

NEW JERSEY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON AFTERSCHOOL & OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME



APRIL 17-18, 2026

**PRESENTED BY NEW JERSEY'S AFTERSCHOOL AND
OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROFESSIONAL NETWORK**

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NEW JERSEY'S AFTERSCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

NJSACC: New Jersey's Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Professional Network is proud to present our 2026 Annual Conference on Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (OST). On behalf of the NJSACC staff and Board of Trustees, we are excited to share more than 40 workshops and sessions designed to meet the diverse professional development and training needs of New Jersey's youth development professionals.

The timing of this year's conference is very fitting as it is right before Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week. There's no better time to participate in meaningful opportunities to learn, network with colleagues, connect with vendors and exhibitors, and celebrate your work! Your work is tireless and often underappreciated, but this is time intentionally set aside for you. At NJSACC, we aim to provide the support, resources, and space you deserve to continue the essential work you do every day. We hope you are able to join us!

The past year has brought renewed questions about the validity and necessity of our field. The research is clear - the demand for quality afterschool and OST programs remains high with four out of five youth in need of programs still lacking access. According to the Afterschool Alliance's New Jersey After 3PM report, more than 150,000 school-age youth are currently enrolled in afterschool programs, and parents of over 700,000 children want access to afterschool care. New Jersey parents rank seventh in the nation in recognizing the importance of afterschool and OST programs, with more than 80 percent rating programs as "excellent" or "very good."

OST programs are beneficial to youth, families and the communities they live in. They provide safe, supportive spaces outside of school hours; help young people build social, emotional, and leadership skills; and contribute to improved academic outcomes and school attendance. Parents and guardians are better able to maintain employment, work additional hours, and experience reduced stress knowing their children are safe. As a result, New Jersey's economy is strengthened through workforce productivity and overall family well-being.

We all have a role to play and together, we form the OST ecosystem: a constellation of diverse programs and professionals, each uniquely designed to meet the needs of New Jersey's youth and families. NJSACC will continue its mission to foster the growth, quality, and sustainability of out-of-school time providers, professionals, and organizations by advancing advocacy efforts, strengthening partnerships, building coalitions, and working to bring additional resources to the field. We also call on legislators, decision-makers, philanthropy, funders, and the business community to join us in sustaining afterschool and OST—because when these programs thrive, everyone benefits.

You help shape the fabric of our communities by creating opportunities for young people to explore, grow, and thrive—while enabling families to support themselves and build stability. We thank you for all that you do!

In service of New Jersey's youth and families,

Ebony D. Grace, MFT
Chief Executive Officer
NJSACC (New Jersey School-Age Child Care Coalition):
New Jersey's Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (OST) Professional Network

Welcome



The mission of the New Jersey School-Age Child Care Coalition (NJSACC) is to foster the growth, quality, and sustainability of out-of-school time providers, professionals, and organizations to expand access and opportunity for New Jersey's youth and families.

Conference at a Glance

Friday, April 17, 2026

8:00am - 8:45am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:45am - 9:45am	Opening Session and Keynote
10:00am - 11:30am	Session 1
11:35am - 1:20pm	Lunch and Showcase Alley
1:30pm - 3:00pm	Session 2
3:15pm - 4:30pm	Session 3

Saturday, April 18, 2026

8:00am - 8:30am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30am - 9:30am	Opening Session
9:45am - 11:15am	Session 1
11:30am - 12:15pm	Lunch
12:30pm - 1:45pm	Session 2
2:00pm - 3:15pm	Session 3 End The Day Your Way

Land Acknowledgement

With gratitude, NJSACC acknowledges the Lenapehoking (Lenni-Lenape) and the sacrifices of the Lenape people, culture and ancestral homeland in New Jersey, for which we all have been able to thrive. NJ has been the ancestral homeland to the Lenape for over 14,000 years and were forcibly removed and displaced by European colonizers, resulting in a historic diaspora. Some tribal and First Nations, officially recognized by the state and federally, maintain communities that still thrive today, located throughout North America, NJ and the greater mid-Atlantic region.

NJ Workforce Registry Requirements

You must have a NJ Workforce Registry ID Number in order to register for the conference. The process is simple and will take a few minutes of your time. Visit www.njccis.com to sign up or log in. Once you're registered and logged in, on the *Profile* page, click *Print Membership Card* to see your ID number. If you have a technical question about the NJ Workforce Registry, please call PCG at: 1-877-522-1050 or email them at: njworkforceregistry@pcgus.com. Not required for non-New Jersey residents.

Conference Accommodations

NJSACC encourages all people to participate in its workshops, programs and activities.

If you have any dietary restrictions, anticipate needing any type of accommodation while attending the conference or have questions about the physical access provided, please call the NJSACC office at: 908-789-0259 in advance of your participation.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE!

- **EACH attendee must have their own NJ Workforce Registry ID Number to register for the conference. ID Number is not required for non-New Jersey residents.**
- **Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Workshops fill up quickly so register early!
Last day to register is Friday, April 3, 2026.**
- **Invoices, receipts for payment and confirmation of registration will be available online only. If you need assistance registering, contact Jessica Heiberg, Director of Administrative Services at: 908-789-0259 or email at jessicaheiberg@njsacc.org.**
- **Group registrations may be done online. The individual registering the group will be responsible for payment and communication to the group members. Each person will need to have their own NJ Workforce Registry ID Number.**
- **Registration fee includes continental breakfast, continuous break stations and a buffet lunch daily. Vegetarian options are always available.**
- **No registration refunds will be given after April 3, 2026. However, substitutions may be made at any time. Sorry, no exceptions will be made, regardless of whether or not you attend.**
- **If not paying online with a credit card, please mail check or PO with printout of online registration confirmation. Payment by mail **MUST** be received by April 3, 2026. Send to NJSACC, 208 Lenox Avenue #363, Westfield, NJ 07090.**
- **All conference participants will receive documentation of completed professional development hours. You must check into and out of your workshop sessions to receive credit. Certificates will be available in your profile on the Eventsquid website/app. Please refer to your confirmation email for Information about the Eventsquid App.**
- **The cut-off date to reserve a hotel room is Friday, April 3, 2026. See Hotel Accommodations on page 21.**
- **Conference questions? Please call NJSACC at: 908-789-0259.**
- **When you complete your registration, you will immediately receive a confirmation via email. If no confirmation is received, the registration is incomplete. Please call the NJSACC Office at: 908-789-0259 immediately so that we can assist you.**

AT THE CONFERENCE

- **WIFI will be available throughout the conference center.**
- **Please dress in layers as room temperature can fluctuate.**
- **Please be courteous to your presenters and fellow attendees as elevated noise levels can be disruptive during workshop sessions.**
- **Please put cell phones on silent or on vibrate.**
- **Workshops are selected when you register online. You must attend the workshops that are listed on your nametag, or you will be asked to leave the session. You will not receive credit for a workshop you are not registered for!**

While we at NJSACC love children and they are a driving force behind the work we do, children may not attend the conference. The conference is a professional development opportunity for adults, and as such, we respectfully request that you take this time to focus on you. If you do bring children, we must insist that you make other arrangements during conference hours. Children will not be permitted in the lunch area or in the workshops.



Finding the balance to a quality afterschool program is an ongoing process. NJSACC: New Jersey's Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (OST) Professional Network - with support from the C. S. Mott Foundation and the NJ Department of Education - convened a group of afterschool leaders to answer the question, "What does quality look like in an afterschool program?"

The NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool are organized into six categories:

- Administration
- Healthy Behavior: Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Human Relationships
- Safety and Environmental Health
- Indoor and Outdoor Environment
- Programming and Activities

The Standards for each category are numbered and in bold. The Standard Elements are listed under the bold heading with letters (a, b, c, etc.). The standard elements will help you understand how to interpret the standard and what the important things to look for are. On the following page you will see each category along with the icon that represents it. Below each Standard, you will see the workshops listed by number that fall under that category. Some workshops fall into more than one category and may be listed under multiple standards.

For more information on the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool please visit our website at: www.njsacc.org/standards.

and **Core Knowledge** **COMPETENCIES**

for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals

Afterschool and OST professionals are the foundation to high quality youth programming. The OST field contributes to the academic learning and social emotional development of youth guided by a body of knowledge and skills, informed by research and best practice. The National Afterschool Association Core Knowledge and Competencies have been developed to enable afterschool and OST professionals to demonstrate expertise within "a framework that describes the dispositions, knowledge, skills, and competencies individuals need to provide high-quality OST programming and advance equity." NJSACC has adopted and aligned with these competencies for the OST professional New Jersey workforce. Learn more about the NAA CKCs at: www.naaweb.org.

The conference workshops reflect the principles embodied by the Core Knowledge Competencies and the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool. Below are the ten content areas:

- Child/Youth Growth and Development
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Child/Youth Observation and Assessment
- Relationships and Interactions with Children and Youth
- Youth Engagement, Voice, and Choice
- Equity and Inclusion
- Family, School, and Community Relationships
- Safety and Wellness
- Program Planning and Development
- Professional Development and Leadership

Below you will find a listing of the workshops by number according to what categories they fall under in the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool. Some workshops may be listed more than once if they fall into multiple categories. All conference workshops address school-age appropriate age ranges and multiple age groups.

Standards



Administration

Friday 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 24, 27
Saturday 30, 32, 43, 44, 47



Healthy Behavior

Friday 13, 15
Saturday 45, 46



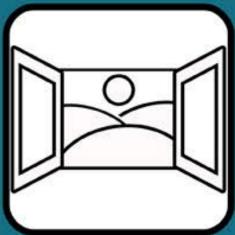
Human Relationships

Friday 1, 2, 10, 21, 22
Saturday 28, 31, 33, 35, 37, 41, 42



Safety and Environmental Health

Friday 4, 6, 19
Saturday 33



Indoor/Outdoor Environment

Friday 6, 14, 26
Saturday 34



Programming and Activities

Friday 5, 9, 14, 17, 18, 23, 25
Saturday 29, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 43, 48



Understanding Core Executive Function Skills

ME	WE	WHY	WILL	WIGGLE	WOBBLE	WHAT IF
Self Management	Relationship Management	Finding Purpose	Motivation & Passion	Action & Movement	Resilience	Creativity
Includes: Self-awareness, attention, focus, and self-regulation.	Includes: Empathy, teamwork, effective communication.	Includes: Curiosity and effective questioning.	Includes: Motivation, persistence, intellectual restlessness that fuels action.	Includes: Physical and intellectual restlessness that fuels action.	Includes: Agility and adaptability.	Includes: Curiosity and imagination.

OPENING



SESSIONS SAMUEL FRISBY

Vice President of Certification,
Membership Standards, YMCA of the USA
Mercer County NJ Commissioner
NJSACC Board member

INSPIRATIONAL KEYNOTE

Join us in the Alexander Ballroom where one of our own NJSACC Board members Samuel T. Frisby will deliver an inspirational keynote to begin the conference each morning!

Samuel T. Frisby Sr. has spent his professional career advocating for children, the under- represented and underserved. He comprehends the significance in engaging communities and utilizing their collective

momentum to strengthen the processes of successful social change. It is through his unique ability to build consensus and create strategic connections that has allowed him to lead successful change in the organizations he's served over the years. Whether as a volunteer or executive leader, service speaks to the core of who Sam is and how he approaches life.

Having worked in several different industries, it has been his pleasure to bring a multifaceted, high-level skillset to every leadership endeavor that he has encountered. Sam has had the fortune of working as a leader in the private sector, higher education, the executive and legislative side of government, and as a non-profit Executive. The multiple levels of experience give Mr. Frisby a unique perspective on solutions to difficult issues.

After 10 years as the CEO of a local YMCA, he made a transition to YMCA of the USA where he now serves as the VP of Certification & Membership Standards. In this role, he leads a small team with oversight of compliance, governance and policy development for federated government of Y-USA. Samuel has a unique blend of experiences, serving more than a decade as an executive, and locally elected official, which allows him to bring a comprehensive perspective to this work.

Over the past 30 years, Samuel Frisby has a proven track record of success with every industry that he has been involved in leading. He has been elected five times as a County Commissioner, served as a cabinet member in city government of New Jersey's State Capital, designed and implemented two nationally recognized programs, led the revitalization of the Capital Area YMCA (tripling its revenue along with a major facility renovation), and has been recognized as CFO of the year for small non-profits.

Samuel is a graduate of Howard University's School of Social Work, where he received a Bachelor's Degree and received his Master of Science degree in Organizational Leadership from Springfield College.

LUNCH AND

SHOWCASE ALLEY

FRIDAY

11:35AM - 1:20PM

Vendors, Prizes & Fun!

Join us for another exciting year at Showcase Alley! With companies and organizations from all over New Jersey, you never know what you might see and what resources you might find. Make sure you take time to come and chat with the vendors!

As always, you will have an opportunity to win a prize basket! All attendees will receive 5 tickets to drop into the prize bags for a chance to win. Winners will be posted outside of the Alexander Ballroom after Session 2. If you see your name, please come to the Registration Desk to claim your prize before you leave! All prizes must be claimed by the end of the day.

It is your choice to have lunch or visit Showcase Alley first, as they are occurring concurrently.

DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!



FRIDAY Special Events



SATURDAY SPECIAL EVENTS



Saturday is getting in on the basket fun!

This year we will have baskets on Saturday too!

All attendees will receive 5 tickets to drop in the prize bags for a chance to win.

Lunch time will be the only time to drop you tickets so don't miss your chance!

Winners will be posted outside of the Alexander Ballroom after Session 2.

If you see your name please come to the Registration Desk to claim your prize before you leave!

All prizes must be claimed by the end of the day.

END THE DAY YOUR WAY

This year we will have three workshops with three different vibes to close out the conference!

Do you want to take a breath and slow down so you can process what you have learned?

**Join NJSACC CEO Ebony Grace
at
"Self-Care to Keep Us Thriving!"**

Still have some gas in your tank?

**Join Ken Anthony Associate Executive Director,
Connecticut Network for Children and Youth
at
"Telling Your Story: Using Program Data to Strengthen the
Case for Afterschool and Summer Programs."**

Or are you feeling like you want to ride the wave as long as you can?

**Join Daniel Hatcher, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships, Alliance for a
Healthier Generation, for a high energy closing
at
"The Feel Good Plan."**

**Wherever you're at, we've got you covered!
Check out the descriptions on page 19**

Friday Session 1

10am - 11:30am

1. Encouraging Positive Communication between Staff and Parents

This training equips afterschool and OST staff with a practical framework for handling sensitive conversations with empathy, clarity, and confidence. Participants will learn strategies to navigate difficult discussions, keep families informed, and maintain professionalism, while fostering trust and collaboration. All levels of staff welcome. Phillip Collazo, MEd, CYT, Education and Training Specialist, Kids Included Together, Fort Lauderdale, FL

2. Team Building for School Age Staff & Kids

Always valuable, teambuilding with your staff teams and school age kids is now more important than ever! Join us for this hands-on workshop where we'll share and explore lots of fun, interactive, reflective team building activities that strengthen and build bonds, communication, and support. Come dressed to play and have fun!

Dagmar Wojcik, Quality Team Director, NJSACC, Westfield

3. Securing the Bag- How to Advance Your Afterschool Career

Did you know that there is a whole field of Afterschool professions? Are you contemplating how to navigate the next steps of your career? In this workshop, participants will learn about the various careers in the field of afterschool and the paths to obtain those positions. Individuals will create a personal professional development plan and working groups will map out a career lattice for NJSACC.

*Tamika Chester, Education Program Development Specialist 2, 21st CCLC Office of Student Support Services, New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton
Tyneisha K. Gibbs, Director of Policy and Youth Advocacy, NJSACC, Westfield*

4. All You Need to Know About Licensing

Are you thinking about starting an afterschool program? Maybe you already run a program but just have some questions about licensing regulations. Staff from the Office of Licensing are here to help by presenting information from the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and answering all of your licensing questions.

Inspection Staff, Office of Licensing, NJ Department of Children & Families, Trenton

5. Beyond Inclusion: Designing Meaningful Afterschool Experiences for Children with Special Needs

Creating equitable and enriching experiences for children with special needs goes beyond simply making programs “inclusive”—it’s about designing environments where every child can thrive, explore, and feel a sense of belonging. In this interactive workshop participants will deepen their understanding of equity and inclusion by exploring practical strategies to adapt activities, build supportive relationships, and collaborate with families and specialists. Through hands-on exercises, small group collaboration, and real world scenarios, participants will discover how to transform afterschool programs into spaces that nurture the unique strengths and interests of all learners.

*Jackie Nisenson, Teacher/Trainer, East Orange School District, East Orange
Dr. Dawn Stokes-Tyler, Supervisor of Staff Development/Project Director 21st Century, East Orange School District, East Orange
Kori Washington, Teacher/Trainer, East*



Friday Session 1 continued

10am - 11:30am

6. New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool (NJQSA)

In this comprehensive, hands-on introduction to the NJQSA, staff will learn the “why”, “how”, and value of regular program self-assessment, including how this proven tool can enhance program quality for both youth and staff.

Participants will learn how to competently use the tool and develop and implement a quality improvement plan for their school-age afterschool program.

Patricia Pugliese, Technical Assistance Specialist, NJSACC, Westfield

7. From the School Leader’s Perspective: What We Need from OST Staff

What do school leaders truly value in OST programs? In this session, a Vice Principal and former OST Supervisor shares practical insights on how OST staff can strengthen collaboration, communication, and student success.

Discover how to align program goals with school priorities while maintaining your unique program identity. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to build trust, increase visibility, and foster stronger partnerships with school leadership.

Angelo Monaco, Vice Principal, Linden Public Schools, Linden

8. From Eye Rolls to Role Models: Teaching Professionalism to Young Staff

Working with emerging young professionals in after-school programs can be both rewarding and challenging. Many are just beginning their careers, bringing energy and relatability, but often need guidance in developing professionalism, boundaries, and workplace habits. This interactive workshop equips leaders and supervisors with practical tools to coach, mentor, and model professionalism in small, consistent ways. Participants will leave with strategies they can use immediately to help young staff grow into confident, professional youth workers—strengthening both the team and the program.

Julia Gabor, Mindful Founder, kid-grit, Los Angeles, CA

Jeffrey L. Jordan, Mindful Co-Founder, kid-grit, Jersey City

9. From Chaos to Cooperation: Large-Group Game Leadership Indoors/Outdoors

Game on! Join us to learn how to implement clear rules, transitions, and communication techniques that minimize chaos and maximize fun and safety.

Beverly Ramos, Lead Trainer, Rutgers Southern Regional Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, Woodbury



Friday Session 2

1:30pm - 3pm

10. Planning Support for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder impacts the developmental skills of children and youth in a variety of ways that can impact their participation and relationships. This training will explore strategies to support social interactions, communication, and sensory processing needs. This training will ask participants to focus on the essential question: **What challenges do children/youth with ASD experience?**
Phillip Collazo, MEd, CYT, Service Delivery Coach, Kids Included Together, Fort Lauderdale, FL

11. Budgeting 101

This workshop is designed for new directors and program leaders and will explore the fundamentals of creating and understanding program budgets. Participants will discuss practical strategies to maximize limited resources, make informed financial decisions, and stretch dollars effectively when faced with budget constraints.
Suad Gacham, Senior Director of Children and Family Services, Bergen Family Center, Englewood

12. The Ins and Outs of Grant Writing

This workshop will provide an introduction to grant writing, discussing foundation, corporation and government grants. Participants will learn about the various sections of proposals – statement of need, program design, organizational capacity, evaluation, attachment and budget. The presenter will share tips on what to include in a proposal and how to avoid common pitfalls.

Christine Corrison, Co-Owner/Evaluator, Laurus Grant Writing & Evaluation Services, Madison
Anne Thompson, CEO, Laurus Grant Writing & Evaluation Services, Madison

13. Reclaim Your Time: Time Management Tips and Tricks

Do you ever feel like there are not enough hours in the day? This interactive presentation will help you identify your personal attitudes toward time management and assess how your time is spent.

Specific time management strategies will be reviewed to help identify goals, prioritize tasks, and plan work tasks to increase productivity and use time more effectively and efficiently.
Elizabeth C. Salerno, Training Coordinator, Rutgers School of Social Work, Institute for Families, New Jersey Child Support Institute, Parsippany

14. Connect and Move: Rainbow Walk, Nature BINGO, and The Walking Classroom

Take a mindful movement break with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation as we bring family engagement resources, like Rainbow Walk and Silly Speedy Conversation Starters, to life in a fun and interactive way. Attendees will have the opportunity to try out The Walking Classroom WalkKit. Come prepared to reconnect with yourself and others.
Daniel Hatcher, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Washington DC



Friday Session 2 - Continued

1:30pm - 3pm

15. Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Care

This workshop reviews the impact of trauma on the wellbeing of young children and how programs can respond through trauma-informed practices. We also introduce the concept of healing-centered care, and discuss strategies that can be used at programs and within families that enhance or transform the climate to be healing-centered.

Jessica Cowan, Assistant Director for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health, College for Education and Engaged Learning, Montclair State University, Montclair



16. Enhancing OST Programming and Operations with Artificial Intelligence

Did you know that artificial intelligence (AI) can be an integral part of your OST work? This session introduces participants to ChatGPT, covering its basics and practical applications for programming and administrative tasks. Participants will also explore other AI tools to improve their programs and consider the ethical and legal implications of AI use. No prior AI experience or knowledge is required.

Angelo Monaco, Vice Principal, Linden Public Schools, Linden

17. From Busy to Purposeful: Making Every Activity Count

This 90-minute session helps participants understand the difference between outputs and outcomes and why the distinction matters. Through interactive discussion and practical examples, participants learn how to align program activities with intended outcomes so that daily work intentionally supports participant growth and measurable impact.

Theo Phillips, Consultant, Blaque Forest Creative Group, LLC, New York City, NY



18. Building Lifelong Readers: Strategies to Support and Inspire Young Readers in Afterschool

Discover engaging, practical ways to help children develop strong reading habits and a genuine love for books. This interactive session will explore how afterschool educators can cultivate literacy-rich environments and support growing readers through intentional routines, family engagement, and joyful reading experiences. Participants will leave with ready-to-use strategies, activities, and resources to make reading an exciting part of every afterschool day.

Naima Ricks, Ph.D., Managing Director of Partnerships & Growth, Reading Partners, Newark

Friday Session 3

3:15pm - 4:30pm

19. Supporting Toddlers and Preschoolers in Inclusive Settings
Creating an inclusive environment for young children starts with a strong understanding of child development and behavior. This course will explore the differences between typical developmental behaviors and those that may signal a need for additional support. This course will also discuss how to match strategies to a child's needs.
Phillip Collazo, MEd, CYT, Education and Training Specialist, Kids Included Together, Fort Lauderdale, FL

20. Knowing Your People: How to Engage Students, Staff & Stakeholders
Effective communication and collaboration are essential for building strong professional relationships with youth, staff, and other OST program stakeholders. This session will equip OST professionals with strategies for engaging program stakeholders in inclusive work, events, and community initiatives.
Dorine Francis, Director of Expanded Learning Opportunities, NJSACC, Westfield
Kandecce Francis, Quality Support Coordinator, NJSACC, Westfield

21. Stress and Young Children
Sources of stress can be biological, emotional, socio-cultural and environmental. By understanding the neurobiology of stress, families and early childhood practitioners can reduce their own reactivity and reframe the behaviors of the children in their care. Participants will learn strategies to reflect and respond in order to co-regulate young children.
Eva Kovacs, Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health, Montclair University, Montclair

22. Promoting Healing: Addressing Trauma through Positive Childhood Experiences
This session will discuss types and prevalence of trauma. It will explore the impact of trauma on neurobiology and well-being of youth and those who serve them. Emerging research on the impact of positive childhood experiences such as afterschool and out-of-school time programs in reducing the effects of trauma and promoting positive outcomes will be presented. Practical strategies to address trauma, support youth, and promote healing for youth and staff will be provided.
Idalmis Lamourt, Assistant Director, Office of Resilience, New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Trenton
Tia Sanders, Project Manager, New Jersey Department of Children and Families Office of Resilience, Trenton

23. Cultural Responsiveness in OST: Reflection and Application
This session will equip Out-of-School Time providers and supervisors with practical tools to create inclusive program environments. Through reflection, participants will learn to move beyond awareness to intentional practice, fostering culturally responsive environments that celebrate diversity and promote positive outcomes for all children and their families.
Nicole Frankel, Instructional Designer, Grow NJ Kids Training Services, New Brunswick
Megan Gerity, Learning & Development Manager, Grow NJ Kids Training Services, New Brunswick
Jordan Levin, Instructional Designer, Grow NJ Kids Training Services, New Brunswick



Friday Session 3 - Continued

3:15pm - 4:30pm

24. SEFI Support for After School and Out-of-School Time

SEFI support is a collaborative, relationship-based practice that supports the early childhood and out-of-school time workforce in developing nurturing and supportive relationships with children, their families, and between staff and leadership. SEFI support is a prevention-based approach that pairs a specialist with adults who work with children in the different settings where they learn and grow. SEFI equips caregivers to facilitate children's healthy social and emotional development, and is intended to promote social/relational and emotional development and transform children's stress behaviors.

Jessica Cowan, Assistant Director for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health, College for Education and Engaged Learning, Montclair State University, Montclair
Ellen Samitt, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Clinician, Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health, College for Education and Engaged Learning, Montclair University, Montclair

25. Rooted Wisdom: How Black Teaching Traditions Align with Brain Science

What if the most effective teaching strategies weren't new—but deeply ancestral? This session explores how Black and multicultural traditions like call-and-response, storytelling, affirmation, and movement align with brain science and best practices. Participants will uncover how these cultural methods enhance engagement, memory, and motivation. Then they will leave with research-aligned strategies to build affirming, high-impact classrooms where culture forms the foundation of excellent teaching.

Crystalyn Thomas-Davis, Literacy Consultant, Literacy Lightbulb Corporation, Baltimore, MD

26. Nature, Mindfulness, & Play

Get ready to sway, breathe, and play in this interactive nature-based workshop. Together, we'll explore how simple mindful moments can bring calm, spark creativity, and strengthen resilience.

Daniel Hatcher, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Washington DC



27. Modeling the Way – Helping Staff Find Purpose in Your Program

How you lead matters. The way you listen to and support your staff can make or break the synergy of your team. In this session, we will take a deep dive into what leadership in out-of-school time means. Strategies to empower your staff and model the way will be discussed as we unpack your own leadership style and how this impacts your program and connections with staff.

Ken Anthony, Ed.D. - Associate Executive Director, Connecticut Network for Children and Youth - Hartford, Connecticut

Workshops

Saturday

Session 1

9:45am - 11:15am

28. Success with ADHD

Chances are, you serve children with ADHD every day in your existing programs. Explore myths about children with ADHD and discover what to look for as you design accommodations for children with ADHD in your program. Learn to prevent challenging behaviors with positive support strategies to help all children be successful. This training will ask participants to focus on the essential question: How can we create environments and relationships that empower children with ADHD to thrive, while honoring their unique strengths and challenges?

Phillip Collazo, MEd, CYT, Education and Training Specialist, Kids Included Together, Fort Lauderdale, FL

29. Bring on the Fun with Games for Everyone!

There are so many obligations in a child's school day, so bring on the fun in out-of-school time! This NJSACC workshop is a quick "how to" on choosing and delivering a variety of games and activities that bring out the best in a group of kids. Most where no one is eliminated, many with limited materials - all active, engaging, and fun. Please come prepared to play in this interactive, hands on workshop.

Dagmar Wojcik, Quality Team Director, NJSACC, Westfield

30. The Power of Partnerships: Sustaining OST Programs Through Advocacy and Collaboration

Longevity in OST programming depends on more than funding—it's about relationships and influence. This session helps professionals cultivate partnerships that expand resources and advocacy power. Using real-world examples, participants will learn how to engage youth, families, and policymakers to sustain programs beyond a single grant. Through interactive exercises, attendees will identify their advocacy sphere and leave equipped to build coalitions that secure the future of their work.

Tyneisha K. Gibbs, Director of Policy and Youth Advocacy, NJSACC, Westfield
Marquise Guzman, Senior Program Director of Neighborhood Partnerships - Rutgers University - Newark

31. The \$100,000 Belonging Pyramid: Youth Engagement Edition

Join the competition and play your way to stronger youth engagement! In this high-energy, gameshow-inspired workshop, participants "climb the pyramid" through four fast-paced rounds to build youth competencies, opportunities, perceptions, and motivations for belonging. In between rounds we'll explore how social, cultural, temporal, and environmental contexts shape each one. You'll collaborate with teammates, tackle real-world scenarios, and unlock strategies that help every young person feel seen, valued, and connected.

Hillary Jones, Director, Professional Learning, Foundations, Inc, Mt. Laurel

32. Collaboration (Sort Of): The Urban Youth Game

Everyone talks about "youth input." Too often it's a formality. Red tape, tight budgets, and competing priorities often decide what programs survive. Urban programs truly thrive when young people lead, co-create, and shape the decisions that affect them because collaboration only works when urban youth are given real power—not just a seat at the table.

Dorine Francis, Director of Expanded Learning Opportunities, NJSACC, Westfield
Mariah Jamison, Group Leader, FOCUS Hispanic Center for Community Development, Newark
Katrina Little, Group Leader, FOCUS Hispanic Center for Community Development, Newark



33. From Grit to Grace: The Site Coordinator's Guide to Leading with Structure, Soul & Strategy

Site coordination takes grit, but sustaining impact requires grace. This dynamic workshop equips site leaders with practical systems and reflective strategies to manage teams, programs, and partnerships with clarity and confidence. Participants will learn how to balance structure and compassion, align daily operations with purpose, and strengthen site culture. You'll leave with a **Serve Excellent Toolkit** packed with ready-to-use templates, strategies, and mindset shifts to lead with excellence — even on the busiest days.

Sharyse Porter, Founder and Principal Consultant, S. Michelle Consulting Agency, Trenton

34. Growing Minds: Urban Agriculture for Youth Empowerment

This interactive workshop explores how afterschool and out-of-school time programs can integrate hands-on gardening, food justice education, and environmental literacy to strengthen social-emotional learning and community connection among youth. This session will share proven models from Newark-based programs that merge

sustainable agriculture, nutrition education, and workforce development. Participants will engage in experiential activities adaptable to any youth setting—whether an urban schoolyard, community garden, or classroom windowsill. Through the lens of New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool (NJQSA) attendees will gain strategies for fostering youth leadership, encouraging teamwork, and connecting cultural identity to environmental stewardship. The session emphasizes how farm-to-classroom education can cultivate mindfulness, resilience, and purpose in young people, especially those in underserved communities.

Raihaanah Hall, Tree Coordinator, Greater Newark Conservancy, Newark

Bilal Walker, Chief Executive Officer, Al-Munir/Urban Seeds Grow, Newark

35. Pride n' Programming (Inclusion for BIPOC QUEER Youth)

From someone with experience of running SACC programs for 10 years, and an organization that centers on social justice, there is no better time than now to ensure that your queer youth are not left behind. With the banning of books, and anti-LGBT legislation and LGBTQ youth, especially trans youth, are looking to YOU for a safe space, especially when their families are unaccepting. How do

you foster a safe space for your queer youth, are you a safe space, how does all youth learning about their differences increase acceptance for LGBTQ youth, and what are the laws surrounding LGBTQ youth? Come to this session, and learn how to make your SACC program an innovative, inclusive, and inspiring place that centers the most vulnerable!

Natalie Hernandez, Education and Youth Development, Garden State Equality, Asbury Park

Justine Saliski, Senior Director of Education and Youth Development, Garden State Equality, Asbury Park
Brielle Winslow-Majette, Deputy Director, Garden State Equality, Asbury Park

36. Activity Planning in Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs

Are the kids in your school-age program engaged? Did you know that having thoughtfully planned activities and positive behavior go hand in hand? In this hands-on workshop, we'll review the components of effective activity plans, including ways to develop clear learning objectives, apportion time, incorporate different learning styles, and keep youth engaged. Activity plan templates, curriculum resources, and organizational planning tools will be provided.

Patricia Pugliese, Technical Assistance Specialist, NJSACC, Westfield

Workshops Saturday

37. Behavior as Communication: Practical Strategies to Promote Understanding and De-escalation

Are you supporting children who exhibit challenging behaviors? Research shows these behaviors often reflect deeper, unmet needs—much like an iceberg, where what's visible is only a small part of the whole picture. While adults may try to shield children from strong emotions, evidence suggests it's more effective to guide them through these feelings using self-regulation strategies. Join us to explore a practical three-step approach to de-escalation that helps children manage emotions, build coping skills, and return to positive engagement.

Phillip Collazo, MEd, CYT, Education and Training Specialist, Kids Included Together, Fort Lauderdale, FL

38. 21st Century Afterschool Science Project (21st CASP)

Explore water and water ecosystems in this hands-on sampler of activities to be found in CASP's free, inquiry based, science curriculum that's fun for all school-age programs. This is a great STEM resource to add to your afterschool program to engage staff and students in the wonders of science!

Kandece Francis, Quality Support Coordinator, NJSACC, Westfield

39. Visual Storytelling for Programs & Projects

There's more than one way to tell a story! In this workshop participants will learn to create visual stories through various media such as comics, photography or video. Participants will gain an understanding of the elements of storytelling and visual communication to help create engaging stories.

Tim Conkling, Communication Coordinator, NJSACC, Westfield

40. Lit Happens: Where Literacy Meets the Arts

Looking for creative ways to boost literacy while meeting learning goals? Learn practical, arts-based literacy strategies that support skill development such as creativity, communication, and critical thinking. Walk away with an activity guide and clear connections between creative engagement and literacy growth.

Hillary Jones, Director, Professional Learning, Foundations, Inc, Mt. Laurel

41. Making a Connection with No Power

The purpose of this workshop is to give program staff new strategies when trying to make connections with the students who aren't giving much to work with. We will discuss embracing personal insecurities, being optimistic about push back and learn strategies to craft a meaningful discussion when it seems to have reached a dead end.

Deidre Johnson, Director of Youth Services, Ironbound Community Corporation, Newark

42. Lead With Purpose: From Grit to Grace in Youth Work

Great youth work blends structure with heart. In this energetic, reflective session, youth workers will explore how to lead with purpose, build authentic connections, and avoid burnout while doing meaningful work. Participants will learn simple frameworks to design engaging experiences and strengthen relationships that drive growth and trust. You'll leave with a Youth Worker's Playbook — a set of tools and prompts that keep you grounded, inspired, and ready to serve with both grit and grace.

Sharyse Porter, Founder and Principal Consultant, S. Michelle Consulting Agency, Trenton

43. Concept to Celebration: Building Engaging Curriculum and Culminating Events

Design youth programs that do more than fill time—build experiences that inspire! In this hands-on session, participants will learn how to create engaging, short-term curricula that build toward meaningful culminating events. Explore planning tools, best practices, and collaboration strategies with teams, families, and community partners. Walk away with ready-to-use templates and the foundation of a program that celebrates youth voice, creativity, achievement, and meaningful family engagement.

Christina Jones, COO, Boys and Girls Club of Mercer County, Lawrence

Workshops

Session 2

Continued

12:30pm - 1:45pm

44. Beyond the Bell: Inclusive Practices for Special Needs in Afterschool Programs

Afterschool programs play a vital role in supporting children's growth, connection, and creativity beyond the traditional classroom. Beyond the Bell equips educators, program leaders, and youth workers with practical strategies to create inclusive, engaging environments that meet the diverse needs of all learners, including those with disabilities and special needs. Participants will explore evidence-based practices for differentiation, sensory-friendly environments, behavior support, and collaborative communication with families and school-day staff. Through interactive discussions and real-world scenarios, attendees will learn how to design activities that promote belonging, social-emotional development, and equitable access to enrichment opportunities. By the end of this workshop, participants will leave with actionable tools and a renewed commitment to ensuring every child can thrive, learn, and shine—beyond the bell.

Dr. Emajonite Etienne, Educational Consultant, Etienne Enrichment LLC, Orange

Saturday

45. Integrating Yoga & Mindfulness Into Your OST Programming

In this session, participants will learn best practices for bringing mindfulness and yoga to the youth they serve. We'll discuss everything from how to ease transitions using mindfulness, to space set up, to staying grounded in your own practice, to making the practice relevant for your students. Participants will leave this session feeling more equipped to incorporate yoga and mindfulness practices within their OST programs.

Emily Fleming, Founder & Chief Consultant, Yoga In Classrooms And Schools Consulting, Baltimore, MD

Session 3

2:00pm - 3:15pm

46. Self-Care to Keep Us Thriving!

OST professionals and providers are natural caretakers that often sacrifice themselves, in order to serve and support youth and families. Consistency in our own self-care is essential for any professional; particularly youth development professionals working to provide high quality OST programming. In this workshop, we will discuss a holistic approach to self-care and participants will learn and implement strategies, tips and tricks to manage stress to function at our best and be aware of indicators of burnout.

Ebony Grace, CEO, NJSACC, Westfield

47. Telling Your Story: Using Program Data to Strengthen the Case for Afterschool and Summer Programs

Research that demonstrates the impact afterschool and summer programs have on children and families. Many enter the field wanting to make a difference and can learn to use their own personal story to raise awareness of data and impacts your program is having. Having a personal connection and passion are crucial elements of taking legislators and funders investment beyond the data and into the story of the program. Why your work matters. Participants will practice using sample program data to craft a story through a simple three-step process.

Ken Anthony, Ed.D. - Associate Executive Director, Connecticut Network for Children and Youth - Hartford, Connecticut

48. The Feel Good Plan

It might be the end of the day but are you ready to keep the momentum going? This high-energy closing session turns reflection into action. You'll create a Feel Good Plan and leave grounded and ready to bring what you experienced at the conference back to your community.

Daniel Hatcher, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Washington DC

YOUR CONFERENCE CONTENT GUIDE – REGISTRATION ONLINE ONLY

Friday Opening Session: 8:45am-9:45am

Inspirational Keynote by Samuel Frisby

Friday Session 1: 10:00am - 11:30am

1. Encouraging Positive Communication between Staff and Parents
2. Team Building for School Age Staff & Kids
3. Securing the Bag- How to Advance Your Afterschool Career
4. All You Need to Know About Licensing
5. Beyond Inclusion: Designing Meaningful Afterschool Experiences for Children with Special Needs
6. New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool (NJQSA)
7. From the School Leader's Perspective: What We Need from OST Staff
8. From Eye Rolls to Role Models: Teaching Professionalism to Young Staff
9. From Chaos to Cooperation: Large- Group Game Leadership Indoors/ Outdoors

Friday Session 2: 1:30pm - 3:00pm

10. Planning Support for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder
11. Budgeting 101
12. The Ins and Outs of Grant Writing
13. Reclaim Your Time: Time Management Tips and Tricks
14. Connect and Move: Rainbow Walk, Nature BINGO, and The Walking Classroom
15. Trauma Informed and Healing Centered Care
16. Enhancing OST Programming and Operations with Artificial Intelligence
17. From Busy to Purposeful: Making Every Activity Count
18. Building Lifelong Readers: Strategies to Support and Inspire Young Readers in Afterschool

Friday Session 3: 3:15pm - 4:30pm

19. Supporting Toddlers and Preschoolers in Inclusive Settings
20. Knowing Your People: How to Engage Students, Staff & Stakeholders
21. Stress and Young Children
22. Promoting Healing: Addressing Trauma through Positive Childhood Experiences
23. Cultural Responsiveness in OST: Reflection and Application
24. SEFI Support for After School and Out-of-School Time
25. Rooted Wisdom: How Black Teaching Traditions Align with Brain Science
26. Nature, Mindfulness, & Play
27. Modeling the Way – Helping Staff Find Purpose in Your Program

Saturday Opening Session 8:30am-9:30am

Inspirational Keynote by Samuel Frisby

Saturday Session 1: 9:45am - 11:15am

28. Success with ADHD
29. Bring on the Fun with Games for Everyone!
30. The Power of Partnerships: Sustaining OST Programs Through Advocacy and Collaboration
31. The \$100,000 Belonging Pyramid: Youth Engagement Edition
32. Collaboration (Sort Of): The Urban Youth Game
33. From Grit to Grace: The Site Coordinator's Guide to Leading with Structure, Soul & Strategy
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47. Telling Your Story: Using Program Data to Strengthen the Case for Afterschool and Summer Programs
48. The Feel Good Plan



CONFERENCE FEES

\$339 / 2 days

\$214 / 1 day

Conference Location and Accommodations:

The Marriott Princeton Hotel and Conference Center at Forrestal
100 College Road East, Princeton, NJ 08540

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Room Rates: \$174 per night (single) / \$184 per night (double)

Reservations must be made by individual attendees directly with Marriott reservations at (800) 228-9290 or (609) 452-7800.

Room reservations must be made on or before Friday, April 3, 2026. When you call make sure to mention the NJSACC Conference and the dates of the conference in order to receive the conference rate.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2026 annual conference!



www.njsacc.org

DIRECTIONS

From Northern New Jersey:

- Take the Garden State Parkway South to Exit 130, Route 1 South
- Take Route 1 South approximately 22 miles to College Road East
- Take College Road East, Marriott Princeton is the second driveway on your right

OR

- Take the New Jersey Turnpike South to Exit 9 - New Brunswick
- Follow Route 18 North for approximately 1/4 mile to Route 1 South
- Take Route 1 South approximately 13 miles to College Road East
- Take College Road East, Marriott Princeton is the second driveway on your right

From Southern New Jersey:

- Follow I-295 North to Route 1 North (Exit 67).
- Take Route 1 North for approximately 6.5 miles to College Road East
- Exit right on College Road East, Marriott Princeton is the second driveway on your right

From Philadelphia (50 miles):

- Follow I-95 North into New Jersey to Route 1 North (Exit 67)
- Take Route 1 North for approximately 6.5 miles to College Road East
- Exit right on College Road East, Marriott Princeton is the second driveway on your right

If you get lost along the way, call the Marriott at: 609-452-7800 ext. 5180. Marriott Guest Services staff will be happy to assist you.