

Addressing Youth Gangs:

Failure is Not an Option

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The ecological framework of violence and the impact of social disorganization on the simultaneous development of language, cognition, social competence, and physical integrity in youth.

**What's up with
these churren?**

All My Churren

- Demographics (17)
 - New Bern & RDU
 - 12 - 20 years old
 - 16 males and 1 female

All My Churren

- Career Exploration
 - Nursing
 - Doctors (medicine)
 - Lawyers
 - Law enforcement
 - Military
 - All want to be rappers

**Does NC have a
youth gang
problem?**







Make ours doubles.

My sister and I have so low-nutrient, that is.
So we drink milk. It has 9 essential nutrients active bodies need.
You might say it's the only thing we serve.

got milk?

www.gotmilk.com

Youth Street Gang Data

- 1992 - 1997

- 13 cities reporting gang presence

- 2009

- 78% counties
 - 1,000 gangs and 9,000 gang involved youth

- 2025

- 4,000 validated gangs
 - Forecasts 50% of gang members between the ages of 18-25
 - 100 counties reported youth gang presence

Important New Findings

- Suspected juvenile gang crime has increased 47.9% in 5 years
- Gang-involved at-risk youth have more mental health problems than other at-risk youth (44% to 33%).
- Approximately 30% of juvenile detention stays were for youth who are identified as gang involved.
- Of the 1,054 gang involved youth, a large number have family and friend relationships that show traumatic factors

Features of “Hybrid” Gangs

- Mixture of graffiti and symbols (cut-and-paste)
- Mixed race / ethnicity
- May belong to more than one gang
- Sometimes switch from one gang to another
- Less concern over turf or territory

National Gangs

- Two main youth street gang designations:
 - Folk Nation and People Nation
 - Two designations occurred in prison
 - In 1979, no individual gang controlled the prison system. . . which led to allegiance between gangs

National Gangs

- People Nation (**left**)

- Latin Kings
- Bloods
- Vice Lords
- El Rukins
- Pachucos

- Folk Nation (**right**)

- Black Gangsta Disciples
- Crips
- Black Disciples

Gang Evolution

- 1800's – 1970's
 - Racism / Prejudice / Oppression
 - Socio-economic conditions
 - Criminal enterprise

Psychology

**“It is better to die on my feet,
...than to live on my knees.”**

~Emillio Zapata – Mexican Revolution



The body of Angel Pantoja Medina, left, stands leaning against a wall during his wake at his mother's home in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Monday.

Juan Alicea Mercado / AP

Gang Evolution

- 1980's – present
 - Remnants of racism and poverty
 - Ineffective and alienating institutions
 - Free time / ability to congregate
 - Messages via pop culture
 - Limited access to conventional careers

**Why do our youth
join gangs?**

Influences in the 1950's

- Family
- School
- Church
- Peers
- Music/Media

Influences in the 2020's

- Music/Media
- Peers
- Family
- School
- Church

Risk Factors for Gang Involvement



Push vs. Pull

Risk Factors for Gang Involvement

- Individual
- Family / Home
- School
- Peer Group
- Community

Family vs. Gang

- *Food
- *Clothing
- *Love
- *Shelter
- *Discipline
- *Belonging
- *Identification
- *Security
- *Status
- *Caring

- *Food
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- *Identification
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- *Status
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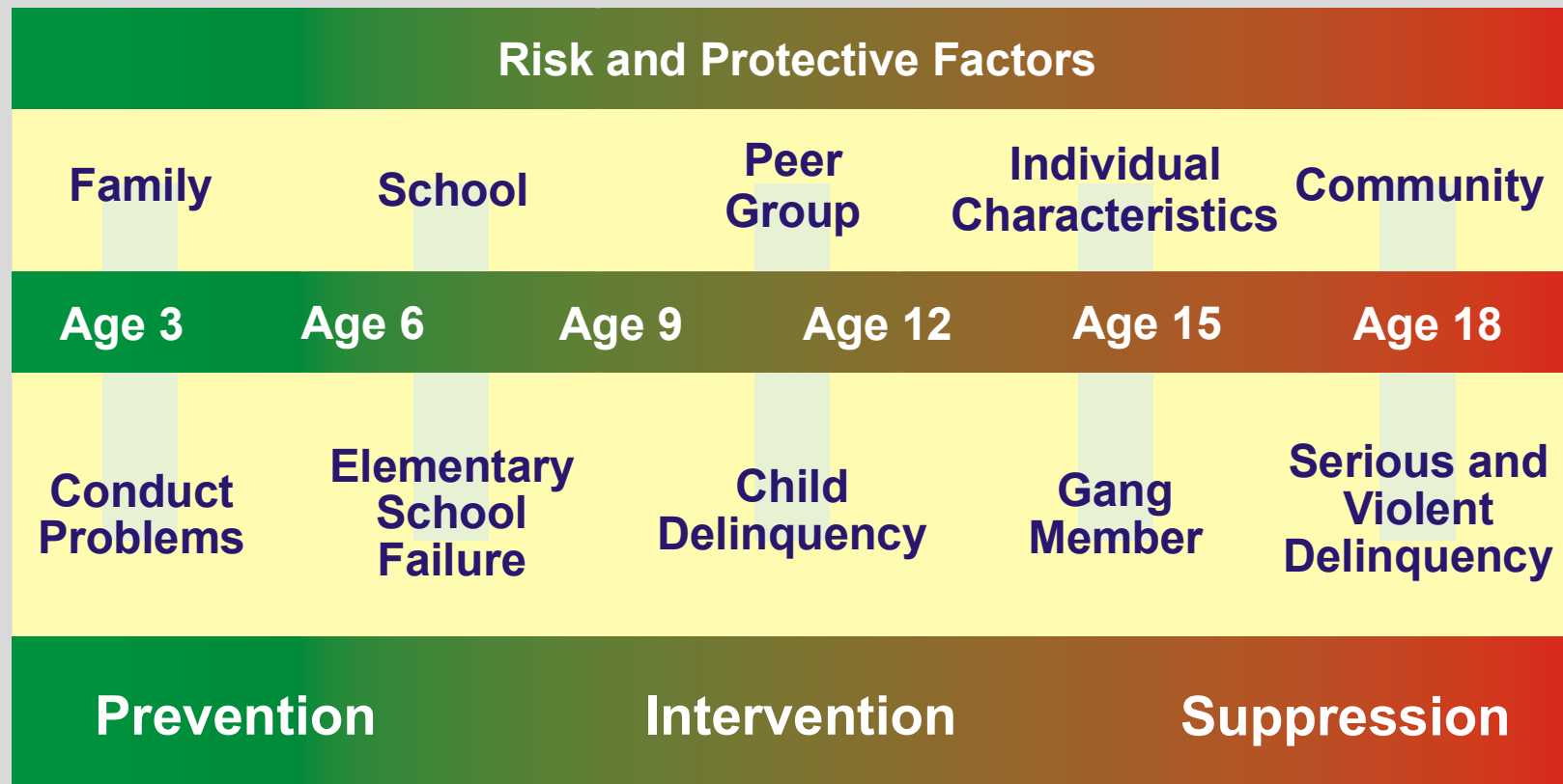
- *Power
- *Money
- *Sex / Drugs

Promising Strategies: Gang Prevention & Intervention

**Are Specialized Prevention
and Intervention Programs
needed for youth gang
members?**

Prevention / Intervention

“Windows of Opportunity”



- Dr. James C. Howell, 2009 – Sage Publications, Inc.

What can judges do?

Robe On vs. Robe Off

Robe On: Prevention & Intervention

- Encourage therapeutic / rehabilitation over strict punishment
- Establish regular court reviews to monitor compliance to ordered interventions
- Order community-based corrections
 - Mandatory school attendance
 - Diagnostic & psychiatric treatment
 - Family services / counseling

Robe On: Prevention & Intervention

- Delay sentencing (final disposition) for positive behavior
- Issue court orders for rehabilitation
- Support colleagues in evolving corrections mindset

Robe Off: Prevention & Intervention

- Lead community mobilization efforts
- Advocate for community resources
- Promote interagency information sharing

Robe Off: Prevention & Intervention

- Design opportunities for new judges to gain a deeper understanding of risk factors
- Initiate programs for gang-prone youth

Creative Intervention Considerations

- Gang renunciation program to re-construct identity
- Job Apprenticeship / Entrepreneurship development
- Leadership development
- Weekend & afterschool programming
- “Find the hook”

May 9, 1984 - January 8, 2004

All My Churren

- Enlisted in Airforce, Army, and Coast Guard – October 2003
- Graduated from NCSU – December 12, 2004
- Graduated from NC A&T – May 10, 2004
- Graduated from ECSU – December 7, 2005
- Graduated from Belmont Abbey – May 2006
- Graduated from FSU – May 2007
- Will run for the Office of the President of the United States of America – Fall of 2028

Questions?



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