



SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Special Needs

SPECIAL
PARENT
INFORMATION
NETWORK

December 2014 Volume XXXI, No. 2

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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A PLAN TO IMPROVE READING SKILLS

In our last issue we outlined the **State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)** process—a wide-ranging plan to improve academic performance for Hawaii students with disabilities. Here's a progress report:

- ✓ A focus on reading improvement has been selected, and
- ✓ A group of over 100 stakeholders met on December 12th to take a long look at data and factors that could be contributing to low reading performance.

The Office of Special Education who monitors how well states are providing services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) had given states a choice of four areas on which to focus their attention and resources:

- ★ Reading performance,
- ★ Math performance,
- ★ Graduation rates, and
- ★ Post School Outcomes.



Hawaii chose to concentrate on reading for a number of reasons. Only 24% of students with disabilities were proficient in reading on their statewide assessment last year compared to 69% of all students combined. Students with limited English (ELL) and students who receive free or reduced lunch (DIS) also performed 2-3 times better than special education students (SPED).

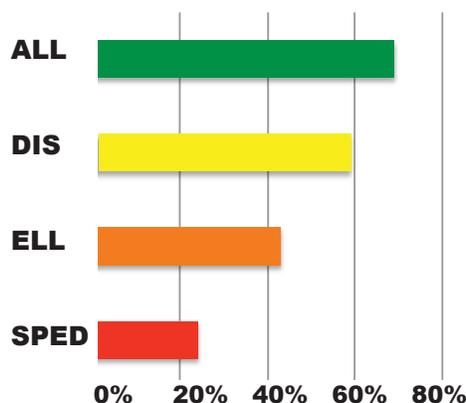
Reading is a critical skill that all students need to be successful.

Increased reading ability leads to higher graduation rates, lower dropout rates, better jobs upon graduation, and a greater likelihood of going to college.

When the stakeholder group met in December, they also identified weaknesses in the delivery of services that, if improved, would likely have a positive impact on reading (for example, teacher training and the use of data to target instruction).

Follow the progress of the SSIP through our SPIN Newsletter and e-Blasts.

Reading Performance SY 2013-14



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Meet Amanda Kaahanui

SPIN's New Program Specialist



Aloha!

My name is Amanda Kaahanui and I am the new Program Specialist for SPIN. I was introduced to the world of SPIN 10 years ago when my son, Ikaika, was born with multiple health complications. My husband, Solo, and I had to navigate through doctor consults, tests, surgeries and a diagnosis we've never had experience with. After four months in the hospital, our beautiful boy came home with more than balloons and flowers—he came home with a trach tube, g-tube and two tiny hearing aids, plus medical equipment, Medicaid, home nursing and early intervention services.

That was the beginning of our amazing parenting journey. Now Ikaika has had his trach removed, is working hard to eat and drink his way out of his g-tube, a 5th grader at Aikahi Elementary and learning to ride his two-wheel bike. We are half way thru our "first 20" years of being parents to an amazing and special kid, and can't wait to see what comes next!

I have the heart and soul of an educator,

spending the last 16 years in the Education Department at the Honolulu Zoo. To me, education and parent support are two peas in a pod, as both share information, talking-story to learn new ideas and make connections to our community. I have been a part of the Hands and Voices organization of unbiased parent-to-parent support for Deaf and Hard of Hearing kids.

Their motto is "What works for your child is what makes the choice right," and I wholeheartedly embrace that philosophy. What worked for me may not work for you, but we can still support each other's goals of the best possible outcomes for our children. I worked with a fantastic group of parents and professionals to start our own Chapter of Hands and Voices here in Hawaii, where I am currently the Board President. Besides being a parent to Ikaika, helping other families in their journey is the most worthwhile and important thing I have done.

I'm excited to be a part of the SPIN family, as they have been a part of our ohana for the past 10 years! I've made calls and sent emails to SPIN, asking for information and resources, connecting families with each other and attending a few of their outstanding conferences. I'm looking forward to being that connection for families looking for help, support and, sometimes, just someone to talk to.

SPIN is about parents helping parents, and its value and contribution to our community is priceless. So next time you need information on your upcoming IEP, need to know who to call for services or support or just need to chat before your next meeting with the school principal, I hope you'll give us a call here at SPIN, and I'll have the opportunity to pay forward the aloha and warm embrace that SPIN has given me.



New Federal Guidelines on Bullying of Students with Disabilities



As part of National Bullying Awareness Month, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights issued a letter to all public schools on October 21, 2014. It points out that students with disabilities are still being

bullied in schools across the nation and reminds school principals and staff that they are required to address and prevent discrimination based on a student's race, color, national origin, sex or disability. The letter also clearly spells out that *regardless of whether the student is being bullied based on his or her disability*, schools must remedy the effects of bullying on the services that the student with a disability receives (special education or other disability-related services), to ensure the student continues to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

"Basic decency and respect demand that our schools ensure that all their students learn in a safe environment."

-- Catherine Lhamon, Asst. Secretary, OCR

Bullying can be considered *disability harassment* if it is based on the student's disability and includes:

- verbal abuse, such as name-calling,
- physical abuse (hitting, shoving, etc.),
- threats of harm,
- other behavior that is harmful or humiliating.



Fortunately there are protections against disability harassment in both Section 504 of the Rehab Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A school can be found in violation of these laws when: (1) a student

is bullied based on a disability; (2) the bullying is sufficiently serious to create a hostile environment; (3) school officials know or should know about the bullying; and (4) the school does not respond appropriately. An important part of any disability harassment investigation is finding out whether the school knew or should have known about adverse changes in the student's academic performance or behavior indicating that the student may not be receiving a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

Bullying Can Make it Hard to Learn

Bullying affects a student's ability to learn. There have been a number of research studies that have confirmed the harmful effects of bullying on a student's education such as:

- ◆ being unable to concentrate,
- ◆ losing interest in school subjects and activities,
- ◆ avoiding school/being absent more often
- ◆ getting poor grades, and
- ◆ dropping out of school.

Resources on Bullying

For a copy of the letter that is cited in this article go to <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-bullying-201410.pdf>. OCR also developed a fact sheet for parents that advises them to ask to meet with the IEP or 504 team, the principal, or the district's Section 504 or Title II (ADA) Coordinator, if they believe their child is being bullied. It suggests using the school's disability grievance procedures to have the school address the parent's concerns.

Here are some links to OCR's website and other resources:



Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education

www.ed.gov/ocr

Here you'll find more about federal civil rights laws or how to file a complaint. Toll-free phone number is 800-421-3481.



Stop Bullying

www.stopbullying.gov

This is a federal website that provides helpful information and resources on bullying prevention and remedies.



www.pacer.org/bullying/

This center offers videos, stories and lots of resource materials for families and teachers.



A New Year Brings New Possibilities

It's that time again – time to think about ways to improve health, reduce stress and try something new! As you're making your 2015 resolutions list, consider becoming more active and involved in your child's education at the school, community or state level. Below are a few suggestions to get you thinking about ways to connect and work towards positive change.



The Learning Disability Association of Hawaii (LDAH) sponsors workshops & classes throughout the year. LDAH, as Hawaii's Parent Training and Information Center, has 27 workshops available for parents, educators, professionals and students including:

- ⇒ Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) & Chapter 60
- ⇒ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974
- ⇒ Rules Regarding Discipline (Chapter 19)
- ⇒ Developing My Child's IEP
- ⇒ Small Group Sessions

For more information and to sign up, contact them at 808-536-9684 or www.ldahawaii.org.



Attend your local **Community Children's Council (CCC)** to share input and improvement ideas. There are 17 council meeting around the state. CCC's are led by parent and professional co-chairs

and include representation from public and private child-serving agencies and other community members such as recreational services, businesses, churches and others. Visit the DOE's website-- <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ParentsAndStudents/SupportForParents/Pages/CCC.aspx>--for locations and contact information or call the CCC Office at 808-586-5369.



The **Hawaii State Legislature** will be starting up in January

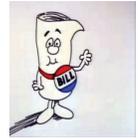
and now is the perfect time to plan for the 2015 session. There are a couple of great resources to learn more about the lawmaking process.

First, check out the Hawaii Public Access Room website at www.lrbhawaii.org to find out about workshops around the state. These meetings are designed to explain the State lawmaking process and demonstrate ways that you can speak out at the Legislature without ever having to leave your home island. All are welcome. No registration or prior experience is required.

Then visit the official Hawaii State Legislature page at www.capitol.hawaii.gov to:

- ✓ Find out who your State Representatives and Senators are,
- ✓ Discover what bills are going to be seen this year and their status,

- ✓ Submit testimony (by email, mail or in person on a topic that matters to you.



Issues that SPIN is watching for this Legislative session include:

- \$ Budgets for the Department of Education and the Department of Health
- \$ Health insurance coverage for autism services, hearing aids and orthodontics (for children with orofacial disabilities like cleft lip and palate)



Are you a Facebook regular? Consider checking out our new **SPIN Facebook page**. Just go to www.facebook.com, log in and type Special Parent Information Network in the search page. We try to post something new that's informative or inspiring almost every day. If you like the postings, "like us" please.



Make a date to attend the **2015 SPIN Conference** on May 2nd. See the program on Page 7 and psych yourself up for a fun and informative day,



Need Help Making Some Resolutions for 2015?



General Resolutions that are good for all parents:

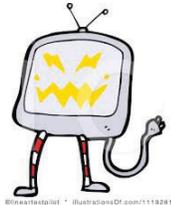
1. **Grow Your Confidence:** Have a little more faith in your parenting and don't worry too much about what other people think of your kids or your parenting. Take a step back and look at the amazing, talented, sweet child you have and know they didn't get that way all by themselves.



2. **Don't Say "Don't":** Reduce how often you use the word "don't". Say "Please be kind to your brother" instead of "Don't talk to him that way."

3. **Make New Years Resolutions as a Family:** Include things the whole family can do like taking a monthly hike or playing board games twice a month. Limit the number, keep it meaningful and post them where everyone can see it.

4. **Unplug From the Grid:** Once a month, turn off the TV, phones, computers, tablets & even the lights. Have a picnic in the living room, play games, use the camp lanterns and enjoy some family bonding time.



5. **Keiki Resolutions:** Talk with you keiki about a few things that they want to continue to do (I will continue to brush my teeth every night before bed) and a few things they would like to change to feel better about themselves. (I'll add flossing to my bedtime routine).

6. **Resolve to Read More:** Make reading goals and have rewards for reaching them. (Get to choose dinner or visit a museum) Visit your local library, there are often fun keiki programs each week.

Studies show that reading with your kids will help improve their reading scores in school.



Resolutions for SPIN Parents:

1. **Celebrate Small Achievements:** Sometimes our kids make progress in teeny, tiny baby steps, but forward is forward, regardless of the distance. Celebrate successful moments throughout the year.

2. **Reach out for Support and Information:** Try to find two new trusted sources of information or visit a support group and make some new friends. The journey is often more manageable when you know you're not alone.



3. **Take More Time for Yourself:** Recognize that when you are not at your best, when you are tired, cranky or worn down, you can make poor decisions, snap at your child or spouse, or let important things go, because you are just too overwhelmed. Its okay to treat yourself to a new haircut, see a movie on your own or have a mocha latte in the corner of the café with only your long-lost book for company.

4. Take an IEP Workshop or Legislative Class:

Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii offers year around classes on different islands to teach parents how to prepare for their IEP. The Hawaii Public Access Room has free workshops and webinars to help you understand the legislative process and boost your confidence in writing and sharing public testimony to get your voice heard.



5. **Come up with a Positive Comeback:** When you encounter rude stares, ignorant questions or family pushback, find a snappy, intelligent comeback that will invite a positive interaction. Try "Have you ever met anyone with XYZ Syndrome?" or take three deep breaths and let it go.

Good Luck!

Deaf Santa Signs Again

This year marked the 23rd annual Deaf Santa event at Pearlridge Center where deaf, hard of hearing and deaf/blind keiki from Oahu gather to share their wish list with a signing Santa. The kids, from preschool to 6th grade, are treated to a photo op with Santa, a goodie bag from Sprint, performances from kids and adults in both American Sign Language and spoken English, a Pizza Hut lunch and a Cookie Corner desert. The entire event is free to the kids and their families.



Ikaika Kaahanui telling Santa, "I've been GOOD all year!"

"Its so fun for the kids to see others signing, and to meet other families and adults from the Deaf community", says Amanda Kaahanui, who's son, Ikaika, was hopping up and down in excitement to tell Santa what was on his wish list. "This may be the only time of the year when we all get together, see other school programs, and for many of these kids, this is their chance to communicate with Santa in their native language."

Danielle Moran, mom to Caiden, a kindergartener at the Hawaii School for the Deaf & Blind, shared "I absolutely love the fact that my son can visit with Santa Claus and tell him what he wants for Christmas. It's amazing to see his eyes light up when he sees Santa signing. As a parent, I feel so proud watching him and the other children performing on stage. I look forward to it every year."


SEAC


Special Education Advisory Council

Phone	• 808-586-8126 Oahu
E-Mail	• spin@doh.hawaii.gov
Web	• www.seac-hawaii.org
Fax	• 808-586-8129
Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 919 Ala Moana Blvd. #101 • Honolulu, HI 96814

Official State Advisory Panel to Hawaii DOE for Special Education

	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Advise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist DOE to meet the needs of special education students </div>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Comment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly on proposed rules & regulations </div>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Monitor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of activities from court orders & decrees </div>



“OPERATION SPIN”

Saturday, May 2, 2015 at the UH Campus Center Ballroom

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Registration/Networking/Displays

9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. - Keynote Presentation

9:45 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. - View Displays

OPERATING SUITE 1 10:20 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.

<i>This is Going to Sting a Little</i>	<i>The Anatomy of Sports Injuries</i>	<i>Stitching a Safety Net</i>	<i>Gizmos & Gadgets</i>	<i>Child Life Services</i>	<i>Respite-ory Therapy</i>
Health Insurance	Sports Injuries & Concussions	Guardianship	Assistive Technology	Transition from Early Intervention to Pre-K	Respite & Stress Management

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

View Displays

12:00 noon - 1:15 p.m.

* Buffet in the Ballroom * Awards Presentation *

OPERATING SUITE 2 1:20 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.

<i>Anatomy of Transition</i>	<i>Trachs, Vents & Whatumacallits</i>	<i>Sink Your Teeth into Dental Care</i>	<i>Code Black and Blue</i>	<i>A Spoonful of Sugar. . .</i>	<i>Dr. Ruth's Power Hour</i>
Transition Planning for Adulthood	Medically Fragile Children's Issues	Dental Care for Kids	How to Handle Bullying	Managing Medications	Healthy Sexuality

OPERATING SUITE 3 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

<i>Autism Strategies Discussed</i>	<i>Invisible Wounds</i>	<i>A Double Dose</i>	<i>Advocates Without Borders</i>
Autism Spectrum Disorders	Traumatic Brain Injuries	Intellectual Disabilities & Mental Health Diagnosis	Advocacy Skills

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

REGISTRATION FORM

Please print clearly

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone: (h) _____ (w) _____ (cell) _____

E-mail _____ School/Agency _____

- Family member of a child with a disability Professional Other _____
- Please register me for the April 2014 SPIN Conference. Enclosed is my payment (\$25 per parent or \$40 for two adult family members; \$40 per professional). Make checks payable to the Special Parent Information Network (SPIN).
- I would like: a Neighbor Island parent airfare scholarship (Based on availability and upon completion of SPIN's Airfare Scholarship Form)
- I would like: materials in an alternate format* a sign language interpreter*
 map of accessible parking stalls

***Accommodation requests must be submitted by April 3, 2015.**

Send this form with your payment to: SPIN, 919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814 or Fax: 586-8129

REGISTER EARLY TO GUARANTEE A SEAT!





Santa says: "You better watch out for these upcoming events!"

12/20 **Group Art Class** sponsored by the Epilepsy Foundation of Hawaii, Ward Warehouse, 10:00 a.m. to noon, RSVP to 528-3058.

2015

1/21 **Hawaii State Legislative Session** begins

1/25 **Hands & Voices Hawaii Ice Cream Social**
Kaneohe Community Park, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Visit their Facebook page for more information and to RSVP

2/23 **Low Tech/High Tech/Your Tech Workshop**
-24 Pagoda Hotel, \$130 for 2 days includes breakfast. Sponsored by the Hawaii Deaf-Blind Project, ATRC, Easter Seals Hawaii & Island Skill Gathering. Register with Velina Sugiyama, 956-9688 or velina@hawaii.edu.

5/02 **"Operation SPIN" 29th Annual SPIN Conference** at the UH Campus Center. Check out page 7 for our program and information on airfare scholarships.

5/18 **Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity**, Hawaii Convention Center. For more information go to www.pacrim.hawaii.edu or contact Charmaine Crockett at 956-7539.



SPIN's Staff and Advisory Committee wish you the Happiest Holidays Ever!



Special Parent Information Network
919 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 101
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Providing a world of support to parents of children with special needs

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