


**Special Education:  
What Do I Need to Know?**

A Brief Overview for Parents

**Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of  
Hawai'i (LDAH) and Special Parent Information  
Network (SPIN): Hawai'i**

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**Agenda**

- What is Special Education in Hawai'i
- Referral, Evaluation, and Eligibility Process
- The Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP)
- Modifications and Accommodations
- Due Process
- Mid/Post-COVID Learning Loss
- Resources
- Open Panel Discussion/Questions and Answers

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**OUR GOAL**

To provide information about special education services under the Individuals with Disability Education Act or IDEA and how it is relevant here in Hawai'i.

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**What do I need to know about SPECIAL EDUCATION?**

**Special Education means:**

- Specially designed instruction
- No cost to parents
- Meets the needs of a child with a disability

**Services are provided:**

- In the classroom
- In the home
- In hospitals, institutions, or where a child goes to school



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**What do I need to know about RELATED SERVICES?**

Some children who receive special education also need related services. These services could include:

- Speech-language
- Audiology
- Interpreting services
- Psychological services
- P.T. and O.T.\*
- Recreation
- Early identification



**\*Physical therapy, Occupational therapy**

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**What do I need to know about REFERRAL?**

**Referral.**  
 The school may ask to evaluate your child.  
 The request is made in writing.  
*You may say Yes or No to the request.*



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**What do I need to know about REFERRAL?**

**Referral.** You may ask in writing for an evaluation.

**The school district may say:**

- **Yes.** Written notice and written consent
- **No.** Written notice and rights
- **Let's try something else first.**
  - *Different teaching method*
  - *Accommodations*

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**What do I need to know about EVALUATION?**

**Why have an evaluation?**

- To see if your child has a disability and needs special education and related services.
- To understand your child's needs and strengths.
- To make educational decisions.



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**What do I need to know about EVALUATION?**

**Assessments are part of evaluation. They include:**

- Tests
- Medical reports
- Observation
- A review of the child's work
- Interviews with teachers
- Interviews with parents
- Other sources



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**What do I need to know about EVALUATION?**

**Evaluation results will show if a child needs special education.**

If the evaluation does not “fit” what you know about your child:

- Say so in writing
- Meet to talk about the concerns
- Ask for more testing, or
- Ask for Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)



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**What do I need to know about ELIGIBILITY?**

**A group (parents & professionals) determines eligibility. If you disagree with the decision:**

- Do it in writing
- Ask what steps to take
- Follow through with the steps!

\*See "The Difference between IEPs and 504 Plans" handout.

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**What do I need to know about ELIGIBILITY?**

**If you agree with the decision:**

- Team meeting will be held (parents and school staff)
- Team reviews evaluation
- Team writes Individualized Education Program (IEP)



**You must be invited to help develop your child's IEP!**

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**What do I need to know about THE IEP TEAM MEETING**

**IEP Team members include:**

- Parents
- Special education teacher
- Regular education teacher
- District representative
- Person who understands evaluation
- May also include:
  - The child
  - Others



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**What do I need to know about THE IEP TEAM MEETING?**

**School staff set-up the meeting. They must:**

- Invite team members
- Tell you in advance
- Set the time and place so you are able to attend
- Tell you the purpose
- Tell you who will be there



**You may participate by phone, or reschedule**

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**What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?**

**The IEP team must discuss:**

- What the child can do – his or her strengths
- Your concerns (must be taken seriously by the team)
- Evaluation results
- Academic needs
- Functional needs\*
- Services



**\*Functional needs: routine activities of everyday living**

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**What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?**

**The IEP team must discuss:**

- What to do when behavior affects learning
- Language / communication needs related to English skills
- Braille (if vision impaired)
- Communication needs
- Assistive technology needs



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**What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?**

**The IEP will describe:**

- How your child is currently doing in school
- Annual goals
- Objectives
- Special education & related services
- Least Restrictive Environment



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**What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?**

**The IEP will describe:**

- Modifications
- Dates and places for services
- Transition services -age 14
- Age of majority
- How progress is measured



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### Accommodations & Modifications

<p><b>Accomodations</b></p> <p>A change made to the teaching or testing procedures in order to provide a student with access to information and to create an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills.</p>	<p><b>Modifications</b></p> <p>A change in WHAT the student is expected to learn and/or demonstrate. While a student may be working on modified course content, the subject area remains the same as the rest of the class.</p>
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### Accommodations & Modifications Examples

<p><b>Accomodations</b></p> <p><b>Presentation Accommodations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to an audio tape instead of reading text</li> <li>• Getting instructions orally</li> <li>• Materials in large print</li> <li>• Having a designated reader</li> </ul> <p><b>Timing Accommodations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking more time on a test/task</li> <li>• Extra time to process directions</li> <li>• Frequent breaks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Modifications</b></p> <p><b>Curriculum Modifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grading using a different standard than other students</li> <li>• Reducing identified benchmarks within a standard</li> <li>• Being excused from certain projects</li> <li>• Individualizing materials</li> </ul>
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### Accommodations & Modifications Examples

<p><b>Accommodations</b></p> <p><b>Response Accommodations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing verbal responses or dictating answers to a scribe</li> <li>• Using a spellchecker</li> <li>• Typing or tape recording answers</li> </ul> <p><b>Setting Accommodations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferential seating</li> <li>• Taking a test in a small group or a private room</li> <li>• Having a sensory/fidget tool</li> </ul>	<p><b>Modifications</b></p> <p><b>Assignment Modifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different assignments (lower-level reading, simplified vocabulary, worksheets, etc.)</li> <li>• Creating alternate projects or assignments</li> <li>• Answering different test questions</li> </ul>
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**What do I need to know about PLACEMENT?**

**Services are in the Least Restrictive Environment**

- Services must be provided in the most normal setting possible
- The team will consider whether a child can be placed in the regular classroom
- You will help decide placement



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**What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?**

**Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements.**

**Meet with school staff**

- Mediation
- Resolution sessions
- Due process hearing
- Complaint



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**What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?**

- **Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements**
- **Meet with school staff:** Talk about differences. Be clear about why you do not agree, and seek agreement. If this does not work, consider one of the other steps.



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**What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?**

- **Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements**
- **Mediation:** Parent/school meeting, where both sides agree to mediation. A person who does not work for the district (*a mediator*) helps people to reach agreement.



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**What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?**

- **Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements**
- **Resolution Session.** Required if a parent submits a due process complaint. Parents, some IEP team members and district staff who can make decisions meet within 15 days of the complaint



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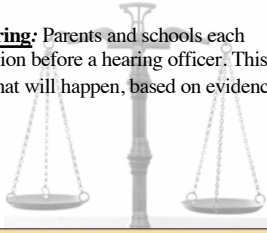
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**What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?**

- **Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements**
- **Due process hearing:** Parents and schools each present their position before a hearing officer. This person decides what will happen, based on evidence and law.



**Attorneys may represent parents or schools in hearings**

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### What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?

- Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements.
- **Complaint:** A written complaint that a school is not following the law. Each state investigates complaints and issues decisions.



Complaint Forms: Available at the school or at the HI State Department of Education.

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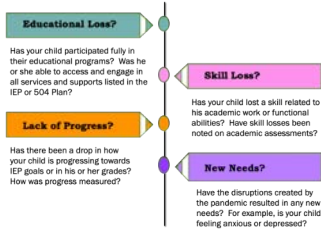
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### What is learning loss?

It is any special or general loss of knowledge and skills or reversals in academic progress, most commonly due to gaps or interruptions in a student's education. Learning loss can also include new needs that have resulted from the interruption to the student's education.



\*See "Address Learning Loss" handout.

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### How is learning loss addressed for students with disabilities?



<p>Information may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal screening</li> <li>• Progress reports</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Family notes</li> <li>• Reports from other service providers</li> <li>• Grades</li> </ul>	<p>Team members discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational loss</li> <li>• Skill loss</li> <li>• Lack of progress</li> <li>• New needs</li> </ul> <p>Team discusses the severity of the loss and how it will be addressed</p>	<p>If learning loss requires individualized supports &amp; services beyond HMTSS, the plan may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating PLEP</li> <li>• New goals/objectives</li> <li>• Increased frequency or duration of services</li> </ul>	<p>When the student's needs cannot be completely addressed through the IEP/504 Plan a COVID-19 Plan may be developed for temporary and high impact services beyond the school day.</p>
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**What are COVID-19 Impact Services?**

COVID-19 Impact Services are services in addition to the IEP or 504 Plan services that are needed to make up for significant skill loss(s) resulting from delayed, interrupted or inaccessible IEP services caused by school closures. They are:

- Temporary, high impact specially designed instruction (SDI) and related services;
- Beyond the regular school day, and
- Based on the student's current needs which may result in different services than were received in the past.

\*See "The COVID-19 Impact Services" handout.

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**What are the main learning loss and accelerated learning approaches?**

In-School Acceleration	Tutoring	Out-of-School Programs	Summer Learning & Enrichment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on the most important skills</li> <li>• Using Hawaii Multi-tiered System of Supports (HMTSS) for minor skill loss</li> <li>• Revising the IEP or 504 Plan with new or more intense services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one or in groups of 5 or fewer students</li> <li>• Tutoring during study hall or flexible periods avoids taking the student away from other instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided before and after the regular school day, on weekends and during school breaks</li> <li>• Extended School Year Services (ESY)</li> <li>• COVID-19 Impact Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official summer school</li> <li>• School learning hubs</li> <li>• ESY and non-ESY special education programs</li> <li>• Enrichment Programs</li> </ul>

\*See "Learning Loss Strategies" handout.

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**SPIN Resources**

[Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities](#), Office of Student Support Services, April 2021

[How Families Can Help Address Learning Loss for Students with Disabilities](#), SPIN, May 2021

[COVID-19 Impact Services](#), SPIN, January 2021

[Learning Loss & Accelerated Learning Approaches](#), SPIN, September 2021

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*Thank you for learning with us!*

For more information about special education or your rights, call 808-536-9684

Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawai'i,  
Parent Training & Information Center for Hawai'i  
& the Pacific Islands

We will be happy to connect you with someone who can help you.

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