



## 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:** Katie Muth

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**Current Job:** State Senator

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**You are running for election in which district?** Senate District 44

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

A: The way I see it, we need to continue to do everything that we can at the state level to advocate for the expansion of early childhood education programs, while also investing in early childhood facilities in every community regardless of the zip code. Throughout my tenure in the State Senate, I have been a vocal supporter of pre-k education and will continue to do so, in order to ensure that every student has the ability to receive high quality pre-k education.

**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: Public resources are paramount to access and affordability of high-quality child care throughout not only my district, but the Commonwealth. I have heard from many families, single parents and child care providers about the strain that the lack of quality, affordable child care options has had on them. Before, during, and after the COVID crisis, I have been a staunch advocate for strengthening public resources that will support working families, and single parents.

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

A: Absolutely. Child care workers that I have met with across the 44th have told me that they often times have to work more than one job, due to the low wages that they receive. Child care workers and educators tasked with the responsibility of teaching our precious children should be paid a fair, livable wage.

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

A: Research from the APA has shown that approximately 15 percent of new mothers suffer from postpartum depression. In Pennsylvania this means more than 20,000 babies and their mothers are annually affected by this mood disorder. I am in support of the expansion of our states investment in home visiting services, in order to provide support for mothers and infants with qualifying health conditions.

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**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: Lack of affordable and accessible childcare has impacted every industry and become dire during the pandemic. I am a co-sponsor the Paid Family Care Act, which would establish a statewide Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program. This important legislation will help hard-working Pennsylvanians care for themselves and their families when serious illness strikes or a new child enters their lives by providing employees the ability to invest small deductions from their weekly earnings into a state managed fund so that when they need to take time off, they can retain their job and remain economically stable. As the American workforce changes, work policies must also evolve to serve a growing and diverse population. Employers should not have to choose between the health of their business and loyalty to their employees. And no employee should ever have to choose between taking care of a sick child or an aging parent or a job. In Pennsylvania, families should come first.

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

A: The Child Care is Essential for Working Families and Businesses report indicates that 45% of respondents with families had to adjust their work to accommodate their child care needs. I am a prime sponsor of SB13, the Paid Sick Leave Act. Pennsylvania should join those thirteen other states in promoting healthy employees, healthy workplaces, and healthy families by enacting a paid sick leave law. Our proposal is modeled after California's Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014. A uniform, statewide paid leave policy that focuses on our employees and recognizes the interests and concerns of employers should be our guiding light in consideration of a statewide paid leave policy.

**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: The Brandywine Hospital and the Jennersville Hospital had been staples in our communities for decades – providing quality community-based health care, emergency services and behavioral health care while also employing our friends and neighbors in good, family-sustaining jobs. When the purchase deal fell through, the healthcare needs of our community became secondary to the profit margins of the healthcare providers. These hospitals provided invaluable resources for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, and since their closure police and EMS agencies have to travel far outside of their jurisdiction to safely ensure that patients receive the appropriate level of care. I have introduced legislation that would require the Department of Health to review applications, hold public hearings, and prepare impact statements on the effect of the buying and selling of health care services that the hospital or hospital system is providing. The bill would also require price transparency from hospitals or hospital systems so that patients have full access to the costs of items and services provided.

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

A: I would only support an increase in tax credits to businesses and corporations through the Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program if funds distributed were both transparent and allocated to help the people and families that the program is intended to serve.

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

A: As we have emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen how essential broad band internet access is in almost every part of Pennsylvanian's lives. I was proud to support HB2071 (Act 96), which established the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority to provide broadband Internet access to unserved and underserved residents; and providing for powers and duties of the authority and for grant awards.