



## Proposal Submission Guidelines

### General Conference Workshops

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**54th Annual National Down Syndrome Congress Convention**  
**July 23 - 26, 2026**  
**Hilton Signia**  
**Orlando, FL**

Thank you for considering to submit your proposal for the National Down Syndrome Convention.

The General Conference Workshops within the NDSC Convention are designed for parents, adult siblings, grandparents, caregivers, medical experts, and educational professionals. General Conference attendees have access to workshop cycles. Each cycle offers a selection of workshops that registrants attend based on their interests. These interactive workshops feature respected professionals, each selected for their valuable contributions to the field of Down syndrome education and support. From individuals making strides in early childhood communication to those innovating K-12 learning environments, as well as researchers addressing the needs of adults with Down syndrome, our presenters bring practical experience and insight to share with our community.

# All General Conference Workshop Proposals are due by November 24, 2025

Before you begin your submittal, here are a few items to consider:

- Submission Form Information.
- Timeline for proposals
- Presentation formats
- Proposal review criteria

## Submission Form Information

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**The following information will be needed when you prepare your submission.**

### **Speaker Information (for each speaker)**

- Prefix
- First Name
- Last Name
- Post-nominal
- Contact Email
- Contact Phone Number
- Organization/Company Representing (if applicable)
- Organization City/State (or city/state where you reside)
- Bio (Exactly as should be printed in the Convention program/app) Be sure to include relevant professional credentials, distinctions, personal or professional affiliations with someone with Down syndrome and unique qualifications. (Max 600 characters)
- Is the speaker a self-advocate with Down syndrome?
- Is speaker a member of the Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group (DSMIG)?
- Is speaker fluent in Spanish?
- Speaker ethnicity
- Please list any accommodations necessary for the speakers.

### **Proposed format**

- Deep Dive Presentation: 3-hour intensive, single session with a live presentation, allowing time for questions.
- Interactive Workshops: Single session with a live audience, engaging delivery, including time for questions.
- Panel Discussions: Single session, moderator-led panel presentation developed by one lead presenter who assembles 4-6 experts for targeted, topic-driven dialogue.

## Youth and Adult Conference & DSAIA Conference

- This is NOT a proposal for the Youth & Adult Conference. If a modified version of your proposal would be applicable to the Youth & Adult Conference please consider submitting a Youth & Adult proposal.
- This is NOT a proposal for the Down Syndrome Affiliates in Action (DSAIA) pre-Con. If your proposal would also be applicable to the DSAID pre-Con (July 22-23, 2026), please consider submitting a DSAIA proposal.

## Session Information

- **Title of Session (Max 110 characters)** (Exactly as it should be printed in the Convention program/app)
  - Your title should clearly describe the session and generate interest in attending. Use words that will attract your session's primary audience.
  - Example: Unlocking Potential: Supporting Success in Education and Employment
  - Example: Literacy Unleashed: Innovative Paths to Integrate Reading Strategies
- **Description of session (Max 1,000 characters)** (Exactly how it should be printed in the Convention program/app)
  - Write a brief but detailed description of your proposed session. Be as specific as possible, avoiding cliches and buzzwords. Describe what the session will offer and what participants can expect to walk away with from your session.

## Themes

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Adult Life          | • Healthy Living          |
| • Advocacy            | • Housing                 |
| • Behavior            | • Medical                 |
| • Co-Occurring DS-ASD | • Personal Perspective    |
| • Communication       | • Post-Secondary          |
| • Education           | • Sexuality/Relationships |
| • Employment          | • Therapies               |
| • Financial           | • Transition to Adulthood |

## Age Group

- Birth - 3
- Preschool
- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School/Postsecondary
- Adult
- All Ages

### **Additional Biography Information**

- Please provide additional information (beyond what was included in the Bio above) about the speaker(s) qualifications that will allow the Speaker Selection Team to better evaluate this proposal. If you have multiple speakers, please provide their information here as well. The additional information may include: previous experience speaking at the NDSC convention or at other Down syndrome educational events; previous presentations of the material to other audiences, links to any websites or social media resources that provide information on the speaker(s) qualifications and any additional information on expertise in this area of work (1500 characters max).

### **List 3 learning objectives of this presentation (“After this presentation, participants will be able to\_\_\_\_” ) (300 characters max)**

- The learning objectives should define clear outcomes, align with the session content, use action verbs, and be specific and concise.

### **Presentation Outline (900 characters max)**

- A detailed outline of the presentation, including the main topics or themes that will be covered. Be sure to indicate what participants will learn and the content covered and the process for engaging participants fully. The outline should allow the Committee to know and understand your session format structure to meet participant expectations.

### **Research supporting Presentation (500 characters max)**

- Any references to academic research, articles, or books that support the presentation content. The Committee is looking for presentations backed by effective practices. If you are submitting a presentation based on your personal experience only, please state this and provide any experience you have presenting this presentation.

### **Engagement techniques or activities that you will use to make your presentation interactive and encourage audience participation. Check all that apply/add your own "other" idea.**

- Interactive polls/surveys
- Use of Multimedia/Videos
- Audience Participation
- Gamification
- Icebreaker activities
- Group interaction/activities
- Interactive Q&A
- Hands-on practices or demonstrations
- Other

### **Relevance or Connection to the Down syndrome Community (500 characters max)**

- Explanation of the relevance of the presentation to current issues or challenges in the field of Down syndrome. Potential impact of the presentation on the audience and the broader community. Inclusion of a self-advocate within the presentation.

# Timeline

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## Timeline for General Conference Workshops Call For Speakers

- **October 1, 2025** - Call for speakers opens
- **November 24, 2025** - Call for speaker proposal submission deadline
- **February 13, 2026** - All those who submitted will be notified if the proposal was approved or declined.
- **March 4, 2026** – Early registration and hotel opens for accepted speakers
- **March 10, 2026** – General registration and hotel opens to all

Please note the schedule is subject to change.

## Presentation Formats

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The 2026 General Conference Workshops will consist of a combination of deep dive presentations, interactive workshops, and panel discussions. Below are session format definitions:

- **Deep Dive Presentation:** 3-hour intensive, single session with a live presentation, allowing time for questions.
- **Interactive Workshops:** Single session with a live audience, engaging delivery, including time for questions.
- **Panel Discussions:** Single session, moderator-led panel presentation developed by one lead presenter who assembles 4-6 experts for targeted, topic-driven dialogue. The panel leader must be identified, and only the leader will receive communications from the NDSC convention staff.

## Proposal Selection Criteria

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When developing the general conference curriculum, our goal is to provide a balanced program that meets the variety of skills and interests of the attendees and is presented by speakers of the highest quality who represent the diversity of the NDSC membership. When drafting your proposal, keep the following criteria in mind:

- Is the material research-based, accurate, and up-to-date?
- Does my presentation offer strategies or how-to's for attendees to take and use at home, school, or within the broader community?
- Is my presentation interactive and/or engaging?
- Is the topic relevant and needed by the Down syndrome community?

- Am I using people-first language?
- Will my presentation appeal to the audience? While there are some professionals, most of our attendees are parents, siblings, grandparents, and other caregivers.

*All proposals are reviewed and selected by the NDSC General Conference Workshop Speaker Selection Team. Speakers are selected based on the completeness and clarity of the submission, relevance of the topic to the NDSC mission, and qualifications and experience of the speaker(s).*

## Presentation Compensation and Benefits

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**NDSC has a tradition of offering educational conference sessions as a platform for the advancement of the Down syndrome community as a whole. We invite contributors who are willing to share their expertise without expectation of compensation in the spirit of educating, inspiring, and advocating for the community, caregivers, and self advocates.**

General Conference Workshop speakers will need to register for Convention and will receive discounted registration price of \$100. Deep Dive speakers will receive a free Convention registration. Self-advocate general conference speakers do not need to register for General Conference.

As hosting costs for the Convention have increased each year, we have considered several budget adjustments to make the event as accessible as possible for families. This included introducing a small registration fee of \$100, which is over 50% less than the regular fee. Our research with other conferences nationwide shows that charging a registration fee for speakers is a common practice across conferences.

In return, NDSC expects presenters to:

- Acknowledge they are available to speak during the timeframe of posted convention dates and during any assigned workshop cycles. An effort will be made to ensure speakers' preferences or conflicts, but final assignments will be made by NDSC.
- Work closely with convention organizers before the event to meet all deadlines.
- Make no substantial changes in content, format, or number of presenters without prior approval of convention organizers.
- Design and provide high-quality PowerPoint presentations in electronic format.
- Allow NDSC to utilize selected speakers and topics to promote convention registration.
- Recognize that a presentation is an opportunity to share information and is not a showcase for promoting one's business, practice, services, or products.

**Questions?**

**Email: [info@ndsccenter.org](mailto:info@ndsccenter.org)**