

CURRENT LIST OF 2024 BREAKOUT SESSIONS

**As of 10/31/2024. Subject to Change*

Session Day	Core Theme	Topic Name	Topic Description
Friday	Board Health & Strategy	Board Recruitment and Succession Planning with Intention	Playhouse sustainability depends upon building strong leadership teams through intentional succession planning and recruitment. We'll discuss characteristics of effective leaders, and strategies for attracting and vetting those who bring lasting value and commitment.
Friday	Board Health & Strategy	Upping Your Game on Board Meetings	Attend this mock board meeting to learn best practices to enhance your board meeting effectiveness to ensure efficiency, engagement, and productivity. You'll gain the tools to transform your board meetings into efficient and value-driven events that support your Playhouse's goals.
Friday	Board Health & Strategy	President's Roundtable	Join fellow Presidents for an engaging and dynamic 2-hour roundtable session over lunch. We'll connect, collaborate, and exchange ideas in both small group settings and as a group. The Presidents Roundtable is designed to encourage open dialogue, foster peer learning, and strengthen leadership networks.
Friday	Board Health & Strategy	Real Estate Strategy & Planning Workshop	25% of GiGi's leases expire each year, and facility costs are one of a Playhouse's biggest expenses. Come prepared to work though a toolkit to help ensure you're planning strategically for your facility needs as you grow.
Saturday	Board Health & Strategy	Fostering Healthy Transitions in Board Leadership Roles	Successful leadership transitions can help ensure long-term organizational health and sustainability. We will discuss strategies for maintaining a healthy balance between honoring the past and embracing new leadership.
Saturday	Board Health & Strategy	Persistence Through the Dip - Seeing the Light Through Challenging Times	Is your Playhouse facing some challenges? You're not alone! Many locations share common struggles that can seem insurmountable—but they're not. In this session, we'll address strategies for moving through a dip and hear from playhouses that have seen success after challenging times.
Saturday	Board Health & Strategy	Building Tomorrow's Leaders: Launching a Local Youth Board with National Impact	Looking to engage young people in leadership roles within your Playhouse? This session will offer practical steps to start a local Youth Board and tie it to the National Youth Board, including the involvement of self-advocates. Gain insights, hear from youth leaders, and leave with tools to empower the next generation.

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Saturday	Board Health & Strategy	Metrics To Drive Your Playhouse Goals	How will you measure your success in 2025? Review your Playhouse's metrics so you can understand your historical data and identify the goals you will set for your Playhouse in 2025!
Saturday	Board Health & Strategy	Strategic Planning Essentials	Explore key elements to drive your annual strategic planning session to ensure it sets up your Playhouse's foundation for growth and decision-making. Whether outsourcing this function or using internal tools, we'll help you optimize your annual planning process.
Friday	Development & Events	From Donors to Super Fans: Elevating Your Peer-to-Peer Event Through Relationship Building and Storytelling	Enhance your peer-to-peer events by focusing on relationship building, storytelling, and continuous engagement with your fundraising teams. Turn donors into lifelong supporters, leveraging influence, and maximizing post-event efforts to drive donor retention and gratitude.
Friday	Development & Events	Development Roundtable	"Development Speed Dating! Let's all join together to talk through and master the art of grants, corporate sponsors and major donors. By working together to determine our development needs and perfect our asks, there's no stopping the GiGi's train!
Friday	Development & Events	Maximizing Event Impact Through Expert Collaboration and Outsourcing	Outsourcing the right roles like auctioneers, emcees, and event planners can elevate your events and reduce the workload on your team. We'll help you find and collaborate with professional contractors to streamline event logistics, enhance guest experience, and boost your fundraising impact.
Saturday	Development & Events	Crafting Your End of Year Giving Campaign	Join us to kick start your End of Year Giving Campaign. You will leave this session with the tools for a complete plan that is ready to execute.
Saturday	Development & Events	Event Strategy, Venues, and Themes to Align With Your Goals	Events represented 56% of Playhouse revenues in 2023 and are a key element in growing acceptance. Join us for this interactive session to review (or build) your annual event strategy. We will assess opportunities to leverage the mission to maximize outcomes.
Friday	Family & Community Connections	Creating Comfort in Uncomfortable Conversations	Back by popular demand! We'll discuss strategies to compassionately handle difficult conversations with families and volunteers so you can be prepared when these situations arise in your Playhouse.

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Saturday	Family & Community Connections	New Families - Creating An Unforgettable Experience	Join us to explore ways to improve first impressions and shaping the experiences of a new family's journey during their pivotal first year. Hear from Rick with Hope Story on ways we can collaborate together to support new families.
Saturday	Family & Community Connections	Empowering Multicultural Communities Through Leadership & Advocacy	Join us to help define a new muticultural program for the Spanish speaking community. Identify the steps for your Playhouse to identify multicultural communities and needs as well as share resources you would like from the National Office.
Thursday	Financial Health	Playhouse Role in the Finance Process	Am I responsible for it? Learn the ins and outs for all the documentation required monthly to speed up the closing process so you can manage your financial status. Speedy processing means your Board will receive the monthly Financial packet in time for each Board meeting.
Friday	Financial Health	Tackling Accounting Headaches: Common Areas of Confusion	This session will focus on areas of confusion for playhouse staff and Treasurers. We will cover In-Kinds, Restricted Funding, Playhouse controls, and much more.
Saturday	Financial Health	Treasurer Roundtable	In this small group setting, we'll have an opportunity for Treasurers to be up close & personal with our new VP Finance & Accounting! We'll discuss Board Financial Reports, opportunities to streamline financial processes, and learn how we can work and support each other more effectively.
Thursday	HR & Volunteer Management	Managing Yourself and Managing Up	Join us for an engaging session sharing tools to thrive in your roles. We'll explore key strategies for managing your time effectively, communicating with team members, prioritizing tasks, and ensuring that both managers and team members are on the same page.
Friday	HR & Volunteer Management	Maximize Effectiveness & Retention of Volunteers	Maximize the effectiveness of your volunteer workforce while enhancing retention rates. Learn how to provide meaningful training and support that empowers volunteers to contribute their best efforts, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment.

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Friday	HR & Volunteer Management	Leading Through Relationships Part 1: Cultivating and Nurturing Team Relationships	The key to success is a strong, cohesive team. This session will guide you through knowing yourself and your team to create trust and effective communication. Opening doors to intentional communication and relationship-building creates efficiencies and opportunities for growth and sustainability.
Saturday	HR & Volunteer Management	Understanding What the Playhouse Staff Does Each Day	What do they do all day? Dive into a behind-the-scenes look at the daily operations of our Playhouse staff. This discussion will provide valuable insights into the diverse roles and responsibilities that keep your Playhouse running smoothly and ensure an enriching and FUN experience for all participants.
Saturday	HR & Volunteer Management	Leading Through Relationships Part 2: Identify & Manage the Many Hats We Wear	In an organization filled with passionate people, many of us wear many different hats - board member, parent, volunteer, staff. But what happens when the hierarchy of these roles change? Explore team dynamics and work through scenarios to help support and strengthen these complex relationships.
Saturday	HR & Volunteer Management	Preparing for the Future: Engaging Your Younger Volunteers Now	Hear it from the source on how to attract, engage, and retain young volunteers at GiGi's Playhouse. Attendees will learn about fostering purpose and community, innovative engagement techniques, and mentorship opportunities with teens and young adults.
Thursday	Marketing	The Power of Blogging: How to Create Engaging Content That Gets Found	We get it—blogs are hardly anyone's favorite. But this interactive session will do the unthinkable: make blogs fun! We'll give time-saving strategies to help you write more effective blog posts, and then we'll dive into all things WordPress. After this easy to follow step by step tutorial, you'll know how to optimize your blog posts!
Friday	Marketing	The BIG Picture: 2025 Annual Marketing & Communications Calendar + Roundtable, TOO!	Together is our favorite place to be! Don't miss this face-to-face opportunity to get a peek at our marketing plans for 2025 and share your best ideas, too! In this hybrid presentation+roundtable opportunity, we'll unpack the broad themes and campaigns planned for the year, month-by-month, and gather your input on creating a year full of ENGAGING marketing content, TOGETHER!

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Friday	Marketing	Short-Form Content Creation for Social Media	Join us for a hands-on workshop on mastering short-form content creation. By integrating our easy steps and special tricks, you will learn strategies to craft engaging reels and shorts to captivate your audiences. We'll capture, edit, and share content on the spot so you can walk away with the skills and confidence to create impactful and purposeful content for your social media!
Friday	Marketing	Strength in Unity: Harnessing the Power of Our Purpose, Mission, Vision & Values	The strength of our collective network lies in uniting around our shared purpose, mission, vision, and values. What role do our organization's guiding principles play in your marketing? Discover how to apply them to elevate your outreach and build deeper relationships with families, donors, and volunteers.
Saturday	Marketing	Messaging through SMS, Email and Snail Mail	Learn which Marketing tool—Marketing Cloud, SMS, or Snail mail—is best for reaching your key stakeholders. We will be reviewing the new SMS platform, the new Templates in Marketing Cloud, and more!
Saturday	Operations & Risk Management	Risk Management Case Studies	Always a crowd favorite filled with great learnings, we will learn about risk, organizational policies and ways you can keep your Playhouse and the network safe. Incidents will happen but together we can learn through them and prevent catastrophes.
Thursday	Programs	Math: What's New and Lesson Demo	You won't want to miss this comprehensive look at the New Math Coordinator and Tutor Training. We will show you the revisions to the G:drive and Resource Library, including the new Pre-algebra section. We will demo the new progress trackers and view some virtual lessons.
Thursday	Programs	Engaging our Ambassadors	We all have amazing ambassadors at our Playhouses!! Come to this session to share and learn innovative ways to engage them at your Playhouse and during events.
Thursday	Programs	Introducing Our Newest Signature Program: Art Explosion	Gain an overview and demonstration of our newest Signature Program, Art Explosion! You may have heard the name before, but we have re-created the program structure, lesson plans and launch information to bring this engaging and interactive program to your Playhouse! This presentation will be followed by a program demonstration where you can let your creativity shine!

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Thursday	Programs	How Can We Serve Our Largest Population Better?	Our adult population is the largest that we serve! Join us for a roundtable discussion to learn how your Playhouse is addressing some of the top questions.
Thursday	Programs	Literacy: What's New and Lesson Demo	Come for an comprehensive look at the New Literacy Coordinator and Tutor Training. We will review new materials and supports on the G:drive, Resource Library and the Raising Robust Readers website. We will demo the new Progress Trackers and view some virtual lessons.
Friday	Programs	Speech and Language Collaboration Meeting	Geared toward playhouses currently offer the GiGi's Amina Grace Speech & Language program, this is for SLP's to come together for our annual in person gathering to discuss strategies and best practices for supporting the program and its participants.
Friday	Programs	Shifting Your Perception of Challenging Behaviors	Changing your own behavior is the most effective way of promoting positive behavior! When we change our attitudes, the strategies that work well become easier to remember and implement. This provides our participants with strategies they can use not only at GiGi's but in their homes, schools, work and communities.
Friday	Programs	Launching Amina Grace Speech & Language	Communication skills are imperative for achieving independence. If you are not yet offering the Amina Grace Speech & Language program, come to this session and find out what it takes! Be sure to attend if your Playhouse is not yet offering but have it on your 3 year Strategic Program Plan.
Friday	Programs	Supporting Participants and Families with Regression and Decline in Skills	Drs. Brian Chicoine and Hannah Graham from the Adult Down Syndrome Center will co-present to share valuable information about Down syndrome regression disorder as well as other causes of decline in skills and regression. Learn more about these important topics so we can better serve our aging population.
Saturday	Programs	Treating Adult Participants as Adults	We will delve into the vital practice of treating adults with Down syndrome with the respect and dignity they deserve. While much focus is often placed on support for children and how we communicate with them, it's crucial to also be mindful of how we speak to and treat adults. Many people do not even realize they are contributing to the barriers our adults face.

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Saturday	Programs	Educator Symposium Sneak Peek	This sneak peek version of the Educator Symposium will not only give you insight into the valuable information provided to teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals and family members, but it will also get you so excited to share it with your community by hosting a Watch Party.
Saturday	Programs	Developing Medical Champions through Teddy Bear Clinics	Explore the Teddy Bear Clinic! This hands-on session empowers individuals with Down syndrome to view doctor visits as safe and fun. Through interactive activities like teddy bear checkups, participants build confidence while healthcare professionals strengthen trust. It is a win-win for all, fostering development and building partnerships with schools, medical teams, and hospitals in your community.
Saturday	Programs	Communicating with Participants with Limited Speech	Many of our participants come to us with limited speech skills, so we will demonstrate how to allow for all forms of communication including vocalizations, words, pointing, signing, and more, so you can learn how you can communicate more effectively with participants and teach your volunteers as well!
Thursday, Friday	Programs	CPR & AED Training with Illinois Heart Rescue	Every year in America, over 420,000 people are victims of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). 9 out of 10 victims die. Learning CPR can double or triple survival rates. We are fortunate to partner with the Illinois Heart Rescue to bring FREE CPR/AED Training. Pre-registration in the session must be made in advance as space is limited to 30 persons per break out. Please note this is a training and not a Certification. There will be an opportunity to learn how you can purchase safety equipment for your Playhouse.
Friday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - Communication	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to learn new strategies and practice communication skills with peers.
Friday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - Self-Advocacy	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to learn new strategies and practice self-advocacy and awareness with peers.

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Friday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - Health & Wellness	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to be a part of our GiGiFIT Adult program to continue your journey of being Healthy!
Friday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - Supporting a tour	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to learn and share ideas on how you are able to engage donors and community members during a tour of the Playhouse.
Saturday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - SMART Goals	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to learn new strategies and practice SMART goal setting with peers.
Saturday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - Media Relations	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to learn new strategies and practice how to present yourself to the media. We will discuss how you can better be prepared to share your story.
Saturday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - Health & Wellness	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to be a part of our GiGiFIT Adult program to continue your journey of being Healthy!
Saturday	Programs for Self Advocates	GiGi's Ambassadors - What More Do You Need?	We invite all GiGi's Ambassador adult self-advocates to join us during this break-out session to brainstorm and learn what is needed in GiGi's Ambassador to support you.
Friday	Programs VPH	Supporting Hispanic and Latino Families	Expand GiGi's reach into Hispanic and Latino families, learn what is in process with virtual offerings, and learn how to best take advantage of these opportunities at your Playhouse. We will also be creating best practices to continue to expand into other multicultural community needs in the future.
Saturday	Programs VPH	Serving the Other 90%: The Virtual Playhouse as an Extension of Your Playhouse	GiGi's is currently serving less than 10% of the US Down syndrome population, and less than 30% in most markets where we have a playhouse! Extend your Playhouse's reach through the virtual programming. We will share the My GiGi's resources available to your families and discuss how we can support families together!

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Thursday	Technology & Data	From Chaos to Clarity: Mastering Event Data Management	Mastering our event platforms, data management, and how it effects your Salesforce data. Don't miss this opportunity to elevate your understanding of event data and transform your Salesforce experience!
Friday	Technology & Data	Quick Fixes: Tech Tools That Save You Hours	Are you using all of the resources that come along with your GiGi's email account and our platforms? Join the experts to learn all that is available to you, and participate in the open forum to address your questions on Sharepoint, Teams, Viva, and more!
Thursday, Friday	Technology & Data	Report Right: Tips, Tricks, and a Dash of Fun!	Your Salesforce data is a goldmine! Learn how to leverage basic reports, and get a sneak peek at our new report folder structure plus time for individual report questions and requests.
Thursday, Saturday	Technology & Data	Tech Q&A: Curiosity Quenchers	Open session to bring all your technology questions on all of your tech platforms: Salesforce, Marketing Cloud, Microsoft Suite, Canva, SMS, and more. Plus learn a bit about Technoloy projects for 2025.