

deaeyc Early Childhood Education Candidate Questionnaire

Answers Submitted By: Debbie Harrington

1. What are your views on the needs of young children (birth to kindergarten) and what specific steps would you take to address these needs?

Children birth to kindergarten will have diverse learning needs, some of which depend upon their socioeconomic status, the time adults have to spend with them to read, explore, and expose them to a learning rich environment, and their specific and unique learning needs. Legislators can support all of these learning needs through appropriate funding of programs and specific oversight and accountability standards to ensure that the funds are making the desired impact needed to close any achievement gaps.

2. What are your views on the ways in which we can close the education achievement gap with a particular focus on the early years?

As I stated in response to question 1, reasons for achievement gaps in Delaware should be continuously studied to identify the various causes and opportunities to then address those specific causes. Every child should have the benefit of high expectations for success. Education, however, has to be uniquely tailored to the outcomes desired. We cannot expect achievement gaps to be closed without measuring the factors that contribute to them and then implementing specific activities to close them.

3. What is the role of the state/city/federal government to provide for programs that will be addressing the socio-emotional and mental health issues young children will experience in the coming weeks and months resulting from the disruption in their lives brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic?

Whether the impact is caused by the health care emergency or other stressors in the environment, our government can address the issues young children face by measuring the impact, developing targeted programs to address the issues flowing from the stressors, educating teachers, physicians, other health care providers, and community resources to identify and address the students' needs, and then sharing best practices that come from these efforts to expand opportunities to heal and help students as they and their families recover from various stressors and trauma.

4. What steps would you take to attract, and retain quality educators in the early childhood education field?

Quality educators need to be compensated fairly, supported in their efforts to hone and enhance their skills, and provided with specialists such as early interventionists, social workers, nutrition experts, and others with whom they can collaborate to educate the whole child and the child's family and community.

5. As an elected official, what would be your top 4 priorities in the first 100 days in the position?

In the first 100 days we must raise the minimum wage, reform education funding to resolve inequities and include universal pre-k, care for our veterans health and welfare and build an economic infrastructure to support small business restoration after COVID-19.

6. How would you improve the economy of your city, our State and/or our nation?

We will improve the economy through modernizing our transportation systems, upgrading infrastructure, transitioning to clean energy and expanding our healthcare/hospital systems thereby creating jobs, attracting businesses and enhancing quality of life.