



Children First Action Fund General 2022 Survey Results

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

Name: Vito Malacari
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You are running for election in which district? House District 119

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

A: High-quality Pre-K is a priority of my campaign. All 3 and 4 years old's should have access to high-quality Pre-K. Allocating funds to increase access is important simply because we need to give children an opportunity to succeed. Pre-K gives a great base for kids moving forward in education and is a predictor for students' graduation. The state needs to increase funding for Pre-K due to the tremendous waiting list of families trying to get kids into quality programs and it will allow for fewer resources to be spent on kids later on in their academic careers. Funding pre-K appropriately early on in a child's life will pay dividends later on.

Q: How important, or unimportant, are increased public resources to expand access and affordability to high-quality child care to working families in your district?

A: Expanding and increasing public resources for families to get high-quality child care is a high priority to me. Ensuring families have access to quality child care has many benefits for the child, the family, and the community. Children benefit from high-quality care because it allows them to blossom during their formative years, families do not have to make decisions about finances or employment, and communities create strong bonds with families and people looking to build a strong community.

Q: Should the wages for child care workers and preschool teachers be commensurate with those of other educators with similar qualifications and experience?

A: Yes. The answer must be yes. We need to increase the salaries for child care workers and preschool teachers. They must be paid similar to teachers within the District they are operating. While talking with early child care workers they do not feel valued because of what they are being paid and many are constantly looking for new employment because of their pay. Expanding access and increasing pay have to go hand-in-hand with the State's ability to use its resources to invest in our future.

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

A: Yes, I will support the expansion of state investment dollars for home visits. My son had a speech delay and through early intervention, we were able to get home visits from an experienced speech

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therapist who helped him go from not being able to effectively communicate to progressing to the point where he needs minimal interventions with his speech. That is just one example of how home visits help our children.

Q: In addition to making child care more accessible and affordable, what other policies would you champion to help businesses facing a workforce shortage?

A: Other policies that could help businesses facing a workforce shortage would be giving tax credits to businesses who support child care initiatives such as transportation for kids, supporting salaries for employees of facilities, and credits for upgrading facilities. I would also champion policies to allow employees to take some time from their day for flexibility to pick up kids, take kids, and otherwise attend student functions where possible.

Q: What other government resources or policies would you consider for families that are struggling with keeping costs, especially child care, under control?

A: We are currently sitting on billions of dollars from American Rescue Plan money that could be used to help offset the costs of childcare for families struggling. We can place caps on what out-of-pocket expenses are for families each year so that they do not pay over 7% of their total income in childcare costs. Those are two ideas that could help control costs in childcare and family affordability.

Q: Which mental health supports are needed most in your district and how will you work to increase access to families that need them?

A: Mental health services that are needed most within this District are to help children with anxiety, coping skills, and social skills. The best way we can tackle this would be through school districts. With children attending in-person instruction in our schools, we need to get more mental health professionals in our schools to help kids stay in school. We need to ensure that kids can meet with social workers, counselors, and other professionals to help with the stress and anxiety our kids are feeling. I would also want to have counselors teach and interact more with our youngest students to teach them coping skills and social skills to create better outcomes for our kids.

Q: Would you support the creation of a refundable State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)? Why/why not?

A: Yes, I would support a creation of a refundable State EITC. The reason is that is an investment in kids and families. That investment will be returned back into the local economy and allow families to have some breathing room and disposable income to pay bills, go out to eat, and invest in themselves. This would decrease dependence on state assistance programs for families and increase workforce participation which would fill the gaps in our labor force we are currently experiencing.

Q: What would you do, if elected, to expand the access to affordable broadband internet?

A: I would expand access to affordable broadband by regulating companies that provide broadband like a public utility. Internet providers are crucial in our information age and people rely on them for all types of things like work, prescription refills, and school. We need to ensure that broadband (with appropriate speeds) is readily available to all people in Pennsylvania.