

## Student Gang Involvement in California

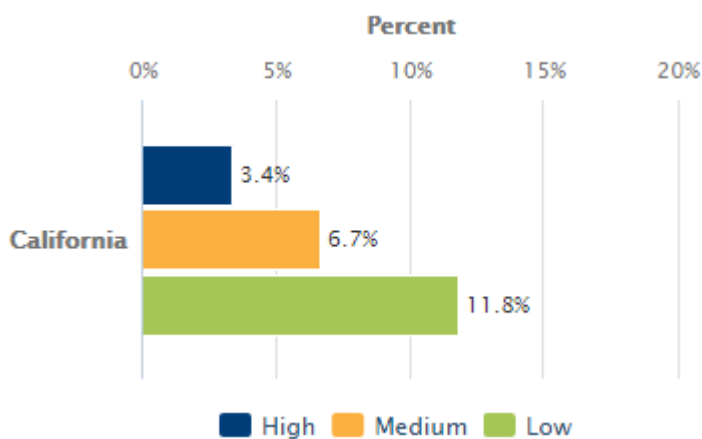
### Students Who Consider Themselves Gang Members, by Gender: 2013-2015

California	Percent	
	Female	Male
Grade Level	Yes	Yes
7th Grade	5.4%	6.2%
9th Grade	4.3%	7.0%
11th Grade	3.3%	7.7%
Non-Traditional	4.6%	13.4%

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who consider themselves gang members, by gender and grade level (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 4.3% of female 9th graders in California considered themselves gang members).

**Data Source:** WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### Students Who Consider Themselves Gang Members, by Level of School Connectedness: 2013-2015



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who consider themselves gang members, by level of school connectedness (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 11.8% of California students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs with low levels of school connectedness considered themselves gang members).

**Data Source:** WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### Students Who Consider Themselves Gang Members, by Race/Ethnicity: 2013-2015

### What It Is

On kidsdata.org, indicators of gang involvement come from the [California Healthy Kids Survey \(CHKS\)](#) and [California School Staff Survey \(CSSS\)](#); data are based on:

- Student reports of gang membership by grade level (7th, 9th, 11th, and non-traditional programs), gender, level of school connectedness, parent education level, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation
- School staff reports of the extent to which, at their school (elementary, middle, high, or non-traditional), student gang activity is a problem

### Why This Topic Is Important

While youth involved in gangs comprise only a small portion of the adolescent population, gang membership is a significant threat to youth health and well being in the U.S.. The majority of youth who join gangs do so between the ages of 11 and 15, and nearly one in five students in grades 6 to 12 report that their school has gangs. Gang members are responsible for the majority of serious violence committed by youth, and they are more likely to bring weapons to school than other youth. Youth involved in gangs also are more likely to drop out of school, abuse substances, engage in high risk sexual behavior, and experience employment instability.

The effects of gang activity extend beyond the individuals involved. For example, when youth are exposed to violence or feel unsafe at school, it can negatively affect their health and well being as well as their academic performance. Communities also can be affected in terms of reduced quality of life, increased crime, families moving out of neighborhoods, and economic costs, e.g., losses in property values, local businesses, and tax revenue.

### How Children Are Faring

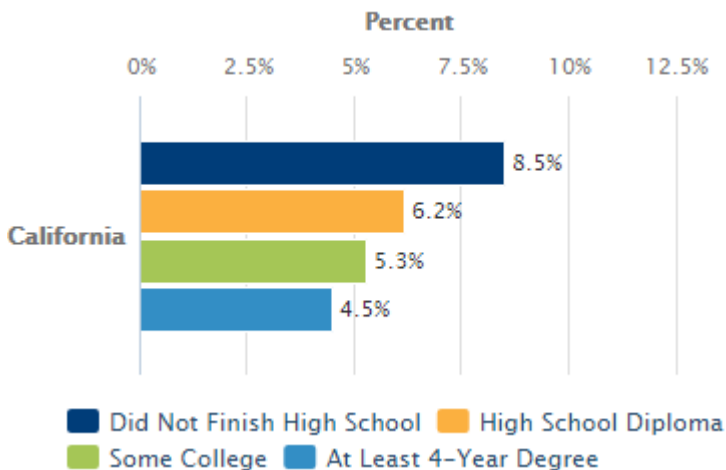
In 2013-2015, less than 6% of California 7th, 9th, and 11th graders considered themselves gang members, compared with 10% of students in non-traditional programs. Reports of gang membership also tended to be higher among male students, students with lower levels of school connectedness, and students whose parents had lower levels of education. Among racial/ethnic groups with data, the estimated percentage of African American/black and American Indian/Alaska Native youth who

California	Percent
Race/Ethnicity	Yes
African American/Black	8.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	8.0%
Asian	3.2%
Hispanic/Latino	6.7%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6.7%
White	3.7%
Multiracial	7.1%

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who consider themselves gang members, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 6.7% of Hispanic/Latino students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs in California considered themselves gang members).

**Data Source:** WestEd, *California Healthy Kids Survey*. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### Students Who Consider Themselves Gang Members, by Parent Education Level: 2013-2015



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who consider themselves gang members, by parent education level (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 8.5% of California students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs whose parents did not finish high school considered themselves gang members).

**Data Source:** WestEd, *California Healthy Kids Survey*. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

considered themselves gang members (8%) was more than twice the estimate for their Asian and white peers (3% and 4%, respectively). Similarly, more than one in ten gay, lesbian, and bisexual students (11%) considered themselves gang members in 2013-2015, compared with one in 20 straight students (5%).

School staff reports from the same period show that gang-related activity was a moderate or severe problem according to 3% of responses by elementary school staff, 11% of responses by middle school staff, 17% of responses by high school staff, and 34% of responses by non-traditional program staff statewide.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*  
<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/73/gang-involvement/summary>



**More Data:** [www.kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org)

**Sign Up for Data Updates:** [www.kidsdata.org/signup](http://www.kidsdata.org/signup)

**This PDF Was Generated On:** 3/24/2019