

# unconference: 2026

## Out-of-School Time

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Trying Together invites you to submit a proposal to present a professional development session for the upcoming Out-of-School Time UnConference, which will be held on June 11, 2026.

Trying Together's UnConference is an innovative, hands-on professional development training format where a deeper experience is provided around a particular theme in relation to school-age and early childhood education. Local speakers are invited to present and participants are encouraged to engage hands-on in the workshops.



### Proposal Information

#### Possible Topics

Trying Together seeks a focused range of topical presentations for its June UnConference, which aims to be **a collaborative, interactive approach to high quality summer programming for school-age children**. The audience for this UnConference will be educators, staff, and administrators working with children in summer programs, engaged parents and caregivers, and ECE and OST advocates.

Appropriate topic areas include (but are not limited to):

- Mental health and social-emotional well-being
- Poverty responses
- Trauma-informed practices for OST programs
- Positive behavior management
- Game-based learning strategies
- Project-based learning for after school and summer programs
- Managing interpersonal conflict among staff
- Parent and family engagement for OST programs
- The importance of play

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## Proposal Selection Criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed by the UnConference planning committee. The committee will review proposals based on:

- Extent to which the proposal targets and is relevant to the early learning workforce and the ECE landscape in Southwestern Pennsylvania
- Experience/expertise of presenters
- Definition and focus of the topic
- Ability to engage participants in discussion and hands-on learning experiences
- Practical application of material and takeaways
- Timeliness and importance of topic

Each workshop proposal should:

- Encourage active learning
- Present culturally inclusive ideas, practices, and/or relevant research aimed at positioning attendees as leaders at the early learning programs in which they work
- Offer strategies for effective implementation of information acquired
- Include presenters who have significant expertise in the topic area and who have spoken successfully in front of groups
- Cover a 90-minute block of time

The proposal form will ask for a program description, learning objectives, and instructional methods. In providing this information, please provide enough detail so the planning committee can understand how the session will be structured and what key issues will be covered.



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## Stipend

Trying Together will offer an honorarium of \$250 to any organization or individual (if not affiliated with an organization) whose proposal is chosen to be presented at the UnConference. This opportunity is open to presenters located in Southwest PA.

## Important Dates

- **March 6, 2026** — proposals due
- **March 16, 2026** — all applicants will be notified about the status of their proposals and the time of their workshop
- **May 28, 2026** — presentation slides and materials/overview of materials are due electronically
- **June 11, 2026** — UnConference

## Your Next Steps: How to Submit a Proposal

- Download the [submission form](#) and save to your desktop.
- Submit your proposal as an attachment to [learning@tryingtogether.org](mailto:learning@tryingtogether.org) with the subject line “June 2026 Unconference Proposal” **no later than 11:59 p.m. on March 6, 2026.**

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## About Trying Together

Trying Together supports high-quality care and education for young children by providing advocacy, community resources, and professional growth opportunities for the needs and rights of children, their families, and the individuals who interact with them. Trying Together works regionally in Southwestern Pennsylvania and takes its expertise and models to statewide and national audiences.

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**A special thanks to our event partners:**

