Questions for Candidates in the 2026 Municipal Elections

Municipal and School Board elections in Ontario are happening ***Monday October 26th, 2026.*** *These questions reflect the recommendations of child care experts in the Institute for Municipal Finance and Governance's publication, "The Municipal Role in Child Care". Some of the initiatives mentioned may already be in place in some regions, but in all places they could be strengthened.*

1. **Securing a Seat at the Table:** How will you advocate for municipalities to have a direct voice in provincial and federal policy discussions under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreements?
2. **Community Collaboration:** Will you support creating or strengthening a local early learning and child care advisory committee that brings together municipal planners, community child care operators, Early Childhood Educators, parents, Indigenous leaders, school boards, and advocacy groups?
3. **Tackling the Workforce Shortage**: Child care expansion across Ontario is constrained by an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) recruitment and retention crisis. Will you support using municipal system management tools to establish competitive local wage benchmarks, benefits, pensions, and professional development support for ECEs and child care workers?
4. **Unlocking Municipal Assets:** What specific actions will you take to make city-owned land, vacant public buildings, and civic facilities (such as recreation and community centres) available for new public or non-profit child care spaces?
5. **Direct Municipal Operation:** Do you support maintaining or expanding municipally operated child care programs to meet supply shortages and service gaps, promote pay equity, and establish high-quality standards?
6. **Dedicated Coordination & Strategy:** As part of ongoing local child care service system planning, do you support establishing a comprehensive municipal child care strategy and aligning child care expansion with overall city planning?
7. **Reducing Land Use Barriers:** Will you advocate for updating municipal zoning bylaws to permit child care facilities across commercial and residential zones without imposing costly or lengthy rezoning processes?
8. **Leveraging Developer Contributions:** What is your position on utilizing development charges, Community Benefits Charges, or dedicated reserve funds from private developments to help finance local child care infrastructure?