

Candidates Early Childhood Education Survey Results

The Children Matter Action Fund is surveying all candidates for Pennsylvania House and Senate seats to learn more about their views on childcare and early childhood education. We invite you to learn more by reviewing their responses below; by contacting their campaigns; and by following them on social media. Let them know your views on the importance of ensuring young children in Pennsylvania get the early education supports they need and deserve.

Name: **Tara Zrinski**

Current Job: Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, Solar Sales Consultant, Northampton County Councilwoman, mom of three.

Website: <http://www.vote4zrinski.org>

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You are running for election in which

House or Senate District?: **House District 138**

Q: What are your views on the benefits, or drawbacks, of allocating additional state funds for high-quality early learning education?

A: The benefits of investing in high quality early learning for our children and their educators is so important. Increasing funding for these programs is integral in ensuring a quality life and community for our future generations. The first few years of life are incredibly important and we must ensure that our children and grandchildren receive all the tools and resources to thrive. We must prioritize investment in early learning for all children and particularly marginalized communities. No ones zip code should determine whether they are worthy of care and attention. Unmet emotional and educational needs leads to generational poverty, higher rates of unemployment, even sickness. Education is important to so many aspects of society and when we invest whole-heartedly we see it's impacts beyond the walls of Pre-K.

Q: Will you support increasing annual investments in the Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program line items?

A: Yes, absolutely. I have seen the great worth of Head Start and for far too long they have been forced to do too much with too little. They need our support.

Q: How important, or unimportant, is expanding access to high-quality child care to working families in your district?

A: This is extremely important. I speak with many parents that have to work just to afford childcare, leaving them with other debts as well. The lack of investment in high quality childcare also leads to gender inequality because often women are forced to stay home and care for the child because care is not affordable. If women cannot afford to stay home and they are unable to find childcare, they have trouble finding employment where they can bring their child. Point blank we need child care for everyone. Working families need working solutions and I know that expanding childcare would bring further economic equality and general wellbeing to the area.

Q: If you support increased state investment in subsidized child care for infants and toddlers at the campaign's recommended levels, how will you help the campaign expand child care for working families? OR If you do not support the proposed increases in access to child care, please explain why.

A: I will be a strong voice in Harrisburg and build grassroots support to mobilize residents to push for these changes. I would be a prime sponsor for legislation that expanded quality care and ensure we push for a budget that does so. As a working mother that had to work & study while raising my boys alone, this is personal.

Q: Improved parenting skills, increased family economic self-sufficiency, improved maternal and child health and reducing abuse and neglect are just a few of the key benefits realized through evidence-based home visiting services. How do you view the needs and benefits of home visiting to families?

A: I would have to learn more about this issue.

Q: How will you support the expansion of state investment dollars to serve those in your district who can benefit from home visiting?

A: I would have to learn more about this issue but it sounds beneficial to families.

Q: What would you do to increase payments to high-quality providers to improve their ability to retain qualified professionals?

A: I believe that we must raise the minimum wage to at least \$15 an hour. These caretakers are entrusted with one of the most important jobs, we must ensure that they are not forced to work multiple jobs and be overworked when they are tasked with taking care of children. I also believe we should make community colleges free. If college and advanced credentials were more easily attainable we would have more qualified professionals in the field.

Q: How will you champion early care and early childhood education?

A: My work has already begun: I am meeting with a daycare next week to speak with their staff and families about the importance of childcare funding. I will fight for a \$15 minimum wage, increasing funds for childcare services, tuition-free community colleges, and build on the coalition of supporters in Harrisburg. In my community I have gathered tens of volunteers for my election and I will be sure they are fighting to raise awareness of these needs too!