

The Fabric of Belonging:
Crafting Spaces for Connection and Resilience

INTERACTIVITY 2026

April 21–23, 2026
San Diego, CA



Hosted in
partnership with
the new children's museum™

Session Proposal Writing Webinar
Tuesday, July 1, 2025
2:00 p.m. ET

Introductions

Speakers

Victoria Garvin, Sr. Director, Professional Development, ACM

Gabrielle Wyrick, Chief Curator + Director of Art and Engagement, The New Children's Museum

Meredith Maple-Gitter, Executive Director, Fairbanks Children's Museum and IA26 Program Committee Co-Chair



What is your experience submitting a session proposal and/presenting at InterActivity? (Select one option.)

1. I have never submitted a session proposal for InterActivity.
2. I have presented at InterActivity but have never submitted a proposal.
3. I have submitted session proposal for InterActivity.
4. I have submitted a session proposal and presented at InterActivity.
5. Other (describe in Chat)



Webinar Agenda

Goals of InterActivity

Conference theme

Developing a proposal

Elements of a proposal

Review and selection process

Timeline



Goals of InterActivity

1. Professional development
2. Networking
3. Advancing the children's museum field
4. Conducting the general business of ACM



Purpose of Professional Development

Planning Programs for Adult Learners, Caffarella and Ratcliff Daffon, 2013, p. 5

1. “Encourages growth and development of individuals.
2. Assists people in responding to practical work problems.
3. Prepares people for current and future work opportunities.



Purpose of Professional Development *cont.*

4. Assists organizations to achieve desired results and adapt to change.
5. Provides opportunities to examine community and societal issues, foster change for the common good, and promote a civil society.”

Planning Programs for Adult Learners, Caffarella and Ratcliff Daffon, 2013, p. 5



Top 3 Reasons Cited for Attending InterActivity 2025

from the post-conference InterActivity Evaluation

1. To get practical information to use in my job
(attend concurrent sessions)
2. To be inspired
3. To network



About the Theme



Q. The most important part of writing a session proposal?

A. Developing the proposal!



Developing a Session Proposal

1. Topic selection
2. Check if topic new
3. Get feedback on session ideas
4. Recruit presenters
5. Know the audience



Know the Audience: What Attendees Want

1. Guidance on how to apply session content at their museum
2. Engagement! Activities! Movement!
3. Strategies, frameworks, worksheets
4. Dynamic presenters
5. Few presenters and more in-depth content

Session Topics Questions

- Theme related: How is your museum creating a sense of belonging and connection in your community?
- What strategies do you have to build resilience among staff and community?
- Not theme related: what effective practices does your museum have that might be useful to others?
 - Hint: Marketing, Finance, HR, Development, Visitor Services, Membership, etc.



Components of a Session Proposal

- Session Chair Information
- Session Title and Description
- Confirmed Presenters
- Learning Outcomes
- Session Plan
- Tools and Handouts
- Session History
- Session Chair Agreement



Session Title and Description

- Pitch for your session, used in the Preliminary and Final Programs.
- Write with attendees in mind.
- Include what the session will cover and what attendees can expect to take away.
- Keep it simple, clear, and concise.
- Will be edited by ACM for style.



Confirmed Presenters

- Limit of one moderator and four presenters.
- Confirmed presenters have the support of their institution to participate.
- ACM may contact the CEO/executive director of each presenter's institution to ensure support.
- Provide a diversity of perspectives.
- First time InterActivity presenters are welcome.



Learning Outcomes--Examples

- Participants will learn two new strategies for bringing play into the workplace, schools, and community settings.
- Attendees will understand the key benefits of growing access and inclusion for visitors of all abilities.
- Participants will be able to write a plan for a community-wide conversation on early learning.
- Attendees will identify three strategies to generate program ideas.

Session Plan

- **Who** will speak and for how long? Include time allotments.
- **What** attendees can expect to take away from the session.
- **Why** attendees need to know the content you will deliver.
- **How** attendees will participate.

Remember: attendees want to know **how** you did what you're presenting.



"DITO"

WHAT IS THE ONE MOST IMPORTANT THING
YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN WHEN YOU TOOK THE JOB?

Actual Financial Position ●●●●

Team Dynamics / Culture ●●●

GLOBAL PANDEMIC ●

Staffing needs for the museum ●●●●●
Staffing Structure

Just how many hats I'd be wearing ●●●●●
● The Number of "Moving Parts" ●●●

Say "I'm not ~~Don't~~ making major decisions in the first 6 mo" ●

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR WORK?

The children! ●●●●

my team ●●●●

Being Creative ●●●●

Helping the Community be better! ●

Sharing our work with our community/region

Solving Puzzles ●

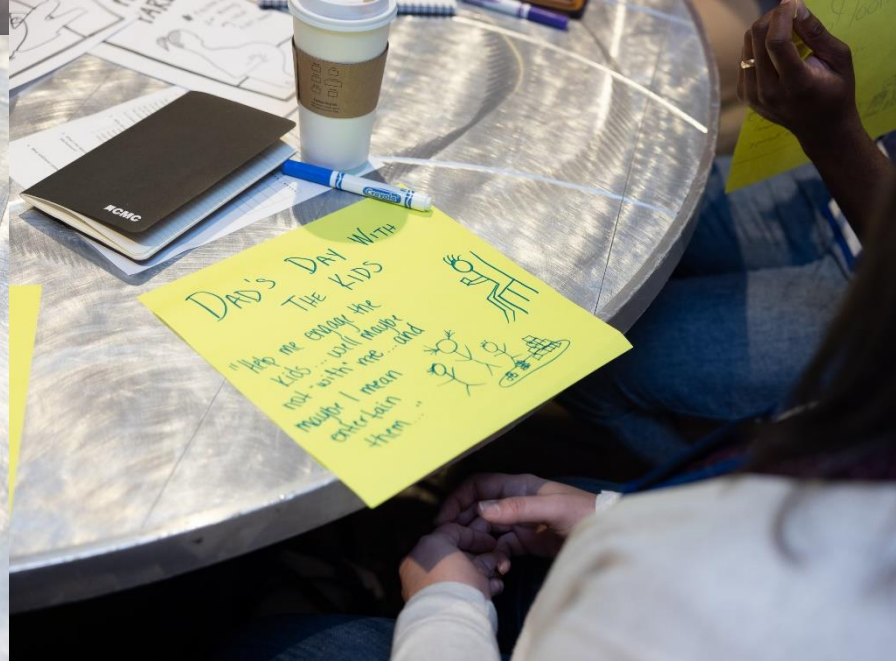
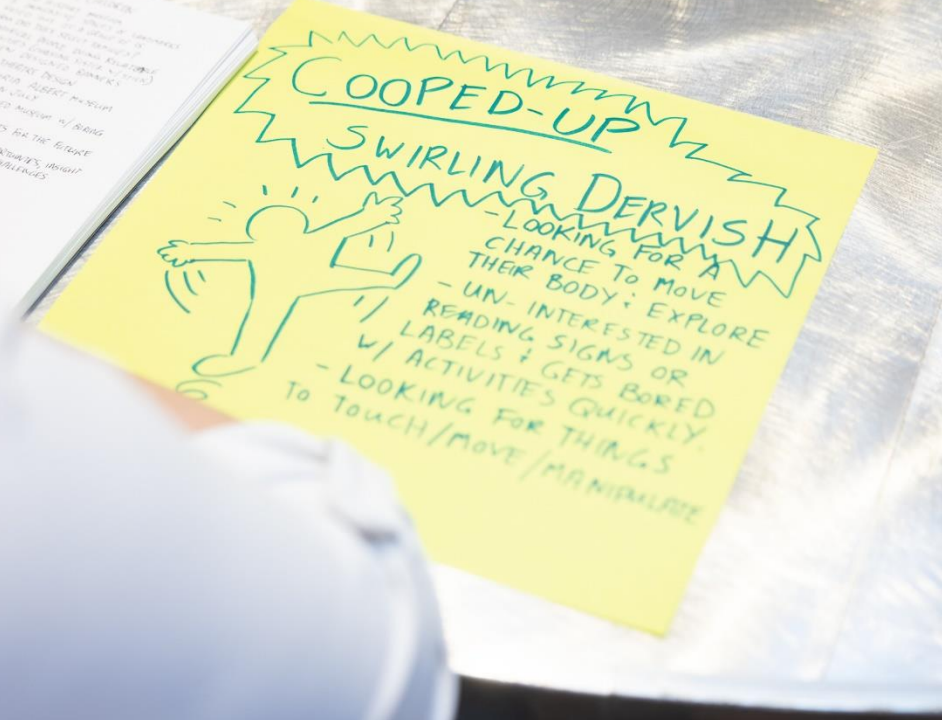
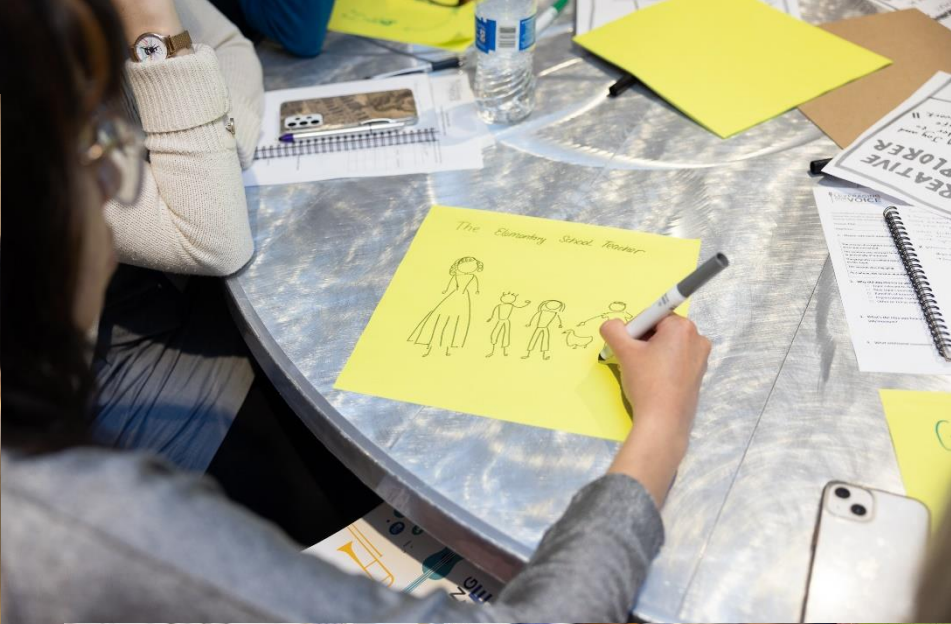
Energy of children, families, team around me

Changing the world ●

Creative conversations (what's possible) ●

THE MANY PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVED! ●●●●

Building COMMUNITY ●●●●
Helping children to become change Agents! ●●●●



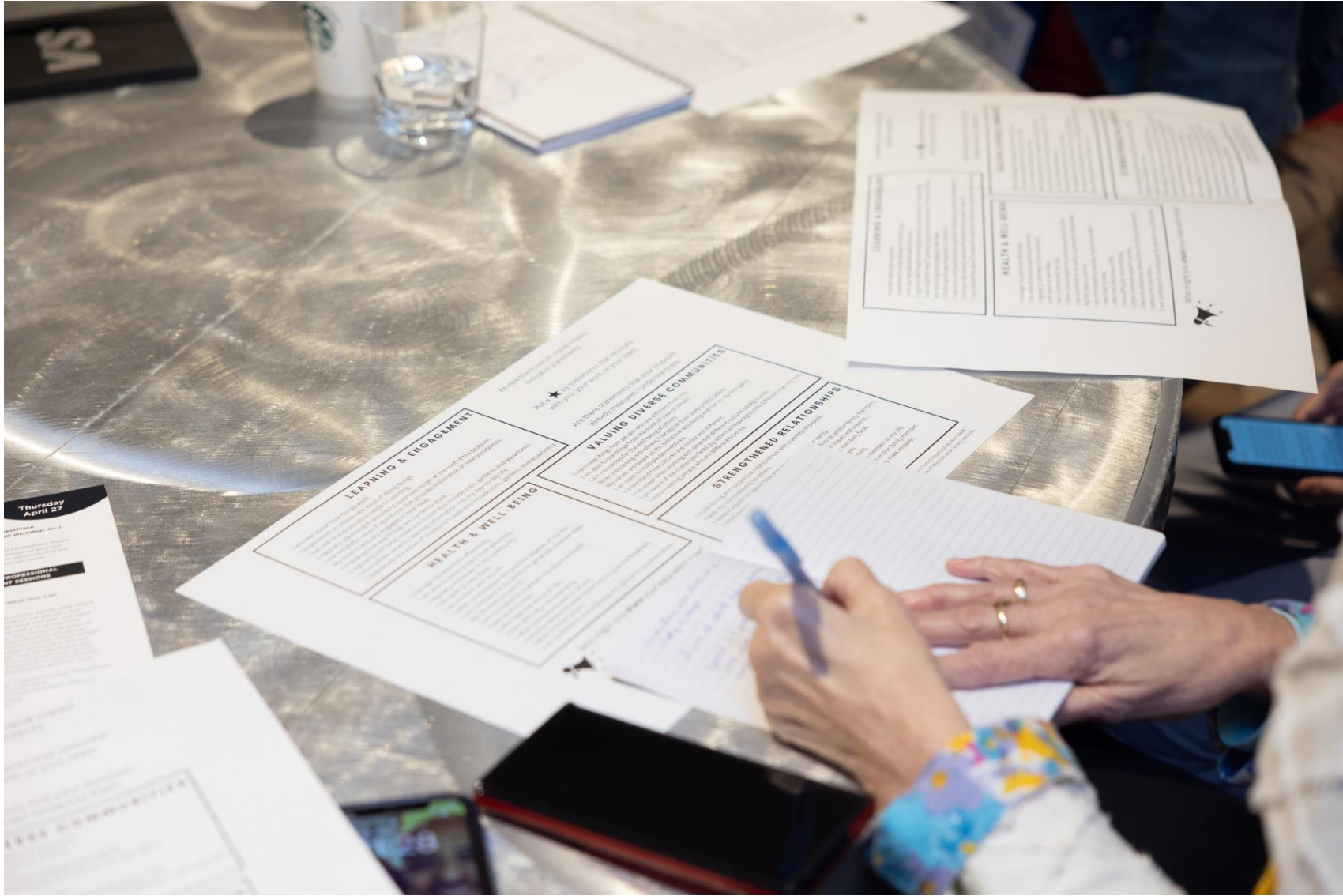


Tools and Handouts

- Resource lists
- Tips and checklists
- Activity instructions
- Worksheets
- Sample documents
- Toolkits







Session Chair Agreement



Session Chair Agrees to:

- Secure and confirm presenters
- Plan the session from start to delivery
- Meet all deadlines set by ACM—including registering oneself and ensuring presenters register by the Early Bird deadline (January 2026).
- Rehearse the session with all presenters in advance.
- Ensure development of useful handouts.
- Reviews all session presentations and handouts in advance.

Session Chair Agrees to:

- Advise presenters that they must complete a Presenter Agreement Form.
- Advise presenters that they must attend the “Tips for Presenting at InterActivity” webinar.
- Understanding that if there are substantive changes to the session after its acceptance, ACM reserves the right to cancel the session.
- Maintain timely communication with their Program Committee shepherd and ACM.

Role of the InterActivity Program Committee



Proposal Selection Criteria

- The proposed session conveys adaptable practices, take-home tools, innovative strategies, or new research and its application.
- Learning outcomes are realistic and achievable.
- Session plan outlines a clear picture of what attendees can expect during the session, including their participation.
- Proposal describes useful handouts.
- Presenters are confirmed and provide a variety of perspectives on the topic.

Timeline

- **July 31:** Deadline to complete online Session Proposal Form.
- **August:** Program Committee reviews proposals.
- **Sept 11-12:** Program Committee meets at NCM.
- **By Oct 10:** Notifications sent to all session chairs.
- **Oct-Nov:** InterActivity 2026 Registration opens.

Questions?



Contact Info

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Web page:

<https://childrensmuseums.org/interactivity/call-for-session-proposals/>

Submission deadline: **Wednesday, July 31**

Thank You!