



SPIN NEWS

The Newsletter for Parents of Children with Disabilities

SPECIAL
PARENT
INFORMATION
NETWORK

2026-27 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, 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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AI Tools for Parents: A Quick Guide

Artificial intelligence (AI) is playing an increasingly important role in children's education. Yet many parents are unsure how to use this powerful tool in daily life—whether to support learning at home, streamline routine tasks, advocate for their children, or find creative solutions to longstanding challenges.

Parents of students with disabilities are often optimistic about AI's ability to strengthen writing, communication, and academic skills. At the same time, many are concerned about protecting their child's privacy and avoiding overreliance on AI chatbots for emotional support.

One effective way to ease these concerns is through better understanding. In this special edition of SPIN News, we introduce four infographics designed to expand your knowledge of AI rules for students and highlight how AI can support parent advocacy and learning at home:

“What is AI?”

A fact sheet explaining major types of artificial intelligence and several widely used AI platforms.

“A Parent's Guide to Using AI for Advocacy”

A primer from the Center on Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Education (CADRE) outlining appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI when preparing for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting or submitting a written complaint or due process request.

“Using AI with Students with Disabilities”

Examples of how AI tools can assist student learning both in school and at home.

“AI Guidance for Student Use”

Published by the Hawai'i Department of Education in January 2025, this resource was one of the first in the nation to offer public school students clear recommendations for responsible AI use and for safeguarding personal privacy.



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What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence is a buzzword everyone is talking about. Let's explore what AI is and how it's used in our daily lives.



There are Three Types of AI

Reactive

Responds to current inputs or situations without learning from past experiences or storing memories.

Examples:

- Early computer chess games
- Spam filters on email
- Simple customer service chat bots

Predictive

Uses historical and current data to identify patterns and make forecasts about future events and outcomes.

Examples:

- Weather forecasting
- Netflix recommendations
- Predictive text & autocomplete
- Fraud detection

Generative

Creates new content based on what it's learned from existing data and generates something new.

Examples:

- Create a personalized email
- Generate an image based on text input
- New music, video, code or text

Standalone vs. Integrated AI

Standalone AI is a separate program you open and interact with to create new content .

Standalone AI chatbots include

- ChatGPT
- Anthropic Claude
- Google Gemini
- Microsoft Copilot

They help with drafting emails, writing stories, creating schedules, summarizing complex documents and some can create images.

Other standalones include:

Research & Learning

- Perplexity
- Khanmigo by Khan Academy

Image Creation

- Midjourney
- DALL-E

Video & Audio Creation

- Sora by OpenAI
- Runway

Integrated AI is a helpful assistant built into the tools and programs we already use everyday.

Gmail has Smart Compose to suggest words and sentences while you type and fixes spelling errors.



Google Maps & Waze help predict traffic and drive times, while suggesting multiple routes when using the app.

Microsoft Co-Pilot is also integrated into Word, Excel, Outlook and Teams to help draft and edit documents.

Voice assistants like Siri, Google Assistant and Alexa answer questions, play media and create schedules.



1 Billion

people actively use AI tools every month. That's 1 in 8 people on Earth - a number that continues to grow.



80 Million

images are created by AI every day. What took human photography 149 years took AI 1.5 years to accomplish.



38%

The human ability to distinguish AI generated images from real photographs has dropped to just 38%.

Created using AI chatbots for information and human input for design and organization.

Anthropic Claude
ChatGPT
Google Gemini
Microsoft Copilot



2026-27
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A Parent's Guide to Using AI for Advocacy

In Special Education



**Key Facts
about AI and
Good Ways to
Use It**

AI tools (like ChatGPT) can be powerful supports for parents navigating special education. This guide is designed to help you use AI confidently and safely – in ways that strengthen your advocacy, protect your child's privacy, and support positive working relationships with your child's team.



**Protection,
Privacy, and
Possible
Problems When
Using AI**



**Positive and
Productive
Ways to Use AI
in Dispute
Resolution**



CADRE
the center for appropriate dispute
resolution in special education



Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

CADRE produced this document under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs Cooperative Agreement ALN H326X230002, Carmen M. Sánchez, Project Officer. April 2026.



Did You Know?

- AI makes mistakes – including about special education law and procedures.
- AI holds on to personal data. Information you type may be stored and used to train future AI systems.
- AI has affirmation bias – it tends to agree with or reinforce what you say, even when you are wrong.
- AI does not know your child, your school team, or your specific situation.
- AI-generated documents can sound formal and official but still contain serious errors.

Good Ways to Use AI

AI can be a helpful preparation tool. Consider using it to:

- Learn common terms (like IEP, FAPE, LRE)
- Organize your concerns into a clear, focused list
- Generate questions to ask at a meeting
- Think of collaborative, team-focused ways to raise a concern
- Practice how you might explain your concerns before a meeting
- Translate phrases or short communications – AI translation is generally accurate, but it's best to confirm meaning with a trusted bilingual person.

Example: You're preparing for an IEP meeting and want to bring up a concern about your child's reading goals. You can ask AI: "Help me make a list of questions to ask about reading goals at an IEP meeting." AI can give you a starting point – then you should review and adjust it based on what you know about your child.

Possible Problems with AI

AI answers the question you ask. It does not fully understand your family, your school team, or what your child needs right now. Additionally, AI does not understand how one action may impact another.

Before you act on AI advice, pause and ask:

- Will this help us solve the problem – or make it bigger?
- Is there a more collaborative step to try first?

If you are not careful, AI can:

- Suggest steps that escalate conflict
- Provide legal information that is wrong, incomplete, or does not apply to your situation
- Use language that sounds threatening or adversarial
- Put your child's private information at risk



Protect Your Child's Privacy

Information you type into an AI tool may be stored digitally and used to train future AI systems. Once shared, that information may not be possible to remove.

Most AI tools are not confidential. Avoid typing in:

- Your child's name, birthday, or other identifying information
- Staff names
- School or district names
- Your child's IEP
- Evaluations, reports, or detailed medical information

Privacy Tip

- Use general language to protect your family's privacy. For example:
- Instead of your child's name → say "my child"
- Instead of the school name → say "the school" or "the team"
- Instead of pasting from the IEP → describe the concern in general terms

Use AI to Get Ready – Don't Let It Decide for You

AI works best as a preparation tool, not a decision-maker. You can use it to organize your thoughts, understand terminology, or draft a starting point for a message – but always review what it produces before using it.

AI is risky when you:

- Copy and send an AI-written email without carefully reviewing it
- Let AI tell you when to “escalate”
- Rely on AI to decide whether to file a State complaint, request mediation, or file a due process complaint

Getting Better Responses from AI

How you ask questions matters. Try prompts like:

- “Help me write a calm, collaborative email to my child’s teacher about my concern that...”
- “What questions should I consider asking at my child’s IEP meeting about [topic]?”
- “What does FAPE mean in simple language?”

Always review AI responses critically – ask yourself whether the advice fits your specific situation before acting on it.



Be Extra Careful when Filing State Complaints and Due Process Hearing Requests

AI can help you understand the general process, but it often creates filings that are unclear, inaccurate, or missing required information. These errors can lead to delays, dismissals, or “no findings.” Before filing something formal, consider:

- Reading your Procedural Safeguards Notice (your rights document)
- Talking with your state Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) or Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC)
- Talking with your school district’s Special Education Director
- Speaking with your State Educational Agency about your options

Working Together and Protecting Your Rights Can Happen at the Same Time

Trying to solve problems early does not mean giving up your rights. You always have the right to:

- Request evaluations
- Disagree with decisions
- Ask for meetings and written responses
- Request mediation, file a State complaint, or file a due process complaint – at any time



A Simple Guideline

Before you act on AI-generated advice, ask:

“Will this help solve the problem – or make it harder to solve?”

Some AI-generated responses may sound confident and official but can push toward formal complaints or legal action before more collaborative options have been tried. Escalating too quickly can damage relationships with your child’s team and sometimes make it harder to get the outcome that is best for the child. Always consider whether a phone call, a written question, or a meeting might be a better first step.

Used well, AI can help you clarify the process, work collaboratively, and prepare you for meetings. However, if your use of AI escalates conflict or increases risk, slow down and consider getting human support.



Using AI with Students with Disabilities

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is more than Chat GPT, it's integrated in many apps and programs we use everyday, like Google, Siri and Alexa and can be found in cell phones, laptops and tablets. Here are a few ways AI tools can help student learning at home and at school.



Areas Where AI Can Support Student Learning

Executive Functions



- Chunk larger projects into manageable steps
- Set reminders for daily chores and school work
- Create visual schedules

Reading and Comprehension



- Summarize text into appropriate reading level
- Microsoft's Word's Immersive Reader reads aloud and highlights words

Speech and Communication



- Real-time captions for in-person and virtual meetings
- Text to speech
- Real-time translations of written or spoken words

Writing and Language Arts



- Speech to text
- Predictive text
- Spelling and grammar checks
- Draft emails & outlines

Individualized Education Program



- Summarize evaluations into parent-friendly language
- Organize follow-up questions and concerns

Mathematics



- Create visual examples of complex math problems
- Step-by-step tutorials to provide guided explanations

Other Ways AI Can Help

1

Brainstorm Ideas for a Project

AI can assist in organizing notes, structuring an essay and revising a draft.

2

Create Stories at Reading Level

AI can create personalized stories using the child's interest and reading level to grow reading fluency and understanding. Use it to create Social Stories for any situation and customize the characters.

3

Create Study Guides & Worksheets

Use AI to create learning materials for additional practice, and simplify instructions, based on the student's current level.

4

Remember the 30% Rule

Use AI no more than 30% on a project (like brainstorming or an outline) and the student provides 70% of the original thinking, writing and overall understanding of the project.

Source: <https://www.huddleupcare.com/post/how-ai-can-help-students-with-learning-disabilities>
<https://hawaiipublicschools.org/student-programs/artificial-intelligence/>
 2026 SPIN Workshop on AI in Schools

2026-27
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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

GUIDANCE for student use

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing how we learn and create. AI tools can be powerful resources for students, offering new ways to explore ideas, conduct research, and express creativity. Students may use digital programs, including AI tools, as learning resources, if they have a signed Technology Responsible Use Form (TRUF) and the program has been approved by the school. These guidelines are designed to help you use AI responsibly and ethically in your education.

Responsible AI Use

Evaluating AI Output



Never rely solely on AI-generated content. Always review and critically assess outputs from AI tools before submission or dissemination to ensure accuracy and originality. Check facts, look for logical errors, and consider whether the tone and style are appropriate for the task. These are often known as AI hallucinations.

AI and Responsibilities



Use AI tools safely and responsibly. Make sure you understand and follow school and department rules (like those in Chapter 19). This means you should never use AI for illegal activities, to create inappropriate content, or to harm others. Misuse of AI could result in disciplinary action.

Bias & Misinformation



Be aware that AI-generated content may possess biases or inaccuracies because of the data it was trained on. Always verify results from AI tools using trusted sources, such as your teacher, librarian, reputable organizations, or primary sources, before using the content in academic work.

Transparency



Any use of AI to aid assignments, projects, or research must be declared. Transparency is important for ethical reasons, to ensure you get proper credit for your own work, and to allow teachers to accurately assess your learning.

The recommendations outlined in this document will be updated based on ongoing research and development in the field of artificial intelligence.

Ethical Use of AI

Assessments



AI tools may be used as a tutor or studying assistant to prepare for assessments, such as exams or quizzes by generating practice questions or summarizing complex topics. It should not be used in the context of completing exams or quizzes unless explicitly stated. It's important to develop your own understanding and not rely on AI to do the work for you.

Assignments



Always check with your teacher for guidance on the acceptable use of AI on assignments, including any limitations. Teachers may have varying expectations for different assignments. If you are unsure, it's always best to ask.

Citing AI Content



It is important to do your own work and avoid submitting AI-generated content as your own. Any AI-generated content used in assignments must be appropriately cited; its use must be disclosed and explained. Refer to the HIDOE AI Website for citation guidelines for proper formatting.

[MLA Style - Generative AI](#) | [APA Style - ChatGPT](#) | [Chicago Style - Generative AI](#)

Plagiarism



Using AI to generate answers or complete assignments without proper citation is plagiarism. Remember the principles of responsible AI use and avoid any actions that violate academic integrity. To avoid plagiarism, be transparent about your use of AI and cite any AI-generated content appropriately.

Privacy and AI

Data Collection



Parents, guardians, and students will be informed of any data collection initiatives involving AI, and consent will be sought when applicable.

Personal Information



Protect your privacy. Avoid sharing sensitive personal information like your full name, address, phone number, or school details with AI tools. If you have any questions, ask a teacher or parent. Protecting your information helps prevent identity theft and maintains your privacy.

Third-Party AI Tools



Only use authorized AI tools approved by the school. A list of approved services is available on the school website or by request. The school approves certain AI tools to ensure they are safe, protect your privacy, and are appropriate for your age.

The recommendations outlined in this document will be updated based on ongoing research and development in the field of artificial intelligence.

Hawaii State Department of Education | January 2025

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) GUIDANCE for Students



1

APPROVAL

To use AI for schoolwork, you'll need your teacher's approval. Ask them for guidance, they want to help you succeed!

2

PRIVATE/PERSONAL INFORMATION

Never share private Information with AI. This includes information such as your full name, address, phone number or anything else that could be used to identify you.

3

BIAS AND MISINFORMATION

Remember, AI isn't always right! AI can make mistakes and may even reflect biases in the data it was trained on. Work with your teacher or librarian to find trustworthy sources and check if the information is accurate.

4

SAFETY

Use AI responsibly and ethically. AI is a powerful tool and should be used to create positive and truthful content. Avoid using AI to generate harmful or false information.

5

TRANSPARENCY / CITATION

Any use of AI to aid assignments, projects, or research must be declared. If you use AI-generated content in your work, credit the tool used and never represent AI-generated material as your original work.

Consistent with our mission to provide a quality education for all students, the Hawaii Department of Education embraces the opportunities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, and seeks to prepare students for a world where such tools will be commonplace. However, it may not always be clear how or when these technologies can be used to assist with classroom assignments and homework. The above guidelines will help students and educators determine when it is appropriate and inappropriate to use AI in HDOE schools. Provided they have obtained parental consent via the Department's Technology Responsible Use Form (TRUF).



The recommendations outlined in this document will be updated based on ongoing research and development in the field of artificial intelligence.