

Democratic Primary Voters Want to Hear More from Candidates On Children’s Issues

While Democratic primary voters have heard a lot of plans from Democratic presidential candidates on critical issues such as climate change, health care and immigration, a new survey of likely primary voters show they want to hear more from the candidates on the issue of access to childcare and preschool. Three different plans to dramatically improve childcare and early childhood education generate support in excess of 85 percent in this electorate. The survey also shows Joe Biden currently leading the field, with Elizabeth Warren in second place and Bernie Sanders rounding out the top three candidates.

Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) commissioned the national survey which was administered by TargetPoint and GQR. That sample included 600 likely Democratic primary voters, was completed September 3-4 and carries a margin of error of +/- 4.00.

Key Findings

- **As other recent polling suggests, Joe Biden holds a lead in the primary, followed by Warren and Sanders.** An impressive number of primary voters remain uncommitted to any candidate.

Figure 1: Democratic Primary vote share

	Vote (%)
Joe Biden	26
Elizabeth Warren	23
Bernie Sanders	15
Kamala Harris	5
Pete Buttigieg	5
Amy Klobuchar	2
Julian Castro	1
Cory Booker	1
Plan to vote for a candidate not named here	5
Undecided	17

- **Democratic primary voters have not heard much from the candidates about access to childcare and pre-school.** A 53 percent majority say they have heard little (31 percent) or nothing at all (22 percent) on these issues.
- **A 74 percent majority believe the issues of childcare and preschool are important to them as they make up their minds on whom to support in the Democratic presidential primary.** Three in four primary voters (74 percent) also want to hear more about the candidates’ plans on these issues.

- Similarly, 83 percent want to hear more about the candidates’ plans to solve the crisis at the border and care for children who cross and 90 percent want to hear more about the candidates’ plans to reduce child poverty across America.
- Three ambitious proposals to profoundly improve access to childcare and preschool draw huge numbers in this electorate.

	Strongly Favor	Total Favor
This plan will triple the money that the federal government spends on low-income schools and districts. The additional money would be used to increase teacher salaries, ensure access to Pre-K for all three and four year olds, and expand the mental health infrastructure within our schools.	69	92
This plan will provide free access to childcare to any family that makes less than 200% of the federal poverty line, place a cap at no more than 7% of income for families over the 200% threshold, pay child care and preschool workers a salary comparable to public school teachers, and put local communities in charge with high national standards to ensure access to quality care and early learning.	53	86
As a first step to solving the problem of access to affordable quality childcare this plan would provide competitive grants to a few states to improve training of child care workforce, help renovate and build new child care facilities and provide more training to child care workers.	49	86

Conclusion

The race for the Democratic nomination is very competitive and likely primary voters are paying close attention to the candidates’ positions on a range of issues. To date, voters feel that access to childcare and preschool has remained largely overlooked in the hotly contested contest. Democratic primary voters want to hear more about candidates’ plans for child care and to see a sharper focus on a wide range of children’s issues as the campaign unfolds.