



## Speaker Tips and Resources Guide

### Tips for a Successful Proposal

Each year, attendees consistently tell us that our speakers are a highlight of their conference experience. We're looking for proposals that reflect the heart of the Head Start mission—sessions that inspire and empower, offer interactive and engaging learning, and highlight emerging trends, innovations, and real-world solutions that strengthen early childhood programs.

We especially encourage submissions from practitioners in the field—the leaders, educators, and staff who are doing the work every day. Your first-hand experience matters. Tell us what you've implemented in your program, what has worked, and how your approach is making a difference for children and families.

Don't wait until the deadline to submit. Early submissions help you stand out and ensure your session receives full consideration.

### Education Topics

The FHSA Professional Development Committee is charged with soliciting and carefully vetting the most advanced and emerging content available. Our education sessions are what make this conference truly unique, bringing the Head Start community together around learning that inspires, equips, and elevates our work with children and families.

Submissions should align with one of these track topics:

#### Challenging Behaviors

This track invites sessions that equip educators, family advocates, home visitors, and program leaders with practical, evidence-based strategies to support children exhibiting challenging behaviors. Presenters should focus on actionable tools and Head Start-aligned practices that staff can immediately apply.

Proposals may explore:

- Positive behavior supports and trauma-informed approaches
- Classroom management techniques that promote regulation and engagement
- Family partnership strategies for addressing behavior concerns
- Preventative practices that strengthen social–emotional development
- Real-world examples from programs successfully reducing challenging behaviors

#### Leadership

This track is designed for emerging and seasoned leaders across all program roles. Sessions should strengthen leadership capacity, operational excellence, and organizational culture. Proposals that highlight Florida-based innovations or replicable leadership models are encouraged.

Topics may include:

- Coaching and supervision strategies



- Leading through change and uncertainty
- Building high-performing teams
- Data-driven decision-making
- Strengthening cross-department collaboration
- Strength-based leadership practices

## **Disabilities**

This track focuses on supporting children with disabilities and developmental delays, ensuring full inclusion and access to services. Sessions should emphasize practical tools, clarity around compliance, and inclusive mindsets.

Proposals may address:

- Data, Identification and Continuous Improvement
- Effective collaboration with LEAs and community partners
- Proactive inclusive classroom practices and systems
- Family Engagement, Empowerment and Education
- Navigating IDEA requirements within Head Start
- Workforce development and capacity building to support children with disabilities
- Integrating behavioral, mental health and social-emotional support for all children and families

## **Mental Health & Wellness**

This track supports the mental health and well-being of children, families, and staff. The committee encourages sessions that blend research, real-world application, and culturally responsive approaches.

Proposals may explore:

- Strategies for supporting children's emotional regulation
- Workforce wellness and staff mental health
- Family mental health engagement and referral pathways
- Behavioral health trends in Florida and their impact on childhood programs
- Mental Health Consultation and Community Partnerships
- Approaches that integrate mental health into everyday practice

## **Fiscal Training**

This track is designed for fiscal staff, directors, and anyone responsible for program budgeting, compliance, and financial oversight. Sessions should help programs strengthen fiscal health and ensure accountability.

Proposals may include:

- Budget development and monitoring
- Allowable costs and cost allocation
- Internal controls and audit readiness
- Fiscal-program collaboration



- Preparing for federal reviews
- Tools for simplifying complex fiscal requirements

### **ERSEA** (*Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment & Attendance*)

This track supports staff responsible for maintaining full enrollment and ensuring compliance with ERSEA regulations. Presenters should emphasize clarity, compliance, and practical solutions.

Proposals may address:

- Recruitment strategies that reflect community needs
- Eligibility documentation and verification
- Selection criteria development
- Attendance strategies and chronic absenteeism prevention
- Data systems and reporting
- Family engagement approaches that support enrollment stability

### **Monitoring & Focus Area Review Training**

This track prepares programs for federal monitoring and continuous improvement. Sessions should help programs feel confident, organized, and review-ready.

Proposals may include:

- Understanding the monitoring protocols and what reviewers look for
- Preparing teams for Focus Area 1 and Focus Area 2
- Using data to demonstrate compliance and quality
- Strengthening ongoing monitoring systems
- Lessons learned from recent reviews
- Anticipating changes related to HSPPS updates

### **Additional Speaker Tips**

To help your proposal stand out, here are key elements reviewers look for when evaluating submissions:

1. **Meaningful Takeaways**  
Show how participants will apply what they learn to their daily work. Reviewers look for sessions that strengthen practice, leadership, and outcomes for children and families.
2. **Engagement and Interaction**  
Build intentional opportunities for participation. Go beyond traditional Q&A—incorporate discussion, reflection, activities, or demonstrations that bring the content to life.
3. **A Clear, Compelling Title**  
Your title should accurately reflect your session while also capturing attendees' interest. Think of it as your ten-second elevator pitch.



4. **Accurate Learning Objectives**

Learning objectives should clearly state what participants will be able to do after your session. Strong objectives help reviewers understand the value and focus of your content.

5. **Accessible, Plain Language**

Use clear, inclusive language. Avoid jargon, acronyms, and slang so your session is accessible to all members of the Head Start community.

6. **Complete and On-Time Submissions**

Only complete proposals submitted by the deadline will be reviewed. Early submissions are encouraged and often receive stronger consideration.

7. **Preparation Matters**

Review the full application and gather all required materials before you begin. A well-organized submission reflects a well-organized session.

8. **Proofread Carefully**

Reviewers evaluate clarity and professionalism. Spelling or grammatical errors can make a strong proposal harder to assess.

9. **Thoughtful Use of Presenters**

Sessions may include up to four presenters, but fewer are often more effective. Too many presenters can limit interaction and dilute key takeaways.

*Please note that only the primary presenter receives a complimentary registration; additional speakers must register for the conference.*