

Hosting a Candidate Forum on Child Care and Early Learning: Sample Facilitator Questions

Want to know where candidates stand on important issues facing young children, their families, and early childhood educators? Inviting candidates to answer questions about child care and early learning—at one forum, in separate forums, or via a questionnaire—is a great way to understand their values and plans. Just make sure your organization extends the same invitation and offers the same forum to all candidates. And remember, partnering with other similar organizations is also a great way to build capacity and encourage candidate participation.

To help you get started, here are some questions you can consider asking candidates:

- › What are your views on the needs of children in our state and what specific steps would you take to address these needs?
- › What is your long-term vision for the role of early childhood education in our society?
- › Brain research and neuroscience have established that children’s earliest years are critical for their social and cognitive development. What actions will you take to ensure all children start school ready to learn?
- › What is your understanding of early childhood education and how would you characterize the importance of the child care industry?
- › What are your strategies to ensure all stakeholders are at the table to address concerns and solutions related to early childhood education?
- › What policies would you implement to ensure that early childhood educators receive fair compensation for their work?
- › What policies would you implement to support professional preparation and development for early childhood educators?
- › What solutions have you seen that address the child care needs of families and employers?
- › What are your plans to increase the availability of affordable, accessible, quality child care and early learning programs that meet families’ needs?
- › What are the opportunities in this state/ community to make high quality child care more affordable for all families?
- › How will you support and improve access to quality early childhood education specifically for families with low incomes and families living in rural communities?
- › What are your plans to involve businesses and business leaders in addressing the child care needs of their employees?
- › What are your budget priorities? How would they affect children, families, and educators in communities across our state?

Here are some examples, including news stories, about child care and early learning focused candidate forums from current and previous local and state election cycles in [Rhode Island](#), [New Hampshire](#), [Colorado](#), [Michigan](#), and [Georgia](#).