

## 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:** Chris Rodkey

**Website:** [rodkey4pa.com](http://rodkey4pa.com)

**Current Job:** Clergy, professor, small business owner

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**You are running for election in which district?** PA House District 93

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

A: I believe that this should be a priority over many other social welfare programs. We know that it works, we know there is a need, we know both the long and short-term benefits.

**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: Clearly, we need to do something; the status quo is unacceptable. I generally support expansion for these programs. I also understand that to do it right will take some time, particularly with training the workforce required; and at the same time, as PA is losing younger workers and every month of postponement will make implementation more difficult and likely more expensive.

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

A: With the same qualifications, experience, yes, the wages should be similar.

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

A: Yes, particularly in southern York County.

**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: Generally speaking, raising the minimum wage would help businesses keep workers; if lower income jobs are not paying anything close to a living wage, staying at home with children will be a better option. Policy possibilities include subsidizing training programs through existing educational institutions, the Keystone Saves program if passed would be an asset to many employers and employees, develop programs to connect employers with high schools and colleges, streamlining and standardizing application processes for these positions, offer flexible scheduling (differently than current public schools).

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

A: Increasing grant availability for families and providers; promote shared services alliances and provider networks; if the PA Educational EITC is to continue, expand it more aggressively to pre-K programs; use current enrollment numbers for support; offer a place at the table for developing programs to community stakeholders and citizens.

**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: Simply stated: all of them. This is something I have encountered myself and in my community work. Access to assessment, therapy, and treatment can take many months, require travel, and might not be covered by insurance. When my family first had a child diagnosed with ADHD, we could only find one provider willing to work with the age of the child, had an opening, and we had to wait months to be accepted as a patient. And even then we paid hundreds of dollars per visit. School districts should be required to have a psychiatrist on staff, which could be shared by numerous school districts. Connecting families with medical assistance programs would go a long way; I have helped several families (who didn't know they qualified) with the applications.

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

A: Yes, if a federal program does not emerge as a better option.

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

A: Unequivocally, yes, and believe that decentralized options (such as the Helium network) are viable, which no state government to my knowledge has seriously considered.