



SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Special Needs

SPECIAL
PARENT
INFORMATION
NETWORK

2016-17 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, professionals and people with disabilities.

SPIN

1010 Richards St. Room 118
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



PHONE
586-8126

Neighbor Islands dial the exchange below, then 6-8126

Kauai - 274-3141

Hawai'i - 974-4000

Maui - 984-2400

Molokai - 1-800-468-4644

Lanai - 1-800-468-4644



FAX
586-8129



E-MAIL
spin@doh.hawaii.gov



WEB
www.spinhawaii.org



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Raising Your Child to be a Self-Advocate

In the early years, we spend a lot of time explaining to school staff how our child learns, what strategies work best for them and how we can help them be active participants in school. At the doctors office, we explain symptoms, how they responded to a new medication and report on anything new. With family and friends, we explain the diagnosis and how to have positive interactions with our child. But eventually, for many children, we have to start letting go and start letting our children have a voice of their own. To tell us what works for them, and what doesn't and to have the knowledge and courage to ask for the help they need, the way they need it. This is the journey of self-advocacy.

Self-Advocacy:
Know Yourself,
Know What You
Need, Know How
to Get It



In this special issue, we'll share with you some tips, strategies and the ideas behind self-advocacy and self-determination. You can start your child on this road at a very young age or add it to the IEP as part of the transition plan. We always say that parents are a child's best advocate, but teaching children to represent themselves, and make choices that positively impact their lives is one of the best things we can do for our kids.

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Building Self-Advocacy in Your Keiki

Skills need to be worked on over time. Be patient and encouraging, allowing your child to find their voice and be comfortable in asking for help when and where they need it.

- Talk to your child about their strengths and weaknesses.
- Help them understand that asking for help is ok.
- Encourage your child to use the classroom accommodations that are written in the IEP.
- Consider putting advocacy goals in the IEP and building on them each year
- Teach your child about their legal rights and how to talk about them in a positive, helpful way.
- If a challenge arises, allow them the chance to problem solve before you step in to fix it.
- Let your child weigh in on what works best for them in different situations and let them share those thoughts with teachers and staff. Drawings, printed templates or a short video can all be used.

Role playing scenario

- You would like a copy of the class notes from your teacher to help you follow along in class.

State the problem

- It is difficult for me to pay attention and write class notes at the same time.

Explain how you tried to solve the problem on your own

- I have tried to write notes while following along, but my notes are not complete.

State what you need that person to do

- Could I please get a copy of the notes printed out ahead of time to help me follow along in class.

Including Your Child in the IEP

Even if your child is not able to attend the physical IEP meeting, or if they are unable to voice their thoughts and feelings about their educational environment, there are other ways to include them in the IEP process.

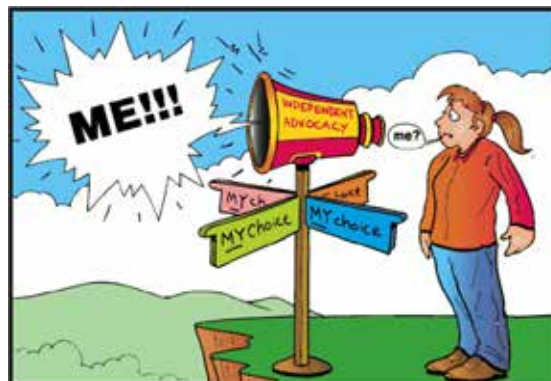
Consider making or downloading the 3x3 sheet from Understood.org. It includes spaces to draw or write what you child feels are their strengths, challenges and strategies that may help them.

Make a short video to play at the IEP meeting showcasing your child and what they like or do not like and ways they like to learn.



If they are non-verbal, this could include showing ways your child indicates if they like to do not like something offered to them and ways to encourage them making a choice.

Ask your child to tell the team what their disability means to them. What are the challenges they face? When do they feel the most comfortable in their learning? Sharing their feelings and being able to explain their diagnosis can help them be more comfortable in their own skin.



As your child gets older, you can include them more in the IEP process. If a question comes up, ask them what they think, or to come up with a suggestion. Eventually, they may develop leadership in the IEP meeting, becoming more responsible in guiding what and how they learn.

For teens who are working towards transitioning to adult life after high school, have them share their goals of a job, secondary schooling and an independent life. Allow them to lead these discussions so they take ownership of their educational pathways.

Self-Determination

Self determination is believing you can control your own destiny. It means learning to effectively solve problems, making your own choices, taking responsibility for your life and accepting the consequences of those choices. Below are some tips from the NCSET.org for families and professionals to help students and young adults reach their own level of self-determination.

Promote Choice Making

- Identify strengths, interests and learning styles
- Provide choices about clothing, social activities, family events and ways of learning new things
- Allow for mistakes and natural consequences
- Involve children and youth in educational, medical and family decisions

Encourage Exploration of Possibilities

- Talk about future jobs & hobbies
- Identify young adult mentors with similar disabilities
- Use personal, tactile, visual and auditory methods to explore the world

Promote Reasonable Risk Taking

- Make choice maps listing risks, benefits and consequences of choice
- Build a safety net of family members, friends, school and mentors
- Develop skills in evaluating consequences

Encourage Problem Solving

- Accept problems as part of a healthy development
- Hold family meetings to identify problems at home or in the community

Promote Self Advocacy

- Encourage communication and self-representation
- Practice ways to talk about their disability and accommodation needs
- Praise efforts to self-advocate and problem solve



Facilitate Development of Self-Esteem

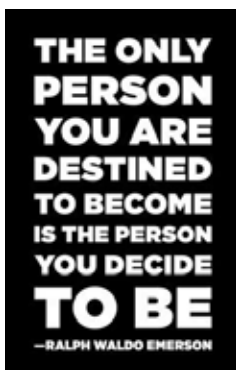
- Provide experiences for children and youth to use their talents
- Provide opportunities for individuality and independence
- Model self-esteem and self-confidence

Develop Goal Setting and Planning

- Define what a goal is and show the steps needed to reach a goal
- Make a road map to mark short-term identifiers as they work towards their goal
- Be flexible in supporting your child in reaching their goals. Be there when they need extra support, and be able to step back when they want to try to go it alone

Help Youth Understand their Disabilities

- Talk about your child's disability
- Talk about your child's abilities
- Develop a "one pager", directed by your child, that addresses their needs, strengths, interests and what kinds of support they would like to have.

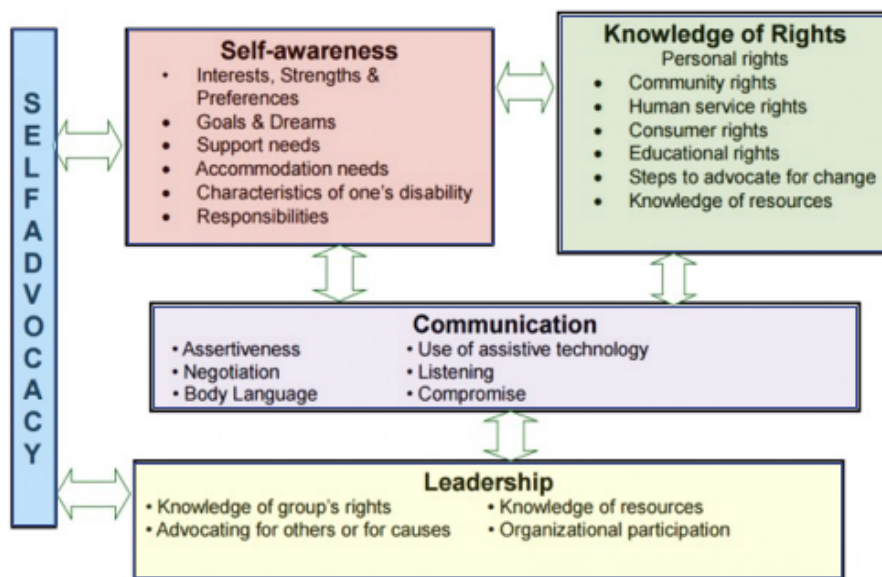


For more ways to build your self-advocacy skills, consider contacting or joining one of these local groups:

SAAC - Self-Advocacy Advisory Council 586-8100 or hawaiiisaac@yahoo.com

Best Buddies Hawaii 545-3025 or hawaii@bestbuddies.org

Internet Resources:
www.understood.org
www.pacer.org
www.ncset.org





MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

7/29 Autism Society Sib Shop Mixer
 6:00 - 7:00 pm, Zippy's Pearlridge
 For siblings 12 and up, kids are responsible for their own meal. RSVP: eventbrite.com/e/sibshop-mixer-tickets-33654078254

7/30 Hilo: Sensory Friendly Film Despicable Me 3
 10:00 - 11:30 am, Adults \$10, Children with autism free, siblings \$5.
 Prince Kuhio 9 Regal Theaters, Hilo
 Visit SPINHawaii.org/events for ticket link

8/5 Welcome Back to School Train Ride
 Sponsored by Hawaii Autism Society
 12:00 - 2:00 pm, \$6 per person, under 2 free
 Hawaiian Railway Society
 91-1001 Renton Road, Ewas Beach
 Visit SPINHawaii.org/events for ticket link



8/16 Honolulu District Families Embracing Autism Support Group
 Sponsored by the Learning Disability Association of Hawaii
 6:00 - 7:00 pm, free parking
 245 N. Kukui Street, Honolulu
 RSVP for childcare: 536-9684

9/19 Autism Workshop FREE
 10:00 - 11:00 am Sexual Abuse Prevention
 Kainalu Elementary school in Kailua
 RSVP: prevent_abuse.eventbrite.com

9/19 Autism Workshop FREE
 12:00 - 1:00 pm De-escalation Techniques
 Maemae Elementary School, Honolulu
 RSVP: deescalatetech.eventbrite.com

10th Annual Traveling Mini-Conference 2017
 Presented by the Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii. Call for info 536-9684

- 8/10** Lanai - 2:30 -5:30 pm
Lanai High & Elementary School
- 8/17** Molokai 3:00 - 7:00 pm
Molokai Community Health Center
- 8/26** Oahu 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
- 9/9** Hilo 9:00 am - 2:30 pm
- 9/14** Maui 5:00 - 9:00 pm
- 9/23** Kauai 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
- 10/7** Oahu 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

10/21 Footsteps to Transition Fair
 Hosted by DOE Windward District
 Windward Community College
 8:30 am - noon FREE
 for students ages 13-22, talk story with agencies, a student panel, speaker & prizes
 Call SPIN to register 586-8126

To get your FREE copy of our new **Parent Guide** give a call 586-8126 or email us at spin@doh.hawaii.gov or visit our website.




Like us on **facebook** 

Please join us for the 2017 Footsteps to Transition Fair
 Hosted by the Department of Education
 Windward District Office

An event for middle and high school students with special needs, with their families, to assist in making a successful transition to adult life and independence.

SAVE THE DATE:
Saturday, October 21st, 2017

What to expect:

-  Meet with adult service organizations and agencies
-  Take the first step in developing a transition plan
-  Hear stories from students on their path to success
-  Network with other families walking in your shoes

