



Welcome to
SPIN's 40th Annual Conference

"SPIN is 40 & Fabulous!"

Saturday March 28, 2026
8:30 – 3:30 pm
UH Manoa Campus Center





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
 9:00 – 10:15 am Opening Number with SPIN Advisors
 Welcome by Mike Fahey & Kupu Kaniho
 Keynote by Leolinda Iokepa and Ohana
 10:15 – 10:45 am Totally Rad Resource Room Open / Networking

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

<i>"Every Test You Take"</i>	<i>"Preschool is Totally Cool"</i>	<i>"That's What Friends Are For"</i>	<i>"Back to the Future"</i>	<i>"Come Together"</i>	<i>Totally Rad Resource Fair</i>
Educational Assessments	Early Intervention Transition	Finding Support Networks	Artificial Intelligence in Schools	Conflict Resolution Strategies	The Resource Fair opens at 8:00 am
Ballroom 3 rd Floor	Room 307 3 rd Floor	Room 308 3 rd Floor	Room 309/310 3 rd Floor	Executive Dining Room 2 nd Floor	Cafeteria 2 nd Floor

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

Mixed Tape Session #2: 1:20 – 2:20 pm

<i>"True Colors"</i>	<i>"Don't Worry, Be Happy"</i>	<i>"Lean On Me"</i>	<i>"Tech Me Up Before You Go Go"</i>	<i>"Decisions Are My Jam"</i>	<i>Totally Rad Resource Fair</i>
Understanding ADHD	De-Stress Techniques for Parents	Supports for Siblings	Assistive Technology in the IEP	Supported Decision-Making	Resource Fair closes at 2:00 pm
Ballroom 3 rd Floor	Room 307 3 rd Floor	Room 308 3 rd Floor	Room 309/310 3 rd Floor	Executive Dining Room 2 nd Floor	Cafeteria 2 nd Floor

Mixed Tape Session #3 2:30 – 3:30 pm

<i>"Radical Realities for Autism Today"</i>	<i>"Handle With Care"</i>	<i>"Stand By Me"</i>	<i>"Talking Heads"</i>
Autism and Current Controversies	Medically Fragile Supports in School	Bullying Prevention	Screen Time & Language Comprehension
Ballroom 3 rd Floor	Room 307 3 rd Floor	Room 308 3 rd Floor	Room 309/310 3 rd Floor

Workshops, times and room assignments are subject to change



Celebrating 40 Years of the SPIN Conference!

Aloha and welcome to SPIN’s 40th Conference—40 years strong and totally rad! Since 1986, this gathering has brought together parents, caregivers, and professionals to connect, share stories, and discover resources and strategies that make a meaningful difference in the lives of our keiki with disabilities and their ohana. As we celebrate this milestone birthday with a fun 80s flair, we honor the journey SPIN has taken alongside families across Hawai‘i—growing knowledge, building community, and lifting each other up along the way. Today is all about equipping you with valuable tools, fresh ideas, and supportive connections you can count on again and again. Mahalo for being part of our SPIN ‘ohana and for helping us celebrate 40 fabulous years!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The Conference includes 14 workshops organized into three sessions called “Mixed Tape”, and in each session you will be able to choose from 5 workshops on various topics. Look at the Conference Schedule on the left, to see your workshop choices for each session. Then look up a description of workshops and speakers and check the program key to see what age group is covered in the presentation.

PROGRAM KEY:

Preschool/Elementary



Middle/High School



All Age Groups



Don’t forget to visit the
Totally Rad Resource Room
down in the Cafeteria on the 2nd floor!



With 60 different
organizations, there’s
something for
everyone!



SPIN IS 40 AND FABULOUS!

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Mixed Tape Session #1 10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

“Every Test You Take” (Educational Assessments) Ballroom

Come deepen your understanding of how educational assessments are designed and why they are used when a child is suspected of having a disability. You'll learn what different tests measure, how the results can support your child's learning and services, and the important role parents play throughout the assessment process.

Speaker: Rosie Rowe, Executive Director, Leadership in Disabilities and Achievement Hawaii

“Preschool is Totally Cool” (Early Intervention Transition) Room 307

Parents of young keiki moving from early intervention services to preschool have lots of questions. Learn more from these wise mentors—an early intervention specialist who will walk you through the transition process, an early learning specialist from the Department of Education who will describe DOE's evaluation process and options for preschool, and an akamai mom and dad who will share tips on preparing and partnering.

Speakers: Kauinohea Correa, HIDOE Early Education Specialist, Dana Pereira, Early Intervention Section Team Leader, and Chelsea & Nick Boughton, parents

“That's What Friends Are For” (Finding Support Networks) Room 308

Supportive communities can offer encouragement, practical tips, and a sense of connection for families of children with disabilities—especially those navigating military life and frequent transitions. You will be introduced to helpful Hawai'i-based resources like Ho'omana, Aloha Minds of All Kinds, and the Exceptional Family Member Program, so families know they have places to turn for support.

Speakers: Kahea Ilae, Parent, Ho'omana Facilitator, Shyla & Cody Gacusana, Parents, Aloha Minds of All Kinds, and Rose DeMello, Training & Outreach Specialist, Marine Corps Exceptional Family Member Program

“Back to the Future” (Artificial Intelligence in Schools) Room 309/310

The future is HERE, and parents need an understanding of what AI is, how it's used in Hawaii's public schools, and how it can support students with disabilities. You'll also learn potential biases and social-emotional risks posed by AI along with questions to ask the IEP team when discussing AI tools.

Speakers: Daniela Bond-Smith, Parent, University of Hawaii Researcher, UHERO, and Moshe Karabelnik, UH Researcher on the Post-Secondary Supports Project, Center on Disability Studies

“Come Together” (Conflict Resolution Strategies) Executive Dining Room, 2nd Floor

Mediation is one of the best tools to resolve disagreements with school over your child's special education services. Learn from a pro about what mediation actually is, why using it early can make things easier for everyone, and how families can get started with the process. It's all about giving parents useful tools to navigate school disagreements with confidence.

Speaker: Roberta Hickey-Gomez, Programs and Communication Manager, Mediation Center of the Pacific

SPIN is 40 and FABULOUS!!

Mixed Tape Session #2 1:20 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.

“True Colors” (Understanding ADHD) Ballroom

In this workshop a developmental-behavioral pediatrician helps parents and teachers better understand how Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) affects a child’s learning, behavior, and emotions. He offers practical strategies for supporting focus, routines, and confidence to use at home and school to help children thrive.

Speaker: Dr. Jeff Okamoto, Developmental-behavioral Pediatrician, JABSOM, and Past President, American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter

“Don’t Worry, Be Happy” (De-Stress Techniques for Parents) Room 307

Would you like to learn to spot your own stress triggers and signs—like irritability, trouble sleeping, or headaches—and learn simple self-care strategies that really make a difference? Come learn easy tips from this super-mom and licensed therapy for managing busy schedules, staying organized, finding respite, and setting healthy boundaries, so life feels a bit more manageable.

Speaker: Meriah “Riah” Nichols, Parent, Licensed Mental Health Therapist

“Lean On Me” (Supports for Siblings) Room 308

Having a brother or sister with a disability can shape a child’s responsibilities, friendships, community involvement, and access to family time. Come explore what influences sibling relationships—both the challenges and the strengths—and gain insights directly from siblings about how this experience has impacted their lives. Parents will leave with practical ideas for supporting all their children.

Speakers: Jonathan Alexander, Parent and Panel Facilitator, MCH LEND Faculty, Maiya Arias, Sibling, Volunteer, NorCal Hawai’i Chapter Tourette Association Of America, and Joy Cabuloy, Sibling

“Tech Me Up Before You Go Go” (Assistive Technology in the IEP) Room 309/310

Assistive technology can help students with disabilities meet their IEP goals in areas like communication, mobility, learning, vision, and hearing. You’ll learn what counts as AT and AT devices, how the IEP team decides what a student needs, and how the Department’s home-use policy works. Join our two experts to get clear, practical info to support your child.

Speakers: Jason Julian, Assistive Technology Resource Centers Hawaii, Tierney Barcarse, HIDOE District Educational Specialist

“Decisions Are My Jam” (Supported Decision-Making) Executive Dining Room, 2nd Floor

Supported Decision-Making is a brand new legally recognized process in Hawaii that helps teens with disabilities make choices and build confidence and independence without having to go it alone. You’ll leave with a handy starter toolkit and a clearer picture of whether this approach could be a great fit for your family.

Speaker: Che Silvert, Community and Legislative Liaison, State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Don’t forget to fill out your Conference Evaluation and
turn it in at the end of the day for a fun prize!

SPIN is 40 and FABULOUS!!

Mixed Tape Session #3 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

“Radical Realities for Autism Today” (Autism & Current Controversies) Ballroom

This workshop helps parents understand what ‘evidence-based’ really means when it comes to autism supports and therapies. You’ll look at why some treatments are considered controversial and learn simple tools for evaluating options, so you can make informed decisions that feel right for your child and family.

*Speakers: **Meghan Miller**, Director and Professor, UH Center on Disability Studies, Clinical Psychologist and **Susan Wood**, Parent, Project Director, Hilopa’a Family to Family Health Information Center and Faculty, MCH LEND Program*

“Handle With Care” (Supports for Medically Fragile Students) Room 307

This power packed panel of an educational specialist, a speech language pathologist and parents will help you understand what the term “medically fragile” means in Hawaii’s schools and pediatric care. They will walk you through the kinds of supports that can be part of an IEP or 504 plan, including how assistive technology can boost mobility, communication, and learning, and why including students with complex medical needs in everyday classrooms and extracurricular activities really matters.

*Speakers: **Suzanne McFadden**, HI DOE Educational Specialist, **Lisa Doran**, Speech Language Pathologist and Certified Assistive Technology Professional, Kapi’olani Medical Center for Women and Children, and **Janelle McCabe** and **Amber and Richard Rosa**, Parents*

“Stand by Me” (Bullying Prevention) Room 308

Come join this workshop to better understand bullying and cyberbullying—especially how it affects students with disabilities here in Hawai‘i. You will leave with practical tools and steps to help keep your child or student safe at school and online."

*Speakers: **Amanda Martinez**, Mental Health America Hawaii Chapter, **Jessica Lau**, HIDOE Project HI-Aware 2*

“Talking Heads” (Screen Time and Language Comprehension) Room 309/310

This workshop helps parents understand what “screen time” really includes and the different ways kids use it. You’ll explore how certain screen habits can help or sometimes slow language development, with simple examples. You’ll also leave with easy, family-friendly tips for building healthy screen routines.

*Speaker: **Verna Chinen**, HIDOE Administrator, Exceptional Support Branch*



BIG Shout Out to these
Totally Tubular Organizations
for supporting the SPIN
Conference!

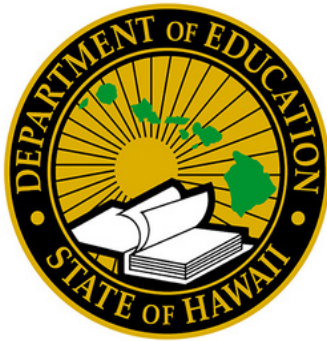
Acumen Fiscal Agent
ATRC
Bayada Home Care

Maui Learning Center
Mediation Center of the Pacific
Parents for Public Schools HI

Emergent Learning Centers

Self-Advocacy Advisory Council

Mahalo to our Excellent Sponsors!



Lynn
Murakami-
Akatsuka



Big MAHALO to these fabulous
organizations who donated a
door prize!



HIDOE
Monitoring &
Compliance
Office



Sunshine
Oils



Our SPIN Advisors are Fantabulous!

Amy Ruhaak – Office of Curriculum & Instructional Design
Anthony Akamine – Disability & Communication Access Board
Daintry Bartoldus – DD Council
Hannah Diaz – Community Member
Jackie Jackson – Hawaii Families as Allies
Jason Julian – Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii
Dr. Jeff Okamoto – Developmental Pediatrician, JABSOM
Jennifer Endo – Early Intervention Section
Leilani Kailiawa – Leadership in Disability & Achievement HI
Lisa Eng – UH Center on Disability Studies
Dr. Meghan Miller – UH Center on Disability Studies
Merlene Jose – Shriners Children's Hawaii
Michelle Maeda – Children w/ Special Health Needs Branch
Steven Vannatta – Community Children's Council
Susan Wood – Hilopa'a Family to Family & MCH LEND
Tina King – Parent, Leeward Student Support Services Section



Susan Rocco – SPIN Program Coordinator
Amanda Kaahanui – SPIN Program Specialist