

✓ Voting for Children: Questions for Candidates and Lawmakers



Let's seize the opportunity of the 2018 elections to secure commitments from candidates, and, come November, those who are newly elected or re-elected, to put New York children and families first. Our elected representatives can – and should – use public policy to improve child and family well-being by expanding access to high-quality health care and early learning, growing economic opportunity, and reducing child poverty. As we approach November 6, let's challenge candidates to put policies that support child and family well-being at the top of their agendas.

Ask these questions of your elected officials:

Nearly 22% of New York's children live in poverty, and that percentage is significantly higher among children of color. Notably, 65% of poor children in New York have at least one parent in the workforce. Growing up in poverty increases the likelihood that a child will be exposed to factors that can impair brain development, and lead to poor cognitive, health and academic outcomes.

Q What policies will you champion to enable families to pull themselves out of poverty and into economic security?

High-quality child care, pre-K and other early learning opportunities can significantly improve educational outcomes for the long-term, and reduce disparities. The cost of child care in NY rivals mortgage payments. Yet, due to underinvestment, fewer than 20% of families eligible for child care subsidies receive them, and the large majority of families outside of NYC do not have access to pre-K.

Q What is your plan to ensure access to affordable, quality early education for children birth through age 5?

Home visiting that provides education and assistance for mothers and babies has been shown to improve health, get children ready for school, reduce child abuse and neglect, and improve the economic stability of families.

Q Given this success, what would you do to ensure that voluntary home visiting is available to all families who would like these services?

Research shows that **when parents have health insurance, they have healthier babies**, they are better able to stay healthy and care for their children, and their kids are more likely to get the care they need. New York has put into place policies that have successfully reduced the number of uninsured parents to 7% and children to 2%.

Q How will you ensure that we continue that trend until all children and families have coverage?

More than **16,000 children across New York State are in foster care**. While research shows that children do best when they live with relatives or in a family, far too many young people in New York live, instead, in group homes (nearly 24% outside of New York City).

Q How will you prioritize the needs of our children in foster care and help ensure they experience the best possible outcomes?