

April 17, 2012

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Kansas receives \$56 million in tobacco settlement monies

TOPEKA – Today, Kansas secured \$56 million from the master tobacco settlement. This is the first of two annual payments that finance the Children’s Initiatives Fund, which supports early education programs like Early Head Start, Tiny-K and Parents as Teachers. The second payment is expected soon.

Approximately 200,000 – roughly one-third of the state’s children – were served in Fiscal Year 2011 by programs that rely on CIF dollars.

“The road to prosperity begins with Kansas kids,” said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. “Investments in quality early learning opportunities provide an immediate economic boost for businesses, create jobs and build stronger communities. Lawmakers have a responsibility to ensure that today’s young children are prepared to become tomorrow’s workforce.”

In November, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet delivered CIF funding recommendations to Gov. Sam Brownback based on an anticipated funding level of \$56 million, but the governor included less than \$40 million for the CIF in his budget proposal. The cabinet recommended increasing funding for the Child Care Quality Initiatives (an additional \$20,743), Kansas Early Head Start (an additional \$3.45 million) and the SIDS Network (an additional \$25,000).

Advocates are urging the Kansas Legislature to fully fund early education programs at \$56 million.

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