

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS MY PRIORITY



Dear Voter:

We hope that you will use these facts and questions to educate candidates for elected office about early childhood care and education in Virginia. Any opportunity you have to engage with candidates is a chance to find out where candidates stand on the issues before voting in November. When you meet candidates, either at event or when they come knocking on your door, share one fact about why early childhood care education is your priority as a voter. And when you get the opportunity to ask a question of a candidate, use the questions on the reverse to find out where they stand on the issues.



Bi-Partisan Voter Support for Early Childhood

- In a 2014 CNU Poll, 70% of Virginia voters strongly supported early childhood education programs and their link to improving academic outcomes.
- In a 2014 national poll, 67% of voters felt that access to affordable, quality child care should be a national priority.

http://cnu.edu/cpp/feb_3_2014_general_assembly_report.pdf

<http://growamericastronger.org/poll/>



Opportunity Gaps Begin in Early Childhood

- Two-thirds (66%) of economically disadvantaged children in Virginia do not attend preschool compared to less than half (46%) of their not disadvantaged peers.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7876-children-ages-3-and-4-not-attending-preschool-by-poverty-status?loc=48&loct=2#detailed/2/48/false/1218,1049,995,116/4172,4173/15190,15189>



Working Families Need Affordable Early Childhood Options

- Over two-thirds of parents of young children are in the workforce.
- The average cost of one year of center-based child care in Virginia is more than a year of college tuition.
- 12% of parents report that child care issues, such as location, cost and quality, impacted their employment.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/8260-children-ages-0-to-5-whose-parents-report-that-child-care-issues-affected-their-employment-by-income-level?loc=48&loct=2#detailed/2/48/false/1021/4325,4321,4322/16810>



High Quality Preschool Programs Prepare Children for Success in School

- The Virginia Department of Education reports that children who participated in the Virginia Preschool Initiative were better prepared in early literacy skills in kindergarten than children from other types of preschool.



Preparation for the Future Workforce Begins in Early Childhood

- Long-term research demonstrates that disadvantaged children who participated in high quality preschool were more likely to have a job and go on to higher education than their peers. Business leaders agree that supporting early childhood education leads to a stronger workforce.

<http://www.readynation.org/wp-content/uploads/ReadyNation-Business-Brief-Endnotes.pdf>



Investments in Early Childhood Education Yield Returns

- Nobel laureate winning economist James Heckman has found that funding early childhood education initiatives yields a return on investment of about \$7 for every \$1 spent.

<http://heckmanequation.org/>





QUESTIONS TO POSE TO CANDIDATES ABOUT YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Safety and Affordability of Quality Child Care

• When parents in Virginia look for child care options they often get sticker shock-- costs of child care are more than college tuition. All families want to give their kids the best care but not all can access it or afford it. Virginia families need quality child care but cannot afford for costs to rise even higher. What do you think Virginia should do to improve quality child care options for working parents?



Access to Preschool

• Virginia’s state preschool program, the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), serves at-risk children who are not served by Head Start. Evidence from this program shows that children who attend VPI are better prepared for school than their peers. Do you support the expansion of VPI? What do you think should be the state’s role in providing preschool education?



Prevention and Early Intervention in Children’s Health and Development

• A child’s healthy development starts with appropriate health care and support for mothers during pregnancy. Children who experience health risks or trauma during their early years are more likely to have chronic, but preventable, health conditions as adults. What efforts would you support to ensure that pregnant women, babies and preschoolers can access resources for healthy child development?



Lifting Families Out of Poverty

• Living in poverty is considered by medical experts as “toxic stress” that shapes the architecture of the brain. In Virginia, one in three young children under six lives in an economically disadvantaged family and may experience stress associated with living in poverty. What initiatives would you support to help families and young children living in poverty?



Help for Working Parents

• Virginia needs a strong workforce to compete in a global economy. Working parents make up a significant portion of the workforce. What policies would you support to ensure that parents can successfully contribute to the workforce and maintain strong relationships with their families?



VOTE ON NOVEMBER 3RD!
MORE INFORMATION ON THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS

VPAP- www.vpap.org
(candidates, elections and fundraising)

Virginia Board of Elections- www.elections.virginia.gov
(candidate contact information)

Voices- www.vakids.org

