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The slide has a white background on the left and a dark brown vertical bar on the right. The title 'FAST FACTS' is in a light green, bold, sans-serif font. Below it is a list of 10 bullet points, each starting with a light green circle. The text is in a black, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner of the white area, the number '3,6' is written in a small, grey font.

- The Department of Justice estimates there are approximately 27,900 gangs, with 774,000 members, impacting communities across the United States
- Graffiti is a way of marking a gang's boundaries and serves as a warning or challenge to rival gangs.
- Gangs prefer to use children because typically children under thirteen do not get jail time for crimes they commit
- Today's gangs cross state lines to establish and recruit members sometimes as young as 10 years old
- Many kids join a gang because it provides love, identity and status that they may lack from their family
- Gangs are compiled of different ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups
- Gangs are the main distributors of drugs throughout the U.S.
- Gangs are associating with organized crime groups such as Mexican drug organizations, Asian criminal groups and Russian crime groups
- Incarceration does not affect gang activity since high ranking gang members can use their power on the street while still in prison

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## DEFINING GANGS

A youth gang can be considered a group of mainly adolescents and young adults who:

- ◉ Interact frequently
- ◉ Are frequently and deliberately involved in illegal activities
- ◉ Share a common collective identity
- ◉ Adopt certain methods of identification

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## WHY KIDS JOIN GANGS

- ◉ Kids want power, status, security, friendship, family substitute or money
- ◉ Gang members cross all socio-economic backgrounds and boundaries regardless of age, sex, race, economic status, and academic achievement
- ◉ They want to be able to succeed at something in their lives

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## RISK FACTORS

- Common risk factors
  - Poverty and family stress
  - School failure or behavior problems in the primary grades
  - Truancy, involvement in petty theft
  - Lack of involvement in activities which provide a positive sense of self and identity
  - Learning disabilities and emotional disorders
    - 60% - 78% of Incarcerated gang members - male and female - have emotional and learning disabilities

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## RECOGNIZING GANGS

- Gang Identifiers may vary by location or gang activity
  - General signs include
    - Graffiti- Unusual signs, symbols, writing on walls or notebooks
    - "Colors"- Obvious or subtle colors of clothing, particular brand of clothes, jewelry, or haircuts
    - Tattoos- Symbols on arms, chest, or elsewhere on the body
    - "Lit"- Gang signs, symbols, poems, prayers, procedures, etc. in notebooks or other documents
    - Initiations- Suspicious bruises, wounds, or injuries resulting from a "jumping in" type initiation
    - Hand signs- Unusual hand signals or handshakes
    - Behavior- Sudden changes in behavior or secret meetings
  - One or many of these signs may indicate gang affiliation

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## RECOGNIZING GANG MEMBERS

- 12 Identifiers of gang involvement
  - Self admission
  - Gang tattoos
  - Style of dress known to show gang affiliation
  - Possession of gang graffiti or arrested for graffiti
  - Use of gang signs or symbols
  - Prior arrest with known gang members
  - Identified by family member as having gang affiliations
  - Identified by law enforcement as being a gang member
  - Identified by rival gangs
  - Identified by reliable informants
  - Observed attending gang meeting or functions
- Rule of 3

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## GANG PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

- Provide skills and knowledge to students to avoid gang involvement
- Create after school programs to provide a positive supervised environment after school
- Involve parents in gang prevention

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## WORKING WITH GANG FAMILIES

- ◎ Educator responsibilities
  - Educators are mandated reporters and have an obligation to report any suspect abuse or neglect
  - If an educator is aware of or suspects criminal activity they must notify the local authorities
  - Zero tolerance rules must apply
- ◎ Develop strong relationships with families
  - Educators should help families develop relationships with health services, family counseling and social workers
  - Parents who are gang members also need support
  - If the family needs protection work with local law enforcement
  - Overcome communication or language barriers with assistance
  - Assist with education or job placement

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## FOR STAFF SAFETY DO NOT

- ◎ Make fun of or disrespect any particular gang or group
- ◎ Demean or insult gang members
- ◎ Humiliate a gang member in front of peers
- ◎ Create opportunities for rival gangs to commit acts of violence
- ◎ Imitate gang slang, signs, clothing or symbols
- ◎ Favor one group over another
- ◎ Let issues slide
- ◎ Focus solely on negative behavior

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## PREVENTING A CRISIS AT SCHOOL

- Confidential reporting for students
- Reports of weapons
- Controlling entrances and exits
- Training and code signal

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## CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING FOR STUDENTS

- Provide a confidential method for students to report rumors of potential violence and/or weapons
  - Toll-free hotline to the district office
  - A suggestion box on campus
  - Teach students when and how to report gang activity
- Every report should be followed up on and should protect the identity of the reporter.
- Emphasize that telling is not snitching

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## REPORT OF WEAPONS

- ◉ Staff members should immediately report to administrators any rumors of students carrying weapons or of a potential violent incident
- ◉ Every rumor must be followed up on
- ◉ Contact law enforcement immediately if a weapon is reported on campus
- ◉ Staff members should not attempt to disarm a person without law enforcement assistance, if at all possible
- ◉ Do not assume that a positive relationship with a student will insure a staff member's safety

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## CONTROLLING ENTRANCES AND EXITS

- ◉ If able school personnel should be stationed at entrances to ensure visitors have a valid reason for entering the school
- ◉ The person stationed at the entrance must be able to communicate with office personnel

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## TRAINING AND CODE SIGNAL

- ◉ Train for an armed intruder or gang related incident at regular intervals like fire drills
- ◉ Implement a code word to warn staff members of a specific incident
- ◉ During an incident hallways should be cleared and students should be moved to classrooms with the doors locked

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## AFTERMATH OF A CRISES

- ◉ Need to form partnerships with community agencies/mental health providers and law enforcement agencies
- ◉ When a serious incident has occurred in the community, partnerships can be used to create an action plan to address student needs and to prevent retaliation
- ◉ Counseling for students should be provided

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## REFERENCES

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5. <http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Bulletin-5.pdf>
6. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/229249.pdf>