

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: Emily Skopov

Current Job: **Nonprofit Executive**

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You are running for election in which

House or Senate District?: **House District 28**

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

A: Investing in high-quality early learning education is one of the best long-term investments we can make for the people, the economy and the culture of Pennsylvania. Making this allocation will force us to do the long-overdue and necessary work of expanding existing revenue sources and generating new ones in order to commit to this and other critically important educational needs.

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

A: Yes.

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

A: As many in my district rely on both parents to generate enough income to support their families, and single parents are especially challenged, I know that having access to high-quality child care is extremely important.

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 work to develop sustainable funding resources specifically for child care subsidies, ensure that we are doing regular evaluations and assessments to be sure that both the providers and the families being served are having their needs met and feel supported. I would also like to make sure that constituents are aware of all of their child care options, and connect them with the resources to make the decisions that best meet their situations.

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 view the needs as being urgent, especially given the unacceptably large percentage of at-risk children and families who aren't receiving these kinds of services. The benefits of home visit services are well documented and profound, both for the children and their families. These are also benefits that will continue to pay off in multiple ways and for the lifetimes of those who receive them.

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 will advocate for increased funding and work to identify appropriate revenue sources to be dedicated for these purposes. I will also work to be sure evidence is collected in an ongoing manner to demonstrate the vital need these programs are addressing and the value of the benefits they provide. I will also work to ensure we are properly identifying and reaching all of the families who would benefit from these services.

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

A: I would advocate for increased funding that is specifically given for the purposes of employee development and salary, as well as promote programs to attract and train professionals for early childhood. We also must ensure that any funding granted carries the requirement that these professionals are receiving the kind of salary and benefits that will retain them, including requirements that early childhood educators are earning as much as their peers who teach kindergarten.

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

A: We must use all options available to educate legislators and other stakeholders about the profoundly positive impacts of early care and early childhood education, so that it is viewed as an investment that truly delivers massive returns in a number of critical ways, rather than seen as an expense. I would advocate for all those working in these fields to earn wages and benefits that will attract and retain dedicated folks who seek to be the best at what they do and who are eager to provide these much needed services to our children and their families. I would also like to see more public awareness campaigns championing the importance of these programs to build public support and increase awareness to ensure that as many folks as possible are connecting with the services they need.