

## 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: **Amanda M Cappelletti**

Current Job: Vice Chair, East Norriton Board of Supervisors

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You are running for election in which

House or Senate District?: **Senate District 17**

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

A: There are no drawbacks to allocating additional state funds for high-quality early care and education (ECE). Decades long research from the Abecedarian Project, the Perry School Project, Head Start and many others have demonstrated the efficacy of investing in ECE. The life-long effects of children participating in such programs include higher educational attainment, improved public and physical health, and positive impacts on the economy. But talking about children's access to high-quality ECE in terms of the economy and other measurable outcomes oversimplifies the issue. Providing a safe health environment for children to grow and develop is a moral imperative. We shouldn't be boiling it down to dollars and cents; we need to acknowledge that providing high quality ECE is simply the right thing to do, and we must do it.

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

A: As a former special assistant to the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, I advocated for increasing the annual investments into the Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program line items. If elected State Senator, I will continue to fight for that increase.

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

A: Expanding access to affordable, high-quality early care and education to all working families, not just in my district but across Pennsylvania, is of the utmost importance to me. Providing a safe health environment for children to grow and develop is a moral imperative. Many parents must make the difficult choice to leave their job because of the lack of high-quality, affordable care. By increasing the access, we not only fulfill our moral obligation to the children, but also better support working class families and those who work in early care and education – a field that is grossly underpaid and overworked.

**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 fully support the state investment in subsidized childcare for infants and toddlers at the campaign's recommended levels. I will be vocal and outspoken on the topic – I've worked with Child Care Aware of America, focused my academic research on early care and education, and worked at OCDEL. I have a strong grasp on the issues not only facing working families in need of care, but also those working in the industry. These are intertwined issues that cannot be pulled apart – we must fight to increase funding and to better support our early care and education providers.

**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 individual with her Master's in Public Health, I fully support investing in evidence-based programming. We must allow science to guide us in these scenarios. Home visiting programs provide a level of support and education that cannot be offered elsewhere. As a Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, I was able to visit several sites which provide home visiting programs, as well as participate in a review of programs seeking funding to provide home visiting services. One of the many reasons home visiting programs are successful is because they are run by community members, making it easier to build trust between provider and participant. We must continue to invest in these programs, as they are tried and true in their outcomes.

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

**A:** Every year the Pennsylvania legislature passes a budget appropriating funds for programs across the commonwealth. This document is more than just a list of programs to fund; it is a statement of what the state prioritizes. We need to reprioritize many of our funding decisions. I will fight to ensure that our state prioritizes programs with demonstrated outcomes to help working families and children – or to put it more plainly, I will fight to prioritize home visiting programs. I will speak out about the efficacy of the programs and ensure that my constituents know that what I'm fighting for is an investment in them, because they are worth

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

**A:** Investing in affordable, high-quality early care and education necessarily means that we invest in those who work in the field. Often, those who work in early care and education rely on government assistance programs. This is unacceptable. We expect that providers be education and credentialed individuals, but do not provide support in attaining those achievements. We must increase funding to support and reward teachers for educational attainments in their field, as well as passing a \$15 an hour minimum wage. Creating teacher apprenticeship and mentoring programs for those entering the field is another way to help develop and retain qualified professionals. We must reprioritize the state budget so that we have an increased minimum wage, fiscal help for those seeking to obtain degrees and credentials in early care and education, and develop apprenticeships, mentoring, and other credentialing programs. When the state budget virtue signals that we prioritize and value early care and education by investing in it, it becomes a field that people will want to develop a career in.

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

**A:** I will fight to reprioritize our budget and provide early care and education the support it deserves. I will speak out about the efficacy of providing high quality early care and education. Above that, I will hold firm in the ideal that it is a moral imperative to infants and toddlers, and working class and middle-class families, and early care and education professionals that we invest in and support them.