

What would you do to increase preschool enrollment for homeless students?



BILL DALEY

"I know the importance of early childhood education. For homeless students, it's even more critical since school is a safe place where kids can get a hot meal. As we expand access to universal preschool across the city, we will need to have a robust outreach strategy to inform and connect parents to high-quality early-learning opportunities. Many families in shelters have young children eligible for preschool. We need to have outreach workers connecting with those families and helping them enroll and adequate promotional materials available in locations homeless families frequent for services—libraries, public clinics, emergency rooms, and public assistance offices."



AMARA ENYIA

"Pre-school enrollment lays the foundation for a child's educational future. Disparities can snowball very quickly, meaning that the next Mayor must have pre-school enrollment at the forefront of their educational outcome improvement plan. The Enyia administration will increase the number of information sessions in communities when parents are less likely to send kids to pre-school, allocate more funding for after-care programs to enable parents to find and maintain stable employment without worrying about having to always leave before close of business. Since housing insecurity makes it harder for parents to send children to school, we will work to build more affordable family units closer to schools to shorten walking distances, and to allow for greater access to quality education. Amara will also increase the number of full day pre-school programs in the city, something which many educational experts agree is better for the long-term growth and development of children than half-day programs."



LASHAWN FORD

"I have introduced legislation in the current General Assembly that provides that, beginning July 1, 2020, a family eligible for child care services whose income is at or below 185% of the most recent United States Department of Health and Human Services Federal Poverty Guidelines for the applicable family size shall pay only a \$1 fee as a co-payment for child care services. My mayoral administration will work with my Springfield colleagues to lower the barriers that exist so every child can receive the quality child care and preschool services that they deserve and need to thrive in life. When child care agencies were not getting paid under the Rauner administration, I was joined by many leaders of these agencies to meet with state officials that led to the restoration of \$300 million of child care funding for low-income families. I introduced and passed legislation that lowered the mandatory age for school attendance from age 7 to age 6 in the state of Illinois. Early childhood education is very important to me and will be a priority in my administration, especially for those who are homeless."



LORI LIGHTFOOT

"We must expand early childhood education opportunities in the city, and ensure that those opportunities are available for homeless students. For homeless students, school often represents the primary source for food and social services, and a primary place of shelter. As mayor, I will ensure that CPS works and coordinates with homeless shelters, relevant advocacy groups and social service organizations to actively identify homeless families with preschool age children and educate homeless parents about preschool opportunities throughout the city."



SUSANA MENDOZA

"As part of my Future Now Plan, I've made a commitment to creating universal full day pre-K throughout the city. In order to fulfill that commitment, I will go after the resources we need by pursuing federal Title I funds set aside for this purpose. I will also build a culture in the homeless services task force to specifically perform outreach to homeless families with children to encourage them to take advantage of public pre-K programs. Homeless children also face other barriers to enrolling in preschool like healthcare services for obtaining immunizations. I will improve access to these services and also implement a grace period for these families that want to enroll their children but face the extra hurdle of being homeless and not having access to healthcare. I will also improve data collection so that my administration remains focused in targeting resources and efficiently serving families and providing them with the support they need."



TONI PRECKWINKLE

"The STLS department within CPS helps to address challenges with enrollment, transportation, attendance, and retention for students affected by homelessness. I would work with this important department and implement their recommendations for preschool enrollment challenges for homeless students. CPS's immediate school enrollment program allows children in temporary living situations to still enroll in school. Families experiencing homelessness must have knowledge and understanding of options for their children, including this program. We will measure our success by whether or not the participation of homeless students in preschool enrollment matches their participation in CPS enrollment as a whole."



WILLIE WILSON

"As stated [in a previous answer], children represent a special challenge in that they must have a proper guardian. We must combine our resources and ensure that these children have not just a place to sleep but proper structure and protection."

