

# HAND-PICKING PEERS?

01

A child will gravitate towards friends with whom he feels he shares common interests or struggles.

02

When parents tell their child not to be friends with another child, it usually has the opposite effect.

Helping children develop healthy interests and behaviors will help them seek out friends who have those healthy behaviors in common. This is ultimately a better approach than attempting to pull them out of unhealthy relationships

*Operation Survival* was founded in 1988 in the hopes of stemming the inevitable tide of drugs and alcohol seeping into the community.

*Operation Survival* provides evidence-based programming in the local yeshivas and public schools, art programs, rap groups, positive alternatives, and crisis assistance to thousands of students each year.

The program also networks with other agencies to disseminate information to educators, clergy, social service and medical professionals, and community agencies.

*Operation Survival* is the first program to combat alcoholism and substance abuse in both the Jewish and African-American communities of Crown Heights, and has been credited with bringing the racially diverse community together in common cause.

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**PREVENTION** 101  
Help Save a Life.

**My child is hanging around a bad crowd – what can I do?**

A project of Operation Survival



**A**ll parents worry about the influence other children have on their own children.

When we have something in common with somebody, we think, “Oh, I like that person. She gets me. We have the same interests.”

**If a child gravitates toward friends who are interested in smoking, hanging out on the streets late at night, or other negative or risky behaviors, that means the child feels accepted by those people and may have some common interests or, in many cases, some common pain.**



Pulling children away from these negative friends will not work, because there is a common bond. Instead, we must help children develop healthy interests and behaviors. We must help them get to a better place emotionally and find more positive interests.

And all parents want to protect their children from negative influences. But when parents tell their child not to be friends with another child, it usually has the exact opposite effect.

Pointing out that another child is a bad influence creates resentment and anger. So what should an adult do when a child has started hanging out with individuals who are having a negative influence?



**First, we must consider what creates bonds between people.**



The healthier a child is, the more likely he or she will associate with healthy friends.

The more positive and healthy interests a child has, the more likely he or she will cultivate friends who have those same interests.



► Based on interviews with Mrs. Dena Gorkin, CPP, for Prevention 101 series.

**REMEMBER,** we can't usually pull children away from unhealthy friendships, but when we foster newer healthier mindsets, we can gently nudge our children toward healthier friends.