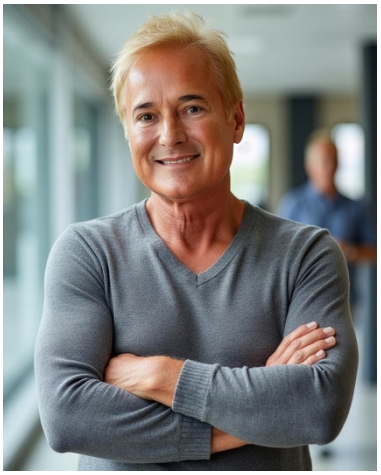
Dr. Kevin Spencer

Artist | Speaker | Author | Scholar



CONTACT

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Special Education
Liberty University, VA

M.Ed. Arts & Interdisciplinary Academic Education
Southeastern University, FL

B.S. Interdisciplinary Studies
Liberty University, VA

Associate of Arts Degree
Honoris Causa
Raritan Valley College, NJ

Humanitarian Scholar
East Tennessee State University, TN

CERTIFICATIONS

Autism Studies
Neuropsychology
Neuroscience
Neurodiversity Mental Health

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- **Associate Professor Special Appointment**: University of Alabama at Birmingham, SHP Dept. of Occupational Therapy
- **Research Consultant**: University of Alabama at Birmingham, SHP Dept. of Occupational Therapy and UAB Arts in Medicine
- **Faculty**: Harvard Medical Teaching Hospital and Boston Children's Hospital's *"Pediatric Sedation Outside the Operating Room"* conference
- **Director**: Hocus Focus, Inc. (501c3 non-profit corporation)
- **Author**, *Teach Like A Magician* (Routledge | Taylor & Francis)
- **Author**, *Fantastic Four Magic* Club (Scholastic Publishing)
- **Author,** *Using Magic Tricks in Occupational Therapy: Purpose, Play, & Performance* (Routledge | Taylor & Francis)
- **Author,** *A Practical Guide to Sensory Inclusivity in the Performing Arts* (Center for Creative Arts)

HOCUS FOCUS™ – Education Project

- The leading authority on the academic and functional benefits of arts-integrated interventions for exceptional learners.
- Presentations and Keynotes at numerous international special education conferences.
- Research Consultant in the field of Special Education.
- Designer of the Hocus Focus™ curriculum for diverse learners.
- Member Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- Member International Association of Special Education (IASE)

MAGIC THERAPY™ PROJECT – Healthcare/Rehabilitation Project

- Founder of the Magic Therapy™ Project
- *Approved Provider* of Continuing Education for the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).
- The leading authority on the therapeutic application of magic tricks in a clinical setting.
- Research Consultant, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Health Professions, Department of Occupational Therapy
- Keynote speaker at numerous U.S. rehabilitation conferences
- Author of the MAGIC THERAPY™ manual for rehabilitation therapists

POWERFUL MEDICINE: SIMPLY MAGIC – The Film

- Film Producer, *Powerful Medicine: Simply Magic*

RECOGNITIONS

- 2025 Anthem Award – Innovation: Sensory Inclusivity
- 2025 Visionary Educator of the Year (ELITEX Magazine)
- 2024 Anthem Award – Nonprofit Leader of the Year (Health)
- 2023 Anthem Award – Innovation of the Year (Health)
- 2022 Anthem Award – Innovation of the Year (Arts, Culture, Education)

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PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Spencer, K. & Brown, P. (2026). Magic-based intervention in a Parkinson's disease boot camp: A qualitative program evaluation. *Annals of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy.*

Ashcraft, R., Delzell, E., McKinney, M., Spencer, K., et al. (2025). Enhancing social skills in autistic children through magic arts. *Health Psychology Research*. https://healthpr.org/journal/HPR/13/2/10.14440/hpr.2685038

Yuen, H. K., Spencer, K., Edwards, L., Kirklin, K., & Jenkins, G. R. (2023). A Magic Trick Training Program to Improve Social Skills and Self-Esteem in Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *The American journal of occupational therapy : official publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association*, *77*(1), 7701205120. https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2023.049492

Yuen, H. K., Spencer, K., Kirklin, K., Edwards, L., & Jenkins, G. R. (2021). Contribution of a virtual magic camp to enhancing self-esteem in children with ADHD: A pilot study. *Health Psychology Research*, *9*(1), 26986. https://doi.org/10.52965/001c.26986

Spencer, K. (2021, September). Hocus Focus: Magic as a creative art therapy. In S. Bailey (Ed.), *Creative Arts Therapy Careers: Succeeding as a Creative Professional.* New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor and Francis.

Spencer, K., Yuen, H., Jenkins, G., Kirklin, K., Griffin, A., Vogtle, L., & Davis, D. (2021). The magic of magic camp from the perspective of children with hemiparesis. *Journal of Exercise Rehabilitation*, February 2021, Vol 14, No 1. DOI: https://doi.org/10.12965/jer.2040802.401

Spencer, K., Yuen, H., Jenkins, G., Kirklin, K., Griffin, A., Vogtle, L., & Davis, D. (2020). Evaluation of a magic camp for children with hemiparesis: A Pilot study. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, March 2020. https://doi.org/10.1080/07380577.2020.1741055

Spencer, K. and Balmer, S. (2020). A Pilot Study: Magic tricks in the ELL classroom increasing verbal communication initiative and self-efficacy. *English Language Teaching and Linguistics Studies*, February 2020. https://doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v2n1p11

Spencer, K. and Yuen, H. (2019). Content validation of a checklist to evaluate therapists' competency in delivering magic tricks. *International Journal of Applied Arts Studies,* http://www.ijapas.org/index.php/ijapas/article/view/207

Spencer, K., Yuen, H., Darwin, M., Jenkins, G. and Kirklin, K. (2019). Development and validation of the Hocus Focus Magic Performance Scale for health professions personnel. *Journal of Educational Evaluation for Health Professions*, 2019; 16:8. https://doi.org/10.3352/jeehp.2019.16.8

Spencer, K., Jenkins, G., Davis, and Yuen, H. (2019 May). When occupational therapy and magic collide. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 0(0) 1-3. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308022619834254

O'Rourke, S., Spencer, K., and Kelly, F. (2018). Development and Psychometric Investigation of an Arts Integrated Assessment Instrument for Educators. *Journal for Learning Through the Arts, 14(1).* https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0mx5z5xd, DOI: 10.21977/D914137309

Spencer, K. and O'Rourke, S. (2018). Creative approaches to working with children with disabilities. In M. Burke (Ed.), *Clinically oriented approaches for human trafficking*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor and Francis.

Harte, D. and Spencer, K. (2014). Sleight of Hand: Magic, Therapy, and Motor Performance. *The Journal of Hand Therapy*, 27 (2014) 67-69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jht.2013.11.001

SELECTED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS & WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

ACCESS+Inclusion 23 (2023, Feb). Mental Wellness Symposium. Public Safety, First Responders, and Mental Wellness. City of Richardson & Eisemann Center for the Performing Arts, Richardson, Texas.

Magic as a Therapeutic Intervention (2022, Dec). Professional training seminar for Ev Okulu Derneği. Istanbul, Turkey.

The Passive and Active Benefits of Magic Tricks in Pediatric Sedation and Rehabilitation (2022, Dec). Professional training seminar for Hellenic Disability Organization and MDA Greece. Athens, Greece.

Magic as a Non-pharmacologic Sedation Technique (2022, Feb). Presentation at the 16th Annual Pediatric Sedation Conference of the Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital and Boston Children's Hospital: *Sedation Techniques Outside the Operation Room*. San Francisco, CA.

CPR Analytics: Measuring the Impact of the Arts on Children with Disabilities (2019, July).
Presentation at the 16th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Special Education: *Empowering Persons with Disabilities: Developing Resilience and Inclusive Sustainable Development.,* Magamba, Tanzania.

Arts Integration Interventions for Individuals with Disabilities (2018, December). Presentation and workshops for rehabilitation specialists, psychologists, social pedagogues, educators, and university teacher preparation (pedagogy) programs in Tyumen, Yekaterinburg, and Izhevsk (Russia).

Magic & the Model of Human Occupation (2018, October). Keynote and workshop at the Virginia Occupational Therapy Association conference in Wintergreen, VA.

It's All About the Magic: Engaging Individuals with ADHD (2018, October). Presentation and workshop at the 15th Annual ADHD and Related Concerns Conference in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

A Celebration of Inclusion (2018, July). Presentation and workshop in Trondheim, Norway.

Creative Aging & the Arts (2018, April). Presentation and workshop at the Creative Aging Conference in Warsaw, Poland.

Intersection of the Arts for Special Populations (2018, April). Presentation and training with teacher preparation program at The Cardinal Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland.

Prioritization of Professional Development Needs for Inclusive Practices in Developing Regions, (2018, April).
Paper co-presentation at the American Education Research Association Conference, New York City, NY.

First World Congress for Persons with Disabilities in Russia (2017, September). Performance and workshop for individuals with disabilities.

Engaging Individuals with Disabilities Using an Arts-Integrated Approach (2017, September).
Presentation and workshops in Yekaterinburg, Verkh-Neyvinsky, Chelyabinsk, and Ufa (Russia).

Celebrate the Magic of Child Life (2017, May). Keynote presentation at the international conference of the Association of Child Life Professionals, Las Vegas, NV.

Inspirational and transformational work with children with special educational needs and disabilities. (2015, October). Keynote at the annual conference of the National Association of Special and Non-Maintained Special Schools, Brighton, United Kingdom.

The Challenges of Inclusion in Conflict Areas, (2015, August). Presentation at the round table of the Division of International Special Education and Services, Jerusalem/Bethlehem.

It's Not An Illusion: Engaging Students with Special Needs, (2015, July). Keynote at the 14th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Special Education, Wroclaw, Poland.

The Magical Benefits of a Technology-mediated Arts Curriculum, (2014, July). Presentation at the meeting of the Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES), University of Minho, Braga, Portugal.

Getting to Yes: Inclusion in the face of a post-conflict Uganda, (2014, July). Presentation at the meeting of the Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES), University of Minho, Braga, Portugal.

Increasing Language Skills Through Magic, (2014, June). Presentation at the meeting of the International Society of Language Studies: *A Critical Examination of Language and Society*, Akita International University, Akita, Japan.

Healing of Magic: Empowering Therapists with New Tools, (2012, July).
Presentation/Continuing Education Workshop at University of Ulster, Belfast, Ireland UK.

Hocus Focus: The Benefits of Arts Integration for Students on the Autism Spectrum, (2012, July).
Presentation at the meeting of the DISES International Round Table: *Promoting Research, Collaboration, and Advocacy for Children and Youth with Special Education Needs*, Innisfree International College, Sligo, Republic of Ireland.

Hocus Focus: Educational Benefits of Arts Integration for Special Learners, (2011, July).
Presentation at the 12th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Special Education: *Educating Every Learner, Every Day: A Global Responsibility,* Windhoek, Namibia.

Hocus Focus: Pedagogical Implications of Arts Integration for Special Learners & Educators, (2011, May). Presentation at the 31st Seminar of the International Society for Teacher Education: *Challenged Teacher Education - Facts, Feelings, Formation,* Kristiansand, Norway.

Healing of Magic: Empowering Therapists with New Tools, (2011, May). Presentation at the International Scientific Conference on Rehabilitation, Russian State Soviet University, Minsk, Belarus.

Hocus Focus: Educational Benefits of Arts Integration for Special Learners, (2010, December). East Asian International Conference on Teacher Education Research: *Teacher Education for the Future – International Perspectives*, Hong Kong.

Hocus Focus: Educational Benefits of Arts Integration for Special Learners, (2010, July). Presentation at RIGA 2010: *Embracing Inclusive Approaches for Children and Youth with Special Education Needs*, Riga, Latvia.