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## USING HIP-HOP AS A LEARNING TOOL TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS

### 1. TOPIC, CHALLENGE OR QUESTION TO BE ADDRESSED

Increasing father engagement in their children's literacy through the hip-hop, art and poetry

### 2. KEY WORDS/GLOSSARY (with definitions)

- Hip-Hop Culture – is an artistic, musical, physical, and visual mode of communication that people use to express their experiences, beliefs, and emotions.
- Rap music (spoken or chanted rhyming lyrics performed in time to a beat) is one of the four key stylistic elements of hip-hop culture, in addition to deejaying/scratching, break dancing, and graffiti writing (word art).
  - Instructional/educational/inspirational rap—is more appropriate for young children and offers multiple opportunities for teaching and learning. Through music and language, movement, and the visual arts, rap and other elements of hip-hop culture can support preschoolers' learning and development in all domains.
- Rapping/emceeing—*Creating and speaking* raps, chants, or class poetry to a musical beat to share ideas and emotions. After reading aloud a book about being loving, such as *One Love*, by Cedella Marley, invite the children's reactions, then compose and perform a brief rap together.
- Deejaying—*Playing music* for an audience by using audio equipment (CD player, MP3 player, turntable). Instead of the usual circle and song time, try throwing a mini dance party, with a deejay hosting. Taking the role of class deejay, a child can select an educational hip-hop CD and operate the CD player for the class.
- Breaking—*Dancing* using creative, expressive, and complex movements. Children can take turns performing their favorite break dance moves for their classmates, including crisscrossing their legs or moving their arms across their midlines to the beat of a hip-hop tune. (Crossing the midline, a child spontaneously moves a hand or foot to the other side of the body—movement that connects the brain with the body—bilateral integration.)
- Word art—*Creating visual representations* of ideas, beliefs, and emotions using words, symbols, and colors. Children can use blank index cards, dry-erase boards, or pieces of paper to draw their names. Using paint on bulletin board paper, children can create a graffiti mural about their neighborhood, their family, or a topic the class has been studying. After talking with children individually about their contribution, the teacher can help them label their art, then display the mural on a wall.
- Beatboxing—*Creating beats and rhythm* using the mouth as an instrument.
- Incorporating social justice themes—*Raising social awareness* by composing and reciting rhythmic verse about an important social topic, like keeping the planet clean. Children and teacher can create brief lyrics based on children's thoughts and experiences, and the class can perform them together.

### 3. RELEVANT FACT/RESEARCH/STATISTICS (within current year)

Children who may be having difficulties in other parts of the school curriculum may find an expressive outlet through art. It's a way to uncover talent that may not be seen otherwise. Art is a means of communicating ideas, feelings, and solutions in a way other than verbally or written. Children share their experiences, ideas, and feelings in diverse ways. Hip-hop culture offers children many opportunities for self-expression while having fun and honing their communication skills. Elements of hip-hop culture can support children's learning and development in all domains: social and emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and physical.

### 4. REFERENCES

<http://corwin-connect.com/2016/12/using-art-way-reading-writing/>  
[https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/multiple\\_intelligences/the-importance-of-the-creative-arts-for-children-and-teens/#.XEXvGlxKg2w](https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/multiple_intelligences/the-importance-of-the-creative-arts-for-children-and-teens/#.XEXvGlxKg2w)  
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2016/teaching-and-learning-hip-hop-culture>  
<https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/classroom-resources/flocabulary-educational-hip-hop/>  
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/tupac-shakur-language-arts/>  
Maxine Nodel: Literacy Through the Arts for Families (Powerpoint)

### 5. TIPS/STRATEGIES/SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Introduce children to different hip-hop experiences or elements, such as rap, break dancing, and word art. Ask them how the music, beat, art, or dance makes them feel.
- Talk together about a particular classroom activity or homework assignment, such as the emergence of a butterfly from its chrysalis or a chick from its egg. Support children in sharing their ideas and feelings by offering social and emotional vocabulary (*excited, exhausted, surprising*) for them to use in a rap, a break dance, or word art to describe their response to the activity.
- Provide children with opportunities to discuss emotions. After listening to a rap, ask them how they think the author/rapper felt, or invite them to listen again and then create word art based on the rap.
- When you read to your children, be dramatic. Act out stories with props and costumes. Encourage them to create their own stories to act out for you.
- Save old Halloween costumes for dress-up fun. Add to the collection with clothing you no longer need: hats, scarves, purses, shoes, and items you can find inexpensively at garage sales.
- Put together an "art studio" in your home. Stock it with a variety of tools and materials: crayons, markers, finger paints, scissors, pastels, watercolors, brushes, glues, papers of various sizes and textures, intriguing found objects, leftovers from your own home improvement, boxes and containers of all sizes.
- Expand your musical repertoire at home and in the car. Venture into unknown musical territory so that you and the children can hear something out of your usual fare. This can be easily expanded by turning to different radio stations and by checking out cassettes and CDs from the public library — all for free!
- While the music is playing at home, dance together. Teach your children traditional dances you know or improvise with them. Body movement is fun and good exercise.
- Sing together. Teach the kids your favorite songs. Many of them allow for verses that can be made up, such as "Down by the Bay," which can have an endless and hilarious number of rhymes added to it.

- Look for arts programs after school, on weekends, and during vacations. Many community park and recreation departments offer these. Summer camps based on the arts are a good departure from the typical competitive sports camps.
- Create a scrapbook together. Put photos, memorabilia, drawings, and captions together creatively. In doing so, you will not only have a shared experience but a memory that will last for many years (if you use acid-free paper).
- Have children create and recite simple rhymes or raps about topics they are studying. Ask open-ended questions about the poems or raps.
- Encourage children to ask each other questions about their raps, word art, or break dance moves. They will gain new perspectives about their classmates and friends.
- Provide opportunities for children to compare and contrast their hip-hop projects. Children learn how their ideas are similar and different while also appreciating their own work and the work of others.
- Record children rapping. Combine the “tracks” to create a classroom or family rap album. Create accompanying lyric booklets for children and families, so they can follow along or perform them at home.
- Create raps for each letter of the alphabet: “C is for cat / She sleeps on the hat.” Encourage children to explore the rhymes and rhythms in raps: “Sat, bat, hat, cat, I like to dance on my mat.”
- Find or create a simple poem—or use a poem the children are already familiar with—and read it aloud. Pronounce words slowly and clearly to allow the children to feel the words and sounds. Invite children to recite the poem to the rhythm of different beats.

## **6. RESOURCES**

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/adventures-in-learning/category/art-culture/>  
<http://guides.mysapl.org/c.php?g=485244&p=3317518>  
<https://bowarts.org/education/early-years-and-primary/creative-literacy>