

## Resources for Coaches for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People Of Color) participants

- **Tights and Shoes**

Coaches should be aware that BIPOC participants have unique needs when it comes to attire, namely tights and shoes. Here are some online resources to consider:

- Weissman's (<http://www.weissmans.com>) has assorted colours of tights and at this time, they carry only one shade of a darker jazz shoe. It is possible that they may expand this in the future. Just be mindful that shade of tights matches the shoe.
- Dance Fashions Superstore (<https://www.dancefashionssuperstore.com/>) is another resource that coaches could check out for tights.
- Capezio (<http://www.capezio.com/>) carries many shades of tights for BIPOC athletes.
- Blendz ([www.blendzapparel.com](http://www.blendzapparel.com)) is a US-based company that sells tights and shoes TO MATCH for BIPOC dancers. This may also be a great option to consider.

**\*Note:** If your local dance store does not carry shades for BIPOC students, please consider advocating for the store to carry items or special order items in for students. It is possible as well for stores to keep sample colors so that students can choose what might best suit their skin tone. As a club coach, you may also want to order color samples so that the shade can be matched more easily to the student's complexion and this will save unnecessary costs since these items are usually non-refundable.

- **Costumes**

- Show Off Costumes (<http://www.showoffinc.com>) and Kenerly Kreations (<http://www.kenerlykreationsinc.com>) carry a darker mesh to insert into costumes.
- If you would like to do a DIY project, you can always dye mesh with tea bags. Everyone's skin tone is different so it may take some time and experimentation to get to the right shade.

- **Hair**

- BIPOC participants have a variety of hair textures. Because of this, it is difficult for some participants to change hairstyles during competition. Braided hairstyles work very well (i.e., 2 braids pinned underneath; corn row style into a bun, etc.). Some athletes may choose to wear a protective style (i.e., micro-braids or a weave) during competition season to manipulate hair into some styles. Here is a site to understand more about Black hair and hair types: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afro-textured\\_hair](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afro-textured_hair)
- Some athletes may choose to wear a head wrap for warm up on competition day to keep their hair laying flat.
- Inform BIPOC parents early in the season about what you are thinking in terms of hair styles for competition, particularly for group routines. Some parents will

need to plan as last minute changes may cause stress. Work with parents to determine what might work best for the athlete and what is possible.

- **Advertisement**
  - When creating advertising materials for your clubs, consider showing a diversity of skin colours on your materials. Representation matters and it is important that BIPOC children and youth see themselves in ads to know that baton is for them as well.
  - Take time to reach out to BIPOC communities to invite participation. This might help to increase the diversity in our sport.
  - If you have a physical space when you are teaching dance and baton, consider including some pictures of BIPOC dancers. This will help create a safe space for BIPOC dancers as they will see themselves represented in the dance space.
  
- **Resources**
  - International Association of Blacks in Dance (<https://www.iabdassociation.org>) is a great resource to find information and other resources (i.e., books, black dance companies, black dancewear) that you may want to discover.
  - Here is a simple article but speaks to more ways to support BIPOC students in your club or studio: <https://www.dance-teacher.com/dance-teacher-support-black-students-2646155926.html?rebellitem=2#rebellitem2>