

## 2022 North Carolina General Assembly Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Natasha Marcus

**District:** Senate District 41

**Party Affiliation:** Democrat

**Current Occupation:** State Senator

### **1. What are your views on the needs of young children (prenatal to age 5) and what specific steps would you take to address these needs?**

These are critical years in a child's development. They need loving care and attention, frequent stimulation, age-appropriate instruction, quality nutrition, safe spaces, clean clothing/diapers, wellness care from qualified medical providers, enrichment from arts, physical activity, and social interactions and discipline to learn expectations, manners and good behaviors.

The State should support low-income families to provide these necessary things for young children by providing better funding for childcare subsidies and the early childhood education programs, food banks, diaper banks, parenting classes, and similar programs.

The State should keep children safe from gun violence by encouraging safe storage of firearms and requiring a background check on all gun sales.

NC should expand Medicaid so working parents have access to affordable healthcare and can be better parents. This would also help improve our rate of infant and maternal mortality, which is too high, especially for Black and Hispanic families.

### **2. What steps would you take to ensure that children birth to age five have access to high-quality and affordable early learning programs?**

We have great programs, like Head Start, Smart Start and NC and Meck Pre-K, but not all children that need to be enrolled can get in -- wait lists, staff shortages, etc. The State should provide more funding for these programs, so that no child spends time on the wait list instead of in an early learning environment.

We should continue to hold childcare facilities to high standards in our inspections and not lower the bar when it comes to child safety.

To encourage people to work in the early childhood profession the state should make classes at community colleges free/easily affordable (through grant programs, tuition waivers, etc.), so we can have a trained and eager workforce.



**3. What steps would you take to stabilize and sustain North Carolina's early education system and child care workforce as we approach the end of the federal child care relief funding?**

The State should extend the relief funding to retain the workers we need to provide early childhood education and care. Also, the state should encourage people to work in the early childhood profession by making classes at community colleges free/easily affordable (through grant programs, tuition waivers, etc.), so we can have a trained and eager workforce.

**4. What are your views on how to provide all children with access to a sound, basic education beginning in early childhood?**

The NCGA should honor the court order in the Leandro case, which is based on every child's constitutional right to a sound basic education.