



SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Special Needs

SPECIAL
PARENT
INFORMATION
NETWORK

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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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'App'lying Technology for School Success

Twenty-five years ago, Congress added assistive technology (AT) devices and services to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and required that they be considered in each student's IEP. An AT device is defined as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability."

AT includes low-tech solutions, like walkers and pencil grips, to high tech equipment and software. In just the last decade, the availability of portable devices that can be used for AT solutions has mushroomed. By 2013, for example, there were more mobile devices than people!

One of the most exciting developments has been the growth of "apps." An app is short for application--a piece of software that you run on your computer, smartphone or tablet. Not only are there a million different apps for all kinds of needs (as Apple famously likes to say, "there's an app for that!"), but many are FREE or very low cost compared to traditional software.

Not every app is designed to enhance learning, communication and independent living for a person with a disability. Still there are literally hundreds ... no, thousands ... of apps from which to choose. The hard part is keeping on top of this growing field

of technology, and finding an effective app that will match a student's unique needs and abilities.

SPIN would like to be a small part of the solution by creating an App Corner on our website, and reviewing one app a week (after careful review and vetting). There are a lot of experts in this field, and we will be utilizing their field research to spread the good word.

In fact, in researching this article, we just discovered the **Tech Finder** on the Understood website (<https://www.understood.org/en/tools/tech-finder>). Understood is a popular site that posts information about children with learning and

attention issues. Its Tech Finder is an interactive tool that lets you specify a grade, a particular issue--like reading, math, speech, attention, etc--and whether you are searching for an app, a website or a video game.

To see our new web page, go to the SPIN website and click on **App Corner** in the menu bar.



WHAT'S INSIDE

Acronym Soup	2
Getting Enough Sleep	3
Health Insurance Survey	3
Suicide Prevention	4
Homework Help	5
Footsteps to Transition	6
Mr. Mac's Class	7
Spotlight on Support	7
5 Minutes of Fame	7
Calendar of Events	8

Acronym Soup



Have you ever been to a meeting at school and felt like the other folks were speaking a different language? That's partly due to the tendency of most educators to use *acronyms*--a string of letters made up of the first letter of each word in a phrase--as a shortcut. One of the first acronyms we learn is I.E.P, which stands for **I**ndividualized **E**ducation **P**rogram. We also often hear L.R.E (**L**east **R**estrictive **E**nvironment), an acronym for the requirement to have children with disabilities learn alongside their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent that is appropriate for the child's unique learning challenges.

Understanding what acronyms mean helps parents follow the conversation and feel comfortable contributing ideas and opinions. Cover up the answers for the acronyms below and see how many you can get. You can find an even longer list at <http://spinhawaii.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/2015-ACRONYMS.pdf>. We have also included a number of acronyms and special education terms in "A Parent's Guide to Partnership in Special Education."

- ABA** **Applied Behavioral Analysis** - an evidence-based process that uses an understanding of why behavior occurs to improve learning and behavior.
- AT** **Assistive Technology** - any item, piece of equipment, software or product that is used to improve or maintain the functional abilities of kids with disabilities and the process to select and use them.
- CCSS** **Common Core State Standards** - the Hawaii standards for what students should know at each grade level
- ESY** **Extended School Year** - educational and related services provided to students during extended school breaks to help maintain critical skills and prevent regression.
- FBA** **Functional Behavioral Assessment** - A problem-solving process that relies on different strategies to determine the functions of the behavior and events or conditions that trigger the behavior.
- NAEP** **National Assessment of Educational Progress** - a national assessment that measures what students know and can do in various subject areas.
- PBS** **Positive Behavioral Support** - an approach outlined in IDEA to address problem behavior utilizing functional assessments and positive approaches.
- PETS** **Pre-Employment Transition Services** - services coordinated by schools and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to help prepare students with disabilities for employment
- PLEP** **Present Level of Educational Performance** - a section in the IEP that documents a student's current level of academic achievement and functional performance.
- RTI** **Response to Intervention** - a scientifically proven method to track student progress and provide help to struggling learners using a tiered system of increasing supports.
- SBAC** (pronounced *ess-back*) **Smarter Balanced Assessment Coalition** - Hawaii's new statewide assessment that is designed around the Common Core State Standards
- SSIP** **State Systemic Improvement Plan** - a requirement of the Office of Special Education Programs that lays out a plan for how a state will implement evidence-based interventions to improve student performance and evaluate the results.

Is Your Keiki Getting Enough ZZZs?



Of all the things parents do to help our students with special needs be successful, we sometimes overlook the obvious. Are they getting enough sleep?

The amount of sleep people get affects how they feel, behave and learn. As adults we know that a lack of sleep affects our reaction time. It may lead to difficulty making decisions, solving problems, and remembering things. We might take longer to finish something and make more mistakes.

Being sleep-deprived has a negative effect on children as well. They may be hyperactive and have trouble paying attention. Emotionally they may feel angry, sad or depressed, or just plain unmotivated. As a result their school performance may not be as good as it could be.

So just how much sleep do children need? The chart below comes from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Age	Recommended Sleep
Preschool children	11-12 hours a day
School-aged children	At least 10 hours a day
Teenagers	9-10 hours a day
Adults	7-8 hours a day

You probably won't be surprised that not all families are getting the recommended hours of sleep. A 2013 NIH study revealed that:



One third of Americans get less than 7 hours of sleep per night.



70% of high school students are not getting enough sleep on school nights.

Another study* published in the journal *Pediatrics* (in February 2015) found that sleeping near a smart phone or tablet, or having a TV in a child's room can negatively affect their sleep. Of the fourth and seventh grade students interviewed, those with a small screen or TV in their room got an average of 20 minutes less sleep each night and reported feeling more tired than their peers who sleep without these devices.

So for your health's sake, and your keiki's, think about trying to get more quality sleep time.

* <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/01/01/peds.2014-2306.full.pdf+html>



Health Insurance Survey Needs Hawaii Parent Input

A new project, led by the Western States Genetic Services Collaborative is asking parents of children who have special health care needs (CSHCN) for help. The project, called "Identifying the Gaps in Essential Health Benefits for Children with Special Health Needs" is trying to identify what the reality of health insurance coverage looks like to families with children who have involved health care needs.

The Hawaii Department of Health will use the results of the survey to help policy makers better understand the health insurance needs of CSHCN and work on improvements to the system. But they can't do it without your input. The survey is completely confidential and will take about 20 minutes to fill out. You can enter to win a \$50 Amazon gift card at the end of the survey.

Access the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/acasurvey_hawaii.com. If you have any questions or comments about the survey, email Lianne Hasegawa, Genetics Counselor for the Hawaii Department of Health at lianne@hawaiiogenetics.org.



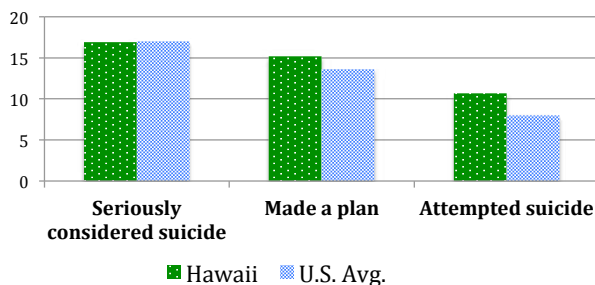
Reaching Out and Saving Lives



September is the month that highlights suicide prevention in Hawaii and across the country. This year's theme is "Reaching Out and Saving Lives," and all of us are encouraged to become more aware of the signs of suicide and where help can be found.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey, developed by the Center on Disease Control and given to local middle and high school students every other year, has revealed that there is trouble in Paradise. Hawaii has more teens who made a serious plan to commit suicide and more teens attempting suicide than the national average.

Youth Suicide Statistics



Taken from the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Within those totals are some individual differences. In the 2013 survey, middle school students were more likely to seriously consider attempting suicide. A shocking one-fourth of middle school students contemplated suicide during their short lifetime. Similarly, girls outnumbered boys in both considering suicide (20% of girls compared to 13% of boys in high school) and attempting suicide (13% compared to 7.7%). However, even though fewer boys attempt suicide, they are 3-4 times more likely to die from suicide. One reason is that they are less likely to call for help.

Several national studies have shown that teens who attempt suicide are likely to be:



- Socially isolated;
- Unsure of whether they really wanted to end their life;
- Unskilled in social problem-solving; and
- Not receiving treatment from a mental health professional.

Suicide is preventable.

The two most important steps in prevention are 1) recognizing warning signs and 2) getting help for the student. Here are warning signs to look for:

- ✓ Previous suicide attempts;
- ✓ Threatening or communicating thoughts of suicide, death or dying;
- ✓ A sudden increase in moodiness, withdrawal or isolation;
- ✓ A lack of interest in doing things;
- ✓ Changes in eating habits—eating a lot more or a lot less;
- ✓ Changes in appearance—not dressing as neatly or being untidy;
- ✓ Sleep problems—too little or too much;
- ✓ A drop in school performance;
- ✓ Giving away important possessions;
- ✓ Feelings of hopelessness, guilt or worthlessness;
- ✓ Restless, irritable or aggressive behavior;
- ✓ Hinting at not being around in the future.

If you recognize these symptoms in someone you know and love, take action. It's not too late to reach out and save a life.

Need help?

On Oahu: (808) 832-3100

On Neighbor Islands:

1 (800) 753-6879

ACCESS Suicide Crisis Line

1 (800) 273-8255

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week

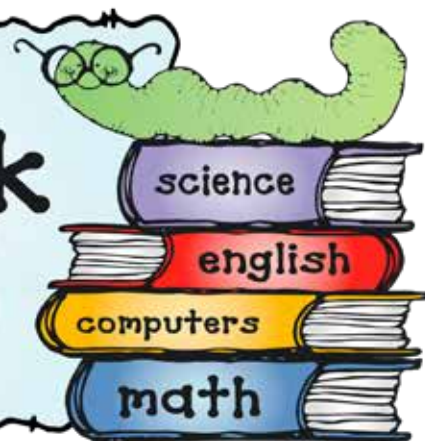
Languages: English, Spanish

Website: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org



Homework

Tips for Parents & Students



School is in full swing and so are homework assignments. For students with disabilities, homework may be especially challenging. Some children may have attention or organization challenges or need more time processing assignments or alternate ways of showing their work.

Here are 6 homework tips for parents of children with disabilities found on the Georgia Department of Education's website:

Communication *is an essential part of successful homework. Teachers and parents of students with disabilities should set up a clear and effective way of sharing information with one another and with the student about homework policies, expectations and concerns.*

- Use technology such as answering machines, texting or email for communication.
- Request teacher monitoring of assignment books.

Organization: *Many students need help with organizational skills to be successful.*

- Establish a daily routine and schedule. Be sure to give your child time for a snack and wind-down time after school before homework starts.
- Limit distractions (TV, phone, loud music) and arrange for a quiet place for homework.
- Organize a consistent work space with needed items (pencils, pens, paper, etc.) where homework is done each day.
- Use a calendar or day planner/assignment book that has been developed with input from the teacher to organize and keep track of daily

- Supervise to make sure that completed work is put in the backpack and leaves home the next morning.

Guidance: *Some students only need help getting started on their assignments, others need guidance to keep them on track.*

- Read the directions together, do the first items together, observe as your child does the next problem on his/her own, then leave the room.
- Guide, but don't correct. It is helpful to point out errors on the homework. If your child needs help, offer ideas that can help sort out the problems, but don't give the answers.
- Give breaks as needed, but set a timer so your child knows when break time is over and its time to get back to the homework assignment.

Accommodations: *If a child uses accommodations in the classroom, they may be needed for homework as well. Your child might need assignments that build on each step or alternative response formats (allow the student to audiotape an assignment rather than handwrite or type it). Homework accommodations can be written into the IEP and be followed by all of your child's teachers.*

Assistive Technology (AT): *Devices that are used at school may be needed at home. Talk with the IEP team about your child's AT needs for homework. Parents should be trained on how to assist their children with any devices during homework.*

IEP Goals: *Include goals and objectives about homework completion and make sure AT, accommodations and added supports are included.*

Transition to Success

Please join us at the “Footsteps to Transition Fair,” hosted by the Department of Education, Central and Leeward Districts! This FREE event is geared towards middle and high school students with special needs, their families, case managers, therapists, teachers, and anyone else in their circle of support. It’s not too early to start planning and preparing for life after high school. As you transition to post-graduation and adulthood, it can be a challenge to make the many decisions about life after high school. Will you go to college, get a job, and/or move into your own place? Who do you turn to if you need help with your finances, or need to see a doctor, or want to make new friends? Will your parents continue to make decisions for you, or will you be responsible for your own choices? How do parents access services for their adult child? All of these questions can be answered

at the upcoming “Footsteps to Transition Fair” hosted by the Department of Education in partnership with various community agencies.

Knowledgeable guest speaker, Leolinda Parlin of Hilopa’a Family to Family Health Information Center, will explain the transition process in easy to understand steps. A student panel will share their own experiences of the transition process. A variety of State and private agencies will come together under one roof to provide information about their services for students with special needs after high school. This is a great opportunity to meet and network with other students and families to build and add to your support system. There will be door prizes and free light refreshments to enjoy.

We look forward to seeing you there! Call SPIN at 586-8126 to register, or go online at the website listed above.

Please join us for the...

Footsteps to Transition Fair



Hosted by the Department of Education
Central and Leeward Districts



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



What to Expect:

- Meet with adult service agencies and organizations
- 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

When:	Saturday, October 24, 2015
8:00-noon	8:00-9:30: Sign in, visit exhibits, and talk story 9:30-10:30: Student Panel Keynote Presentation by Leolinda Parlin 10:30-12:00: Win Prizes! Visit exhibits & talk story
Where:	Kapolei High School Cafeteria 91-5007 Kapolei Parkway Kapolei, HI 96707
How:	<u>Registration is highly recommended!</u> Please RSVP your attendance and access accommodations by September 30, 2015: call 586-8126 (SPIN) or by register online at: http://tinyurl.com/footsteps-to-transition-2015

Please note: Accommodations may not be available if requests are received after the deadline.



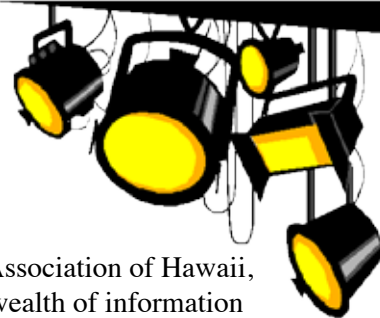
footsteps-to-transition



SPIN Award in Action

At this year's SPIN Awards, Mr. Matt MacDonagh, a special education teacher at Castle High School, received our esteemed Family Choice award. "Mr. Mac" was nominated by the parents of Jason (holding the award, above) for his outstanding work with not only their own son, but for all of the students he has had a positive impact on. Mr. Mac was off island last May when the awards were given, so Susan and Amanda planned a field trip to Kaneohe, to present him with his award and meet his students. They arrived with brownies and ice cream and were greeted with smiles, handshakes and open curiosity. Mr. Mac's class of students were not surprised by his award; they already know. "He's awesome" said one student. "The best" others chimed in. As we were treated to an impromptu "Watch Me" dance, with Mr. Mac in the middle of it all, we could tell by the happy, vibrant, diverse group of teens that they are right: Mr. Mac is pretty awesome!

Spotlight on Support



The Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii, also known as LDAH is a wealth of information and support for families in Hawaii. They are the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) providing support and services through screening, identification, information, training and mentoring and public outreach and advocacy. LDAH hosts multiple workshops and training opportunities for families across the state, throughout the year. Currently they are hosting their annual Traveling Mini Conference, the next ones happening on October 2nd on Kauai and October 10th on Oahu. They are co-sponsoring a workshop with Art Cernosia, Esq. to talk to families about special education law on October 31st on Oahu. The event will stream live to all neighbor islands. Visit LDAH on the web at www.ldahawaii.org, like their Facebook page at LDA Hawaii PTI or give them a call at 536-9684. LDAH has been a SPIN partner for many years, and when families call us needing guidance regarding an IEP, evaluation or 504 plan, they are one of the first numbers we share to get answers, support and information out to families.



Trey Balding and Ikaika Kaahanui, 11 yrs old of Kaneohe, catch a wave at an AccesSurf event at White Plains. Ikaika and Trey are both deaf and had a great time on the water together, signing and surfing. It was Ikaika's first time surfing, but it won't be the last.

5 Minutes of Fame

SPIN is looking to update our website photos soon. We have some great shots from the SPIN conference this past May, but we thought it would be fun to showcase families, their teachers, classmates and programs. It would be great to see kids in action in the classroom, on the sports field, on the bus or anywhere they are having fun. It's a great opportunity to give a "shout out" to teachers, therapists, programs and your student for doing their best in the special education system. If you send us a photo with someone other than you or your family, please get permission before sending it to us. We will choose photos at random and place them on the front page of our updated website at www.spinhawaii.org. Email us your favorite photos to spin@doh.hawaii.gov, then check out our site for your five minutes (or 5 days, weeks, months) of fame!





Fall Calendar of Events & Workshops

10/2 LDAH FREE Traveling Mini Conference
Kauai: King Kaumualii Elementary school
9:00 am - 2:00 pm RSVP 800-533-9684

11/13 LDAH FREE Traveling Mini Conference
Oahu: UH Manoa East West Center
9:00 am - 2:00 pm RSVP 800-533-9684

10/3 Access Surf Day at the Beach

11/7 White Plains, Ewa Beach from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. FREE surfing event, for all ages and abilities. Sign up online accessurf.org

10/4 Anat Baniel Neuromovement Workshop
9:00 am - 5:00 pm. UH East West Center
Pricing and registration: www.anatbanielmethod.com/events/category/special-needs-workshops

10/14 Epilepsy Talk Story - FREE 6:00- 7:30 pm
1050 Ala Moana Blvd. Suite 2550 Ward Warehouse RSVP 528-3058 Open to all who have or are caring for epilepsy.

10/16 Special Education Advisory Council

11/13 (SEAC) Meeting 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Oahu:
475 22nd Ave. Room 264 A For info: 586-8126

10/16 23rd Annual White Cane Walk FREE
10:00 am-12:00 Hawaii State Capital 586-5271

10/18 Hands & Voices Hawaii Fall Festival FREE
12:00 - 4:00 pm Waimanao Beach Park RSVP
www.facebook.com/handsandvoiceshawaii
for families with kids who have hearing loss

10/24 Footsteps to Transition Fair FREE
8:00 am - 12:00 pm Kapolei High School
RSVP 586-8126 for students age 14-21 & family

10/31 Art Cernosia, Esq. Workshop FREE
9:00 am - 1:00 pm Oahu Shriners Hospital
RSVP 536-9684 This event will also stream live

11/14 Living Well With Epilepsy Conference FREE
Oahu Queens Medical Center RSVP 528-3058



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