



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: **Michele Knoll**

Current Job: Developmental Specialist in Early Intervention

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You are running for election in which

House or Senate District?: **State District 44**

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

A: Allocating additional funds is essential and an investment in our future. Investing in high quality early learning will help stop the Preschool to Prison Pipeline.

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

A: I will support increasing these annual investments. Even with increases, there are many children who will not have access to these programs.

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

A: Expanding access to high quality child care is critical in my district. As an Early Interventionist, I am in child care facilities and know that many families do not have access to the highest quality child care. Stimulating, knowledgeable caregivers make a huge difference in a child's developmental outcomes.

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: As a Legislator, it is incumbent upon me to help families by having my staff understand and facilitate their ability to access the subsidies to help pay for child care as well as to help child care facilities uphold the very highest standards for the children enrolled. Helping individuals acquire small business loans to open well equipped and well trained staff is a role a Legislator can take in serving the very youngest constituents. I will work for all the citizens in the 44th, young and old.

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: As an Early Interventionist who engages in home visits, I see many families who just need to understand the basics language acquisition, early literacy, and behavioral techniques to help their child reach their milestones. Without being able to visit the child in the home, it is difficult to see the subtle nuances and hurdles that may need to be overcome. Helping parents learn how to calmly deal with a tantrum or add language to routines is best done in person in the least restrictive environment. As a mandatory reporter myself, my ability to see what is going on in the home is one that I always wished I had when I was a classroom teacher. Sometimes with very young parents, what seems like neglect is a matter of lack of understanding child development as opposed to blatant neglect. Nutrition, common sense limits, and realistic expectation can be imparted by a patient home visitor in gentle, instructional way that a pamphlet can not do.

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

A: Supporting OCDEL financially at the state level and funding more slots for all home visiting would be a high priority for me. Taking the subsidies from horse racing and applying it education, closing the Delaware Loophole and using that money for education, and holding Charter and Cyber Schools accountable frees up millions of dollars for education in the state. Right now when many home visitors can't put eyes on their clients, keeps me up at night, literally. Friends of mine in the field of Early Intervention are extremely worried about their most vulnerable families at risk from abuse, homelessness, and food insecurity. We know that the people in the United States right now who are hungry are our children. We know that the people in the United States right now who are at risk from abuse are children. Protecting the youngest among my constituents is at the top of my list of things I want to accomplish in Harrisburg. Providing information about unemployment and potential employment opportunities to families helps them support their families, providing information about where families can access food banks, and making sure all levels of education are funded properly will benefit the whole family.

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

A: Provide funding at the state level to help these providers remain open and to retain qualified professionals. Raising the minimum wage should help retain workers, but we need to help the providers pay that higher minimum wage. If we can subsidize Cracker Plants, we should be able to subsidize Pennsylvania's future, our children.

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

A: I will speak out for funding, higher professional standards, and higher standards for facilities. I will legislate for funding, higher pay for caregivers, and higher standards for those caregivers. I will never forget that it's for the children of this state, our future, that I also work.