
- ▶ Graffiti includes "BK" for "Blood Killer"

**Local Crips affiliates include:**

Courtyard Crips      Mafia Style Crips  
Imperial Village Crips      Rolling 60's or 90's  
6 Deuce Diamonds      Kirby Blocc Crips

**Other Gangs:** Gangs that are less common in our area, but whose members are sometimes seen here include:

Gangster Disciples (Folk Nation)      The Brood  
Latin Kings (People Nation)      Hoover Criminals  
Vice Lords (People Nation)      Fresno Bulldogs  
4 Corner Hustlers (People Nation)

**Gang-Like Groups:** Some youth may join groups that differ from "traditional" street gangs. These groups usually reject the label "gang" but may engage in criminal, violent, and antisocial activity. Examples include:

Tagger crews, Straight Edge, Insane Clown Posse/Juggalos



Norteño graffiti in red paint with X4 (14).



Hand sign spelling the word "blood".



3 dots - often with 1 dot on the other hand - to symbolize "13".



Using a blue Dodgers jersey and bandana to represent the Crips.



Juggalo identifiers include clown-like face paint and hatchets.

# What parents can do

## Talk to your children about gangs.

Let them know that you disapprove of gangs and do not want to see them hurt or arrested.

## Tell your children not to:

- ▶ Associate with any gang members.
- ▶ Hang out where gangs congregate.
- ▶ Attend any party sponsored by gangs.
- ▶ Use hand signs that may be meaningful to gangs.
- ▶ Wear clothes that may have meaning to gangs.

## Take a parenting class.

Children don't come with instructions. Be open to learning other ways of parenting rather than simply repeating how you were parented.

## Plan family time.

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

## Set firm limits.

Children and teenagers need to know clearly what is expected of them and the consequences for acting otherwise. Do not rescue your children from the consequences of their decisions.

## Get to know your children's friends and their 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 friends.

## Talk to your children about ways to deal with pressure from friends.

Help your children practice simple ways to respond to peer pressure.

## Find positive activities.

Pro-social peers and activities are an important factor for keeping youth out of trouble. They can help your child develop an identity and sense of belonging that may otherwise be found by joining a gang.