

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: **Sara Innamorato**

Website: <https://www.saraforpa.com/>

Current Job: **State Representative**

Social Media: **@SaraForPA**

Campaign Contact Person: **Nick Monaco**

You are running for election in which

Campaign Contact Cell Phone: **412-396-9296**

House or Senate District?: **House District 21**

Campaign Contact Email Address: **nick@saraforpa.com**

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

A: It is indisputable that children who grow up with quality early childhood services are provided to a significant advantage, early in life. Access is almost always determined by socio-economic circumstances. Children who grow up in absolute poverty often face significant disadvantages, even when the child presents no signs of developmental delay. Children of impoverished households who experience even minor developmental challenges are often tossed aside by society, when children in more well-resourced and advantaged households can get the help needed to overcome the same struggles.

At the same time, we as a state and country drastically under invest in early childhood development, early education, and child care compared to other countries. Other governments invest in programs for young families, because they recognize that most people have children at the same time when they are struggling to establish themselves financially. By the time that most households reach financial stability, they are also beyond the peak age to have children, creating an imperative for society to provide resources to fill the financial gap. They also understand how crucial early childhood is to the development of children's skills and emotional well being. We need to follow their example, and invest more in these services.

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

A: Yes, we must increase the state's contribution.

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

A: I unequivocally support efforts to expand and provide subsidized child care to Pennsylvania families. Child care has rapidly become one of the working families' largest expenses. Referring to above, young families often lack the disposable income required to make child care a reasonable expense and allow them to achieve financial stability. At the same time, ensuring a high quality of childcare is a plus for children's mental and social development. We should work to provide generous subsidies and programs to ensure that quality child care is available for all families.

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 support it. I want to make sure that every time we talk about economic development we talk about Universal childcare and pre-K. Universal childcare and pre-K are some of the best tools for economic development and workforce development that we have. Both measures would deliver immeasurable benefits to future economic development in the form of children having better education outcomes and parents being able to enter the workforce.

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 believe in the benefits of home visits, and support legislation such as H.B. 2335 that expands their availability. Home visits can be a good way for parents in disadvantaged communities to have access to the same services and knowledge of their children's needs as is available to families who can afford regular pediatric visits. I do think it is important that we are respectful to families who require or request these visits, as they are often disadvantaged in other ways; to that end I support increased funding to more education, training, and wages for social workers.

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 support Rep. Kosierowski's bill, H.B. 2335 that is intended to expand Pennsylvania's home visitation program for expectant women and new mothers. As a compliment to Rep. Kosierowski's legislation, I am working on a bill that would provide a kit of basic maternity and child care products, as well as informational materials.

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

A: Increase state funding to county and community programs, and also increase funding for oversight agencies to ensure standards are being upheld.

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

A: I supported H.B. 2629 and H.B. 2335, as well as other measures relating to early childhood education. I will always support any legislation that furthers the goals of improving and expanding early care and early childhood education.