



**The Kids on the Block Program on
Alternatives to Gangs,
Violence & Prejudice**

**Featuring: (l to r) Joanne Spinoza, John Sanchez, Nam Nguyen,
Clare Sanchez and Jason Robinson (seated)**

The Kids on the Block Program on Alternatives to Violence, Gangs and Prejudice is designed to help children stay out of gangs and avoid the violent behavior that often precedes gang involvement. JOHN SANCHEZ, the newest Kids on the Block character, is a sixteen year-old who extricated himself from a neighborhood gang. Through flashbacks, visual demonstrations and lively, upbeat dialogue, John helps younger characters understand that camaraderie masked as friendship in a gang undermines individuality and personal choice. Developed in conjunction with The Assistance League of Downey, California and their sponsoring organizations, the program focuses on a number of critical issues; RESISTING GANG INVOLVEMENT, ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR, SELF-ESTEEM AND PREJUDICE. The five characters interact in five scripts to explain the consequences of violence, recognize better, more productive ways to solve problems, identify low-esteem which may lead to gang activity or gang involvement and address racial and ethnic stereotypes to achieve greater sensitivity and personal respect. The package consists of five large hand-crafted puppets, five scripts, props, classroom activities and resources to form a curriculum on alternatives to violence and gang membership.



**CALL OR WRITE TODAY
THE KIDS ON THE BLOCK, INC.**

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Script Summaries

Alarm Bell

John is overwhelmed by the sudden burst of business at the store. He is hassled and frustrated that his coworker, Joanne Spinoza, is late for work. When Joanne explains that she is late because she overslept as a result of last night's party with a gang member, John tells Jo his story about his involvement in a gang. **(John, Joanne, Nam, Jason)**

Food for Thought

When John and Joanne take a break from their work at the video store, they stop at the food court in the mall for lunch. As they wait for their pizza, Jo asks John about his gang involvement and how he made a successful break from the gang and a brand new start in life. John explains about "mentoring" and how one caring adult, a mentor, can make all the difference in a young person's life. When Joanne drops the pizza and berates herself for what she thinks is her stupidity John puts the "mentor" concept into action especially for Joanne. **(John, Joanne)**

Shake It Up

While Jason is returning his video, Nam runs into the store. He has just been beaten up and his money has been stolen. As John tends to Nam, Nam recounts the incident with the bullies. John suggests that Jason's and Nam's plan to gather a group of friends and go after the perpetrators would only escalate the violence. John then takes the time to explain about the consequences of violence and helps the boys see that there are better, more productive ways to solve their problems. **(John, Jason, Nam)**

Guessing Game

When Nam and then Jason return their videos to the store, Joanne plays a game with each of them. As she tries to figure out which video each boy rented "just by looking at you." Clare Sanchez overhears Jo and her stereotypical reasons for making her choices. After the boys have left, Clare talks with Joanne about racial and ethnic stereotypes, even those that seem like compliments. Through Clare's guidance, Joanne learns to treat others with greater sensitivity and personal respect. **(Joanne, Clare, Jason, Nam)**

True Colors

Clare joins Joanne for lunch at the food court. As Clare approaches, Joanne is studying the newspaper and she is lost in thought. As the girls begin to talk about prejudice, Clare compliment Joanne on her abandonment of the video guessing game. Joanne confesses that although she is no longer playing her prejudicial game, she is still fearful of people who are minorities. Clare explains that fear is normal, but the fear should be of particular *behaviors* not particular people. **(Joanne, Clare)**

NOTE: After each script the children in the audience are given the opportunity to make suggestions or ask their own questions directly to the puppet characters.

The Kids on the Block, created in 1977, features life-sized puppets who, through the magic of live puppet theatre, teach children and adults about disabilities, medical and educational differences, and social concerns. Through the hard work and dedication of many community-based groups, **The Kids on the Block** puppets are able to touch the lives of people all over the world.