

New workouts

BY RHONDA OWEN

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

School House Hop, Bayview Entertainment/Widowmaker, 45 minutes, DVD, \$19.99. Available at Amazon.com, www.hiphop4kids.net and other retailers.

The best way to get children interested in exercising, it seems, would be to make it Fun! — and flexible enough for youngsters to put their spin on the action.

That obviously makes sense to the producers of *Hip Hop for Kids*, children's dance videos that are all about fun, fitness, creativity and individuality. Put all that together with a hip professional dancer/instructor and you've got the makings of much fitness frivolity. It definitely beats calisthenics or running laps.

The 45-minute video targets youngsters ages 5-14, but the hip-hop dance steps are simple enough even for adults, so it wouldn't be inconceivable to find parents dancing to *School House Hop*.

Instructor Roger G. leads his posse of young dancers (ages 5-14, the same as the target audience) in six routines: Stand-up Warm-up; The Snap; Walk It Out; The Motorcycle; Chicken Noodle Soup; and School House Hop Dance Video.

The warm-up includes basic workout moves such as sidesteps and shoulder rolls but, delightfully, they're performed with a great deal of bounce, attitude and laughter.

Roger G. inspires with his enthusiasm, hip-hop sensibility and cool demeanor. Cheerful and upbeat, he knows dance and also is able to explain and demonstrate moves without breaking the flow of the video.

After warming up, dancers move into The Snap, which, as



you'd surmise, includes a lot of finger-snapping. You move side to side, two steps to the right, then two to the left, all with a little lean of the body and a lot of snaps of the fingers.

The Motorcycle proves to be more complex than The Snap, but still a snap for youngsters. Step to the side, extend your arms forward and flick the wrists as if revving a motorcycle. Switch sides, then add a little bounce for some "flava, a little salt and peppa," Roger G. says.

Another step, Walk It Out, tweaks the well-known twist, with dancers up on their toes and walking with a twisting motion. This and other steps come together for a complete dance in a "combo" segment of the video. Throughout, however, children are encouraged to freestyle, or throw in their own moves.

In the bonus section, viewers can see Roger G.'s dancers performing individually and creating routines. Also offered are nutrition tips, such as drink milk and eat vegetables, and a segment on yoga-type stretches.

School House Hop rocks with wholesome, but hip, fun.