SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Special Needs

2014-15 School Year Special Edition

SPIN is co-sponsored by the Disability & Communication Access Board and the Department of Education. Services include a phone line for information referral and support, a quarterly newsletter, an annual conference and community workshops. SPIN is guided by an Advisory Committee made up of parents, teachers and people with disabilities.

SPIN

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Assistive Technology: Enabling Students to Succeed

In 2009 public school teachers across the country were surveyed on how they used technology to help students learn. 97% of teachers reported that they had one or more computers in the classroom and that the classrooms were wired for Internet access. Students were using the computers and other technology to write reports, take tests, and research topics.

Yet despite the growing availability of technology for learning, many students with disabilities have not been able to have reliable access to or benefit from this classroom technology. These students may require an individualized evaluation that looks at the need for *assistive technology devices or services*.

What is Assistive Technology?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines *assistive technology* (A.T.) as any item, piece of equipment or device that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability.

Assistive technology services are defined as any service that helps the student select, acquire or use an assistive technology device. These services may include training in the use of the device for the student, his family and his teachers.

What Does IDEA Require?

IDEA requires schools to make available assistive technology devices or services, or both, to a student with a disability **IF** required as a part of the student's special education, related services, or supplementary aids and services. A.T. is considered a supplementary aid, if it allows the student to remain in the general education classroom.

The determination of whether or not a student requires A.T. is made by the IEP team once present levels of performance are determined and appropriate supports and services are discussed. The team also decides if any assistive technology device purchased by the school can also be used at home. This may include providing an A.T. device or software needed to complete homework or to address a skill required at school, at home and in the community--like communication.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Looking at the Range of A.T. Available

Assistive technology devices and software often allow a student with a disability to perform a task that he or she couldn't otherwise do. The range of A.T. goes from "low tech" (like pencil grips or magnifying glasses) to "high tech" (like iPads and environmental control units). Some of the categories of A.T. include the following:

Aids for Daily Living:
Helps studeents with disabilities with self-help care like eating, bathing, and dressing. Examples are button fasteners and adapted spoons and forks.

Alternative Access/Input Device:
Alternative ways to control a computer. Examples are trackballs, joysticks, and sip-and-puff systems. (See also Switches).

Augmentative Communication System:
Increases or improves communication for students with receptive (taking in communication) or expressive (producing communication) language disabilities.

Braille Embossers and Translators:
Converts text from a computer into Braille (raised dots on a page) for a student who has no or low vision.

Captioning:
Creates a text message of the audio portion of video and television and displays it on the screen.

FM Systems:
Wireless assistive listening/hearing devices that enhance hearing over distance and in noisy environments.

Mobility and Transportation Aids:
Helps students with physical disabilities move within their environment. Examples include walkers, lifts, wheelchairs, adapted bikes, ramps and car seats.

Screen Reader:
A software program that uses synthesized speech to read text out loud.

Switches and Switch Software:
Provides input into a computer or other device when it is not possible to use a more direct method like a keyboard or mouse.

Talking Word Processors:
Writing software programs that provide audio feedback as the student writes.

Voice Recognition:
Allows the student to speak to the computer to input data or control computer functions.

Word Prediction Programs:
Allows the student to select a desired word from an on-screen list located in the prediction window, thereby saving time for students who are slow typists.

A.T. Tips for Parents

The following tips are intended to help you be an active team member in finding and using the right assistive technology for your child.

1. Think about your child's **specific needs and learning challenges**. Where does your child struggle to keep up with his or her peers?

2. Consider your child's **strengths**. Ideally, assistive technology will use your child's strengths to help compensate for his or her disability.

3. **Include your child** in selecting the right technology to address his or her needs. Be sure to reflect his or her preferences. A student might avoid using a device, if it sets him apart from peers or looks "nerdy."

4. **Consider low tech (and low cost) options,** too. These might include highlighters, calculators, and color coding.

5. **Keep your eyes and ears open for new technologies.** There are new "apps" or applications for smart phones and tablets coming out all the time. Spend some time reading up on how to evaluate their use for your child.

6. If the IEP team selects a technology for your child that you are not familiar with, **ask for information and training on how to support its use at home**.

7. Remember that the type of A.T. your child needs may change over time, so **ask for an annual asssessment of its usefulness** in addressing your child's needs.

8. **Consider visiting an AT Access Center** for advice, opportunities to try out devices and software and training (see ATRC below).

Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii

200 North Vineyard Boulevard, Suite 430
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: 808-532-7110 or 1-800-645-3007
Website: http://www.atrc.org/

A.T. Websites/Resources

http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Special%20Education/assistivetechnology.pdf
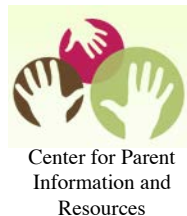
The Hawaii Department of Education's A.T. Guidelines

http://www.fctd.info/assets/assets/21/AT_solutions-may2012.pdf?1338562550

A.T. solutions for different disabilities

http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/at/

A nice overview of A.T. in the form of training modules with videos and text

http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/considering-AT/

A checklist for considering A.T. in the IEP process.

Center for Parent Information and Resources

Apps for Phones & Tablets

For students with Learning Disabilities:
http://ncld.org/students-disabilities/assistive-technology-education/apps-students-ld-organization-study

http://teacherswithapps.com/50-best-ipad-apps-for-reading-disabilities/

For students with Autism Spectrum Disorders:
http://sixestate.com/apps-help-children-with-developmental-disabilities/

For students with Intellectual Disabilities:
http://appcrawlr.com/ios-apps/best-apps-intellectual-disabilities

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

2014

CARE Hawaii presents:

8/6   Co-Occurring Diagnoses

8/12   Evaluation of ABA

9/16   Data Collection
2201 Waimano Home Road, Oahu

TBA   Positive Supports for Challenging Behaviors
Kauai
Call Veronica at 791-6082 or email to
veronica.mendoza@carehawaii.com.

Hilopa'a Family to Family Health Information Center is hosting the following webinars:

**8/14   Let's Talk Story: Transitioning to Adult
Health Care**

9/18   Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

**10/1   Twist & Shout: Physical Activity, Nutrition,
Obesity & Growth**

Go to http://www.hilopaa.org/Pages/Webinars.aspx for links and for additional webinar topics.

7th Annual Traveling Mini-Conference 2014
Presented by the Learning Disabilities
Association of Hawaii
8/22   Molokai
8/29   Lanai
9/6   Kauai
9/12   Hilo
9/13   North Kohala
9/19   Maui
9/20   Oahu
For locations and details, contact LDAH at
536-9684 or toll-free (800)533-9684.

9/11   Kauai Legislative Forum
Kauai Convention Hall
4:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Contact El Doi at 274-3484 or email
kauaiddc@yahoo.com.

**10/5   21st Annual Children
and Youth Day**
State Capitol Grounds
Go to www.HawaiiCYD.
org for more information.

10/11   Hawaii Buddy Walk
Hosted by Down Syndrome Ohana (DSOH)
Kakaako Makai Park
For details, call DSOH at 366-6706.

**10/10-   2014 Annual Leadership and Hawaii Early
11   Childhood Conference "2014 Equity for
Every Child"**
Sponsored by the Hawaii Association for
the Education of Young Children
Hawaii Convention Center
Call 942-4708 or email to haeyc@hawaiiaeyc.
org.

10/18   Footsteps to Transition FaiR 2014
Hosted by DOE Central District
Mililani High School
Call Hilopa'a at 791-3467 or register
at http://hilopaa.wufoo.com/forms/
central-footsteps-2014-registration/.

**10/31   Future Horizons Autism Conference
with Dr. Tony Atwood**
7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Venue to be announced
Go to http://fhautism.com/attend-a-conference/
honolulu-hawaii-october-31/

2015

**5/2   29th Annual SPIN Conference
"OPERATION SPIN"**
Limited Parent Airfare Scholarships
Call SPIN for more info.

**5/18-   31st Annual Pacific Rim
19   Conference**
Hawaii Convention Center
Check out www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/ or email to
prinfo@hawaii.edu.