



SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Disabilities

SPECIAL
PARENT
INFORMATION
NETWORK

January 2025
Volume XLI, No. 3

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, educators, agencies serving children with disabilities and their families and people with disabilities. SPIN also provides staff support to the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC).

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Parent Voices Needed at the Capitol

What happens at our Hawaii State Capitol often has just as much—if not more—impact on a child’s IEP than what happens in Washington, D.C. SPIN is encouraging our readers to pay attention to key bills that are being introduced this session and, when possible, speak up.

Why parents should speak up

- Many state lawmakers don’t know much about special education or special health care needs.
- Your testimony about bills that affect your child and family carries extra weight, because it shows real-life impact.



Why it matters

- Supports from federal agencies like the Department of Education and Health and Human Services are uncertain right now.
- Decisions made at the state level—by the Legislature, Department of Education, and

Department of Health—can greatly affect students with disabilities.

- State legislators and their staff are easier to reach than our Congressional representatives and can make changes faster.

How to get involved

STEP 1: Find a bill or two that matches your needs and read up on it. The Structured Literacy Bill on page 2 is a good example of a bill that can improve reading for all students.

STEP 2: Decide on your level of support. Do you just have time to make a few calls to legislators, or are you able to write a page of testimony? Are you motivated to do even more? Check out our infographic on page 3 to find suggestions for action along with agencies and groups to educate and support you through the process. Together we can make a difference!

Don’t miss SPIN’s 40th SPIN Conference March 28, 2026



UH Manoa Campus Center

WHAT’S INSIDE

Structured Literacy Bill	2
Legislative Tips for Parent	3
SPIN Conference Info	4
SPIN Awards	5
IEE Infographics	6-7
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	8
Footsteps to Transition	9
Calendar of Events	10

Helping All Students Become Better Readers

What is this Bill About?

- ✓ Improving reading for all students using scientifically proven methods
- ✓ Focusing on early identification and support for struggling readers
- ✓ Creating a fair and consistent system for teaching students to read

Early Support for Students

- ✓ Dyslexia-sensitive screening of all students in Grades K-3 including students with IEPs
- ✓ Special considerations for English Learners
- ✓ Extra help for struggling readers based on research as to what works
- ✓ Timely communication with parents when their child is at risk for reading delays



Better Training for Teachers

- ✓ Includes special education teachers, elementary teachers, reading specialists and English Learner teachers
- ✓ Uses evidence-based reading practices



Why It Matters

- ✓ Dyslexia and other reading challenges can be identified early.
- ✓ Families will be informed and involved.
- ✓ Dyslexia and structured literacy will be defined in state law (see definitions below).

HawaiiKidsCAN, the Hawaii Chapter of the International Dyslexia Association, the Hawaii State Literacy Coalition and the Special Education Advisory Council are all supporting this bill.

Definitions from the Structured Literacy Bill

"Dyslexia" is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling that involve accuracy, speed, or both and vary depending on the orthography. These difficulties occur along a continuum of severity and persist even with instruction that is effective for the individual's peers. Dyslexia is a complex combination of genetic, neurobiological, and environmental influences that interact throughout development. Underlying difficulties with phonological and morphological processing are common but not universal, and early oral language weaknesses often foreshadow literacy challenges. Secondary consequences include reading comprehension problems and reduced reading and writing experience that can impede growth in language, knowledge, written expression, and overall academic achievement. Psychological well-being and employment opportunities also may be affected. Although identification and targeted instruction are important at any age, language and literacy support before and during the early years of education is particularly effective."

"Structured literacy instruction" means an evidence-based approach that emphasizes explicit and systematic instruction in the following components of literacy:

- (1) Phonological and phonemic awareness;
- (2) Sound-symbol recognition;
- (3) Alphabet knowledge;
- (4) Decoding skills;
- (5) Rapid naming skills, including letter naming and letter sound fluency;
- (6) Encoding skills;
- (7) Oral reading accuracy and fluency; and
- (8) Oral language.

For More Information about the Bill

HawaiiKidsCan

erica@hawaiikidscan.org

Hawaii Branch, International Dyslexia Assoc.

info-hida@dyslexia-hawaii.org, (808) 538-7007

SPIN

spin@doh.hawaii.gov, (808) 586-8126

Tips for Speaking Up at the Hawaii State Legislature



1: Identify your state legislators

Go to the Hawaii State Capitol website page called [Find Your Legislator](#) and type your street name in the search box. You'll be shown information about your House and Senate Districts. Click on the blue box to get the names and contact information of the legislators assigned to your address. You can also click on your Senator's or Representative's name to find more about them, including their committees.



2: Create a Capitol account

Sign up for a free [personal account on the Capitol website](#). It is the easiest way for you to submit testimony. Your testimony can be as little as a sentence or longer. Once you have an account, you will also be able to request notice of hearings of specific bills or of committees that you are interested. If identifying your state legislators or creating a Capitol account has you confused, you can find videos on the [Engagement 101 Guide from the Public Access Room](#) that will walk you through the process.



3: Consider contacting the bill sponsor

Agencies who have worked with legislators to draft bills are the most in the know about the history behind why the bill is needed. Often they can offer suggestions and support for drafting testimony. [HawaiiKidsCAN](#) (erica@hawaiikidscan.org) who are sponsoring the Structured Literacy Bill on page 2, and the [Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities](#) (che.silvert@doh.hawaii.gov) who are sponsoring a Smart 911 bill this session are both very supportive of parents who want to testify.



4: Testify & repeat as necessary

If a bill gets scheduled for a hearing, you may get the opportunity to testify for or against the bill in writing and/or in person. If the bill moves from one committee to the next, be ready to send in your testimony again. Try to find others to help you testify and gather legislative support for your bill. Having a bill become law is not an easy process and can take a few years. Be patient, be persistent and be passionate.



5: Get training to grow your knowledge

The [Public Access Room \(PAR\) training videos](#) are a great tool to learn more about the legislative process. For a more in-depth learning experience, consider applying for the next [Parent Leadership Training Institute](#) hosted by the Hawaii Children's Action Network. This 20 session unique learning opportunity teaches parents how to identify problems affecting children and work toward solutions. For more information, contact Mai Hall at (808) 531-5502, Ext. 110#.





40th Annual SPIN Conference

March 28, 2026 8:00 am – 3:30 pm

UH Manoa Campus Center

In-person workshops and resource fair

8:00 – 9:00 am Registration / Totally Rad Resource Room Open
 9:00 – 10:15 am Welcome / Keynote
 10:15 – 10:45 am Totally Rad Resource Room Open / Networking

Mixed Tape Session #1: 10:45 – 11:45 am

<i>“Back to the Future”</i>	<i>“Preschool is Totally Cool”</i>	<i>“Come Together”</i>	<i>“That’s What Friends Are For”</i>	<i>“Every Test You Take”</i>	<i>Totally Rad Resource Fair</i>
Artificial Intelligence in Schools	Early Intervention Transition	Conflict Resolution Strategies	Finding Support Networks	Educational Assessments	The Resource Fair is open for Visiting

12:00 – 1:15 pm Buffet Lunch & SPIN Awards in the Ballroom

Mixed Tape Session #2: 1:20 – 2:20 pm

<i>“Lean On Me”</i>	<i>“Stand By Me”</i>	<i>“Tech Me Up Before You Go Go”</i>	<i>“Don’t Worry, Be Happy”</i>	<i>“True Colors”</i>	<i>Totally Rad Resource Fair</i>
Supports for Siblings	Bullying Prevention	Assistive Technology	Destress Techniques for Parents	Understanding ADHD	Resource Fair is Open until 2:00 pm

Mixed Tape Session #3 2:30 – 3:30 pm

<i>“Radical Realities for Autism Today”</i>	<i>“Talking Heads”</i>	<i>“Handle With Care”</i>	<i>“Decisions Are My Jam”</i>
Autism and Current Controversies	Speech or Language Disabilities	Medically Fragile Supports in School	Supported Decision-Making

Workshops & times are subject to change

2026 SPIN Conference Registration Form

Name/s: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Island: _____ Child’s Disability: _____ Age: _____

\$25 Parent/Family Member \$45 2 Family Members \$25 Student \$50 Professional

Check enclosed: \$_____ Check #: _____ I need a parent registration scholarship

Airfare Scholarship request (for Neighbor Island parents & caregivers of kids with disabilities 0-22 years)

Please send airfare application by Email Street address: _____

I need an accommodation due to a disability, please specify: _____

Send completed form with payment (payable to Hawaii Department of Health) via mail or email:
 1010 Richards Street, Room 118, Honolulu, HI 96813 or spin@doh.hawaii.gov

2026 SPIN AWARDS Nomination Form

Every year, at our annual in-person conference, **SPIN** publicly acknowledges key parents and professionals whose efforts make a positive difference in the lives of children and young adults with disabilities and their families in Hawaii. We are asking for your help in identifying candidates for SPIN's 3 award categories: Parent of the Year, Professional of the Year, and the Family Choice Award. **If you have more than one nomination per category, feel free to copy this form and submit multiple nominations. Mail, fax, or email your nominations to us by March 1, 2026**

Address: **SPIN**, 1010 Richards Street, Room 118, Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-8126
Fax: (808) 586-8129
E-mail: spin@doh.hawaii.gov

Please choose one category:

Family Choice Award

The Family Choice Award is given to a professional who has been particularly helpful to families as they sort out services and supports for their child with a disability. This individual does not have an impact on the larger system, but is recognized in his or her community as an extraordinary professional.

Parent of the Year Award

The Parent of the Year Award is given to a parent of a child or young adult with a disability whose actions and advocacy have benefited other families.

Professional of the Year Award

The Professional of the Year Award is given to a professional who has had a significant impact in improving services for children or young adults with a disability and their families.

Nominee's Name _____ Phone _____

Nominee's Community or Workplace _____

Your Name _____ Phone _____

Your E-mail _____

Reason for nomination: _____

* SPIN Awards are generally kept a secret from the award winner until they hear their name during the program. If your nominee is chosen, we may ask your help in getting them to attend conference. *



The Ins and Outs of Getting an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) for Your Child



Legal Requirements

- The IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Hawaii Chapter 60 (Hawaii's Special Education law) have safeguards that allow for a parent/guardian to request for an IEE at public expense.
- Once an IEE is requested, the DOE must either:
 1. File a due process complaint if they feel their evaluations are appropriate, or
 2. Provide parents with info on how to obtain an IEE at public expense.



When CAN a Parent Request an IEE

- If they disagree with a DOE evaluation or one or more of the assessments, for example, a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- After the DOE has completed their evaluation
- If the school did not assess in a specific area
- If they disagreed with an assessment and paid for a private evaluation and are now requesting reimbursement



When IEE is NOT Allowed

- If no DOE evaluation was completed (because parent revokes consent or the evaluation is still in progress)
- If the DOE determines an evaluation is not needed (If parent disagrees, they can file a state complaint, go through mediation or file due process)
- If a Due Process Hearing Officer determines the DOE evaluation was appropriate
- If you are seeking a medical diagnosis.



Requesting an IEE

- Request must be submitted to the child's home school (either verbally or in writing).
- Within 10 calendar days, the school must provide a Prior Written Notice (PWN) to either
 1. Approve the IEE, or
 2. Deny the request and file for due process
- If parent wants a specific evaluator, they must provide the name and contact information to the school.



IEE Evaluation Criteria

- The evaluator must be qualified and licensed, like DOE staff.
- An evaluator must first be sought within the school district or island where the child lives.
- The evaluator must meet the same criteria used by the school for its evaluations.
- A copy of the IEE report must be provided to the school and the parent at least 5 calendar days before the IEP meeting.
- Schools may select the evaluator a parent recommends, but they are not required to do so.

- The IEE report must provide the IEP team with information to help determine eligibility, if the child has a disability that requires special education and related services, and to identify their strengths and needs.
- If you have questions about requesting an IEE, contact your school principal or the District Educational Specialist (DES) for your school district.

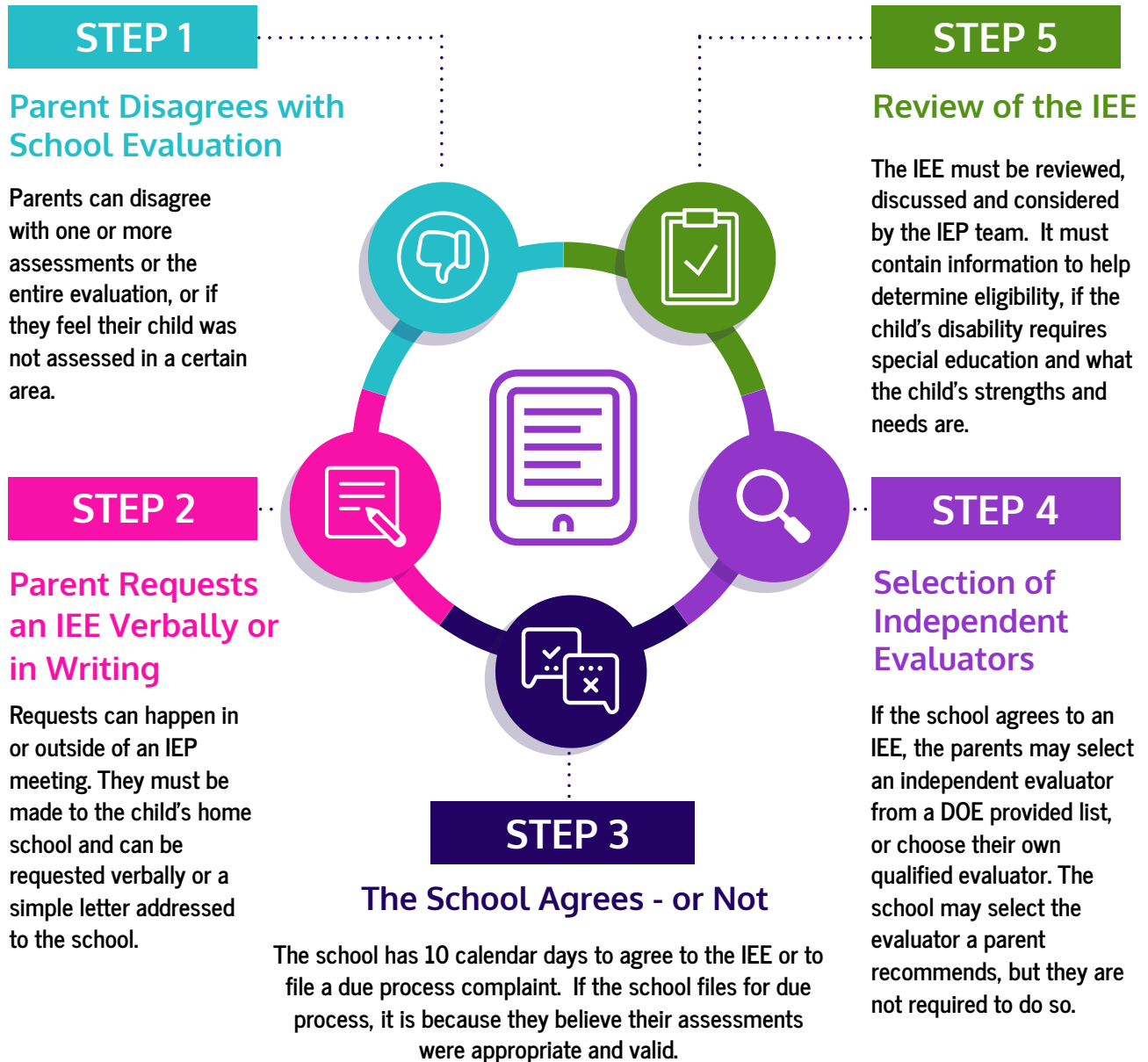
Source:
[Hawaii Administrative Rules \(HAR\) Chapter 60](#)

January 2026



How to Request an Independent Educational Evaluation

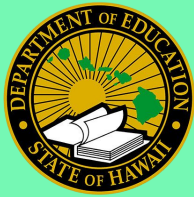
When parents do not agree with a school's evaluation for special education, they have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense, which means the Hawaii State Department of Education can pay for an independent evaluation.



Source:
[Hawaii Administrative Rules \(HAR\) Chapter 60.](#)

January 2026





Eligibility Categories for Special Education Under IDEA and Chapter 60 Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HH)

While Hawaii's Chapter 60 uses the terms **Deaf** and **Hard of Hearing (HH)** to describe hearing loss in children that requires special education and related services, the federal law, IDEA, uses the dated terms **Deafness** and **Hearing Impairment**.



Degree of Hearing Loss

The difference between an eligibility determination of **Deaf** and one of **Hard of Hearing** relates to the severity of the child's hearing loss. Below are the hearing ranges:

0 - 25 dB* 26 - 70 dB* 71 or more dB*

Normal
Hearing

Hard of
Hearing

Deaf

*In the speech frequencies (500 Hz-4000Hz)

An exam by a hearing specialist or audiologist is needed to provide evidence of the hearing loss. The home school may be able to assist families who are unable to access an exam.



Terms Used in Determining Eligibility for Deaf/HH

Auditory Processing: what our brain does with what we hear

Decibel (dB): a unit of measuring how loud or intense a sound needs to be for a child to hear it

Decoding: how well our brain quickly and accurately takes in speech and processes information

Frequency: the different pitches of sound measured in Hertz (Hz) indicating how fast sound waves are vibrating

Other data that is gathered may include:



The child's medical history



Input from family members,



Teacher reports and student work samples,



Observation of listening skills at school or in a natural setting, and



Measures of self-help skills.

Eligibility Standards

After hearing loss has been documented, the child must show evidence of either **processing delays** OR **adverse effect**.

1 The hearing loss results in delays in auditory processing of speech and language in the areas of:



Speaking



Reading



Writing



Listening

2 The hearing loss adversely affects performance in the present educational setting or natural environment.

Sources: [Chapter 60 Guidelines](#), Appendix B - Referral, Evaluation & Eligibility, Speech or Language Disability



January 2026
SPIN News

Footsteps to Transition Fairs This Spring

To register for any of these FREE events, visit: <https://footstepstotransition.weebly.com/>

OAHU
Footsteps to Transition Fair

Hosted by the Hawaii Department of Education
 Windward District Office

DATE: Saturday, February 21, 2026
 TIME: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
 Virtually on Zoom

Please join us for a virtual transition fair, an event for middle and high school students with disabilities and their families, to help in making a successful transition from high school to adult life and independence.

To register for this FREE event, visit www.footstepstotransition.weebly.com or click on the QR code

For more information, please call 808-586-8126 or email: SPIN@doh.hawaii.gov

MAUI
 HIDEO BKKM COMPLEX

MAUI FOOTSTEPS TO TRANSITION

Tuesday, March 10, 2026
 Maui High School Library 5:00 - 6:30 PM

Supporting students with disabilities and their families to transition to adult life and independence.

Connect with 20+ agencies! Free dinner and door prizes!

Register at bit.ly/footsteps26

HILO
FOOTSTEPS TO TRANSITION
 March 25, 2026
 1:00pm - 6:00pm
 Arc of Hilo

LIGHT DINNER | GIVEAWAYS (IPADS, GIFT CARDS) | NETWORK VENDORS

SIGN UP <https://bit.ly/ETT2026>

It's never too early or late to start planning! Footsteps to Transition is a FREE event for students with disabilities and their families to help make a successful transition from high school to adult life and independence. We hope you can join us for this AWESOME event!

SCHEDULE

- 1:00pm-4:00pm - Open to network with Vendors
- 4:00pm - Welcome
- 4:10pm-5:00pm - Speakers/Presentations
- 5:00pm - Program guide & BIG GIVEAWAYS
- 5:10pm - 6:00pm - Open to network with vendors

Giveaways are available throughout and between presentations.

To learn more about statewide transition resources visit www.footstepstotransition.weebly.com or scan the QR code.

EVENTS CALENDAR

1/31 Coffee Cake & Play Date

8:00 am – 12:00 pm In Person FREE
The Comprehensive Services Center invites parents who have a child who is Deaf/hard of hearing/deaf-blind to join them for a U-Pick Farm to Basket day at Hoa 'Aina O Makaha Farm in Waianae. For info & to RSVP, email Ginger: gingermk@hawaii.edu

2/7 AccesSurf Day at the Beach

3/7 9:30 am – 1:30 pm FREE
Join AccesSurf at White Plains Beach for a day of assisted surfing and ocean access. Sign up at www.accessurf.org

2/13 SEAC Meeting

3/13 9:00 am – 12:00 pm Virtual FREE
The Special Education Advisory Council, meets monthly to discuss the unmet needs of children with disabilities in public schools. Public input is available during each meeting. For the Zoom link, visit the agenda page <https://seac-hawaii.org/>

LDAH Small Group Sessions

Held in person on Oahu and Hawaii island
Oahu: Mondays 3:00 – 5:00 pm
Oahu: Thursdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
Hilo: 2nd Thursdays 9:00 – 11:00 am
Kona: 3rd Thursdays 9:00 – 11:00 am
Call to sign up: 808-536-9684

2/21 Oahu Footsteps to Transition Fair

9:00 am – 12:00 pm Virtual FREE
The Windward District is hosting a virtual transition fair and it is open to all Hawaii residents. Mini workshop presentations will include transition timelines, work-based learning, DVR/DOE services and more! Register here: <https://footstepstotransition.weebly.com/oahu-footsteps.html>

2/27 Central Oahu Parent Power Hour

6:00 – 8:00 pm In Person FREE
Leilehua High School Library
Hawaii Children's Action Network invite you to share your voice on what you'd like to change for the better in your community. RSVP: http://bit.ly/pph_26

3/10 Maui Footsteps to Transition Fair

5:00 – 6:30 pm In Person FREE
Maui High School Library
BKKM Complex area invites you to a transition resource fair with free dinner and door prizes! To register, visit <https://footstepstotransition.weebly.com/maui-footsteps.html>

3/25 Hilo Footsteps to Transition Fair

1:00 – 6:00 pm In Person FREE
East & South Hawaii Districts invite you to attend their transition fair with presentations starting at 4:00 pm, and a resource fair all afternoon. To register, Visit: <https://footstepstotransition.weebly.com/hawaii-island-footsteps.html>

**3/28 40th Annual SPIN Conference
"SPIN is 40 and Fabulous!"**

8:30 am – 3:30 pm In person \$25-50
UH Manoa Campus Center
14 workshops, resource tables, SPIN Awards, networking, lunch and more!
Visit www.spinconference.org for registration, airfare and exhibitor table forms. Like, it's going to be totally tubular, for sure, dude!

5/27-5/30 Pac Rim International Conference on Disability "Unbreakable Threads: Communities of Resilience & Community"

UH Campus Center, In person & virtual
Virtual access for all 4 days: \$198
For more info, visit: www.pacrim.coe.hawaii.edu