

THE KEEP DREAMING TOOLKIT



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THANK YOU

To our fearless and creative parent and teacher design team,

Thank you!

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The Keep Dreaming Toolkit is the product of your collaborative wisdom and commitment. You dedicated your time and genius to bring forth a vision of what was possible for Black children. What you have envisioned is a continuation of the work of those who have come before us to create spaces where our children's Black Genius can thrive and serve as a foundation for the world of our choosing.

Thank You,



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This document is a collaborative effort. It reflects the wisdom of Black parents and the reflection of Black teachers. It can be used to guide your home school, in-class, whole group, or individual practice. It is available both digitally and can be printed as a reference. We encourage anyone who uses this to share their journey with us @Village of Wisdom on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

WHY THIS? WHY NOW?

"For a people to be truly independent, they must have an independent educational system. If they are dependent on another people's educational system, they are dependent on another people's information. No other people feeds into other people that kind of information that gives that people the ability to dominate them. Therefore I have often said, education has but one honorable purpose, one alone, everything else is a waste of time: the role of education is to train the student to be a proper handler of power."

Dr. John Henrik Clarke

Daily, Black children and families navigate the harsh and oppressive realities of systems that were not designed by them or for them. The physical, emotional, and psychic costs of supremacist ideologies impact the academic self concept of Black children as learners. As this country comes to a racial reckoning unlike any other in history, Black parents and families strive to create spaces and messages that affirm the racial identity and self-worth of their children.

This resource emerged from COVID-19 pandemic and Black activism of 2020 that revealed the harsh realities of Black children and families striving to navigate systems of oppression. The goal was simple: create a space to mine and elevate the collective wisdom of Black parents to create culturally and racially affirming environments for their children. Leverage the cultural wisdom of Black parents to affirm their children's Blackness as an antidote to a world that actively depletes their self-worth through systemic racism and interpersonal racial discrimination.

We knew Black parents had a lot of wisdom to share; we just needed to create a space for them to share insights with and learn from each other. We also provided content to encourage conversation between parents that would amplify racial pride and deepen perspectives on racism and how to undermine it. Leveraging an approach at the intersection of human-centered design and the belief that Black parents are experts.

The time is now.



THE BLACK GENIUS FRAMEWORK



The Black Genius Framework is a liberatory approach to whole learner development. Village of Wisdom developed The Black Genius Framework in partnership with Black parents as a model for parents and educators to create culturally affirming learning environments that allow young people to explore, thrive, and self-actualize. The Black Genius Framework comprises six elements: [1] Interest Awareness, [2] Can-Do Attitude, [3] Multicultural Navigation, [4] Racial Identity/Pride, [5] Selective Trust, and [6] Social Justice.

Interest Awareness - The practice of using a learner's interests to engage them in learning activities. This includes allowing the learner to embrace significant challenges and be motivated to persist in learning for long periods of time.

Can-Do Attitude - The practice of creating learning environments that reward learners who extend themselves beyond what they know. This includes providing feedback and creating spaces for learners to fail.

Multicultural Navigation - The practice of creating learning environments that explore various cultures in meaningful ways related to concepts the learner is being asked to master. This includes preparing learners for an increasingly globalized world.

Racial Identity/Pride - The practice of using a Black learner's connection to their race and culture to increase the relevance of a learning task. The purpose of this practice is to counteract the negative impact of white supremacist and dominant thinking on the academic self-concept of Black learners.

Selective Trust - The practice of identifying and using actions that build learner trust in the instructor. The purpose of this practice is to increase learner safety and desire to participate in learning activities that require and would benefit from love and creativity.

Social Justice - The practice of creating learning environments that challenge learners to analyze social injustices, especially those that are relevant to learners' communities. The purpose of this practice is to encourage learners to devise strategies that either dismantle systems of oppression or create new systems of freedom and justice.

HOW DO I USE THIS TOOLKIT?

Each strategy includes an overview of the strategy, the Black Genius element it most relates to, and an action you might take in your home. Under the action section, you will find a quick action guide and a note on the age range and number of learners that the action would be most effective with. Some actions include different levels and suggestions, feel free to use what works for you.

Here are a few suggestions to support how you move through The Keep Dreaming Toolkit:

- *All the underlined **yellow text** tells you that you can move around the toolkit or it will link you to other resources.*
- *Start with **Strategy 1: Woosah, Chile** before moving to another strategy. It is designed to help all relieve a little stress!*
- *You will notice that some strategies have more than one action and just like you, Village of Wisdom is learning about what works and what does not. Feel free to try one or all of the strategies listed.*
- *Use the **reflection tool** to capture your thoughts on what went well with each strategy and what could be changed or improved. Each strategy is unique and meant to be a jumping off point to a deeper understanding of and relationship with your learner. This is a learning experience for you as well!*
- *Check out other Black Genius Protection tools [here](#).*

STRATEGIES IN THE TOOLKIT

The Keep Dreaming Toolkit includes five strategies that will help parents create a learning environment that is affirming to Black learners:



Just Move (Somatic Learning) involves learners using their body and nature to engage learning.



Woosah, Chile (Mindfulness) recognizes that each learner may bring stress and responsibilities into the learning space and leverages self awareness to help them 'de-clutter' their minds.



Talk to Me (Dialogic Interrogation) involves learners creating a space for learning through curiosity, safe spaces, and expression.



Our Story (Exploding Boundaries) encourages learners to create their own self definition without references to stereotypes through expression and creativity.



You Matter (Affirming Identities) recognizes that learners are the experts of their own experiences and encourages learner autonomy.

Strategy 1: Woosah, Chile (Mindfulness)



*Breathe.
And breathe again.*

Overview: This approach encourages learners to practice awareness and declutter their minds through the use of mindfulness and gratitude.

Black Genius Element: Interest Awareness

Action: LOFI Music

START HERE: Consider the vibe or mood that will facilitate calmness and learning and create a playlist of inspirational and/or soothing music. Play music for learners at the beginning of the day and during down times around the home.

Grade: k - 12

Audience: 1+ learners

LEVEL 2: Ask learners to envision the mood or vibe from the music and encourage and soothe them. Work with learners to create a playlist of their own LOFI music.

Grade: k - 12

Audience: 1+ students

You can find LOFI playlists on iTUNES, Spotify, and YouTube
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Strategy 2: Just Move (Somatic Learning)

Everything you need is inside of you and around you.

Overview: This approach encourages learners to explore a full sensory experience and body autonomy through the use of the body and nature. This strategy recognizes that learners are not empty wells to be filled and confined in seats but as full humans that make meaning of the world through a multiplicity of ways, e.g. through the hands, through the feet, through the heart, through the mind.

Black Genius Element: Interest Awareness

ACTION: Making Jazz

START HERE: Create a playlist of music and or Instagram of visual art. Host a listening or viewing session with learners and encourage them to engage with the music or art with all of their senses, e.g. eyes, ears, nose, hands, feet. Ask the learner to make connections to music or art that they know and enjoy.

Jazz is an improvisational art form. The purpose of “making jazz” is to build learners' interest and collaboration with new learning.

Grade: k - 12

Audience: 1+ students

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Strategy 3: Talk to Me (Dialogic Interrogation)



Overview: This approach creates space for learners to define themselves for themselves through the use of questions and thoughtful conversation with peers and adults.

Black Genius Element: Selective Trust

Action: Sacred Spaces/Circles

START HERE: Create a sacred circle or roundtable for learners. Learners can choose to engage with one another in a number of ways, including collective expression, conflict resolution, check-in's, collective alignment, feedback, relating with one another in a positive way, peer-to-peer accountability, milestone reports, and summarizing or concluding the day.

Many families already “circle up” when gathering at the dinner table to pray and eat, for meetings at the corporate workplace, or when sports teams huddle. These circles create an opportunity for learners to fully engage in the meaning making of their day.

Grade: k - 12

Audience: 2+ students

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WHEN CREATING A CIRCLE WITH LEARNERS, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Circle up daily and consistently
- Encourage students to express themselves
- Positively reinforce usually shy or hesitant learners and reinforce those who speak up and express themselves
- Use learner ideas to build a multifaceted curriculum based on what learners show interest in
- Encourage learners to share what they enjoyed about a learning experience when giving feedback and ask them to express themselves openly



Strategy 4: Our Story (Exploding Boundaries)



And nothing, no challenge, no distance, no single moment, can hold you back.

Overview: This approach encourages parents and educators to leverage creative expression in the learning process as a means to resist stereotypical definitions of Blackness or the Black experience. This approach envisions learners experiencing the full intersectional and dynamic lived experience of Black people and understanding that Black stories include triumph, victory, and hope.

Black Genius Element: Racial Identity

Action: Multilayered Our Story (History) Making

START HERE: Work with learners to create a vision of the future. Ask learners to consider the information or types of books they want in a library that would help to facilitate that vision of the future. Work with learners to create a library that reflects their experiences, desires, identity, and vision of the future.

Grade: k - 12

Audience: 1+ learners

LEVEL 2: Work with learners to choose a historical event of interest. Ask learners to review this historical event(s) from a Black lens (e.g. what was the experience of Reconstruction for Black communities?). Work with learners to consider how this historical event(s) impacted and shaped the lives of Black people in that time period.

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Black Genius Element: Racial Identity

Action: Multilayered Our Story (History) Making

LEVEL 3: Work with learners to choose a historical event of interest. Ask learners to make connections to the historical event(s) and how that event(s) shaped our present experiences. Using that analysis, ask learners to make predictions for what the events of the past, in context with the present, mean to the future of our communities (e.g. How did the experiences of Reconstruction in Black communities impact the Black communities' present economic experience and what lessons can we consider for the future?)

Grade: 6 - 12

Audience: 1+ learners

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Strategy 5: You Matter (Affirming Identities)

And if you ever forget, we will be right here to remind you.



Overview: This approach positions learners as the experts in their own experiences and learning in order to shape the learner as an individual.

Black Genius Element: Can-Do-Attitude

Action: Subject Matter Expert

START HERE: Encourage learners to choose a topic that they would like to learn more and/or help teach about. Help learners to dive into the subject through research, activities, experiments, activities, and/or storymaking. Encourage learners to share what they have discovered through a presentation or assisting in teaching the parent/instructor or peers.

Grade: k - 12

Audience: 1+ learners

LEVEL 2: Instead of moving to a new task, provide learners who struggle with an opportunity to correct themselves, relearn and correct mistakes. Engage learners in a dialogue around the task or topic until they demonstrate mastery.

Provide learners a space to receive positive feedback on their assignments or different ways of engaging the topic so that learners can correct their own work and engage in a dialogue/reflection about what they've learned through the process.

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REFLECTION

When you try any of these strategies at-home or in other learning environments, think about the following:

How would I rate this strategy?

- 1 (not working for me and my child/children)
- 2 (working a little bit for me and my child/children)
- 3 (not sure if it is working)
- 4 (it is working for me and my child/children)
- 5 (it is really working for me and my child/children)

How often was I able to use this strategy?

- 1 (only once)
- 2 (maybe two times)
- 3 (about three times)
- 4 (more than three times)

What did I like about this strategy?

What did I struggle with? How can those around me or Village of Wisdom support me in working through this struggle?

How might I improve it or change it?

Remember: Village of Wisdom is on a mission to close the academic opportunity gap by protecting the intellectual curiosity and positive racial self-concept of Black children through the love and wisdom of their families and communities. *WE are on this journey with you.* We develop tools and resources that help parents, teachers, and students create ideal learning environments for Black learners, as well as support family organizing and advocacy entities working to eliminate racial injustice in schools. Visit us to learn more: <https://www.villageofwisdom.org/>

