

KEEPING THE PROMISE TO KANSAS KIDS



Kansas' early education system is dependent on the Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY) Fund and the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF).

A 2015 statewide audit commissioned by the Kansas Legislature highlighted the CIF as the gold standard for government efficiency and accountability in state government.

Some want to dismantle the current structure and eliminate the CIF, moving those dollars into the State General Fund (SGF).

Kansas' premier early childhood system should be left intact to ensure its consistently high return on investment for Kansas taxpayers and outcomes for Kansas kids.

The Kansas economy depends on the health and well-being of the next generation. That's why, in 1999, Kansas legislators made a commitment to our state's future prosperity by establishing the KEY Fund and the CIF. Lawmakers dedicated CIF dollars to children's programs - like the Kansas Preschool Program, tiny-K, and Parents as Teachers - to make a difference in the lives of our youngest citizens and in the livelihood of our state. Unfortunately, efforts are underway to eliminate the CIF and dismantle Kansas' premier system for early childhood education as we know it.

WHAT ARE THE KEY FUND AND CIF?

The Kansas Legislature created the KEY Fund and the CIF in 1999. The KEY Fund serves as an endowment for investments in early education, funded by annual payments from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (MSA). Money flows from the KEY Fund into the CIF, and then is distributed to early childhood programs. The CIF is administered by the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. CIF-funded programs undergo a rigorous evaluation coordinated by the Children's Cabinet to ensure effective use of state dollars.

THE FLOW OF TOBACCO MONEY TO CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS



WHY THE CIF MATTERS: A STABLE FUNDING STRUCTURE FOR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

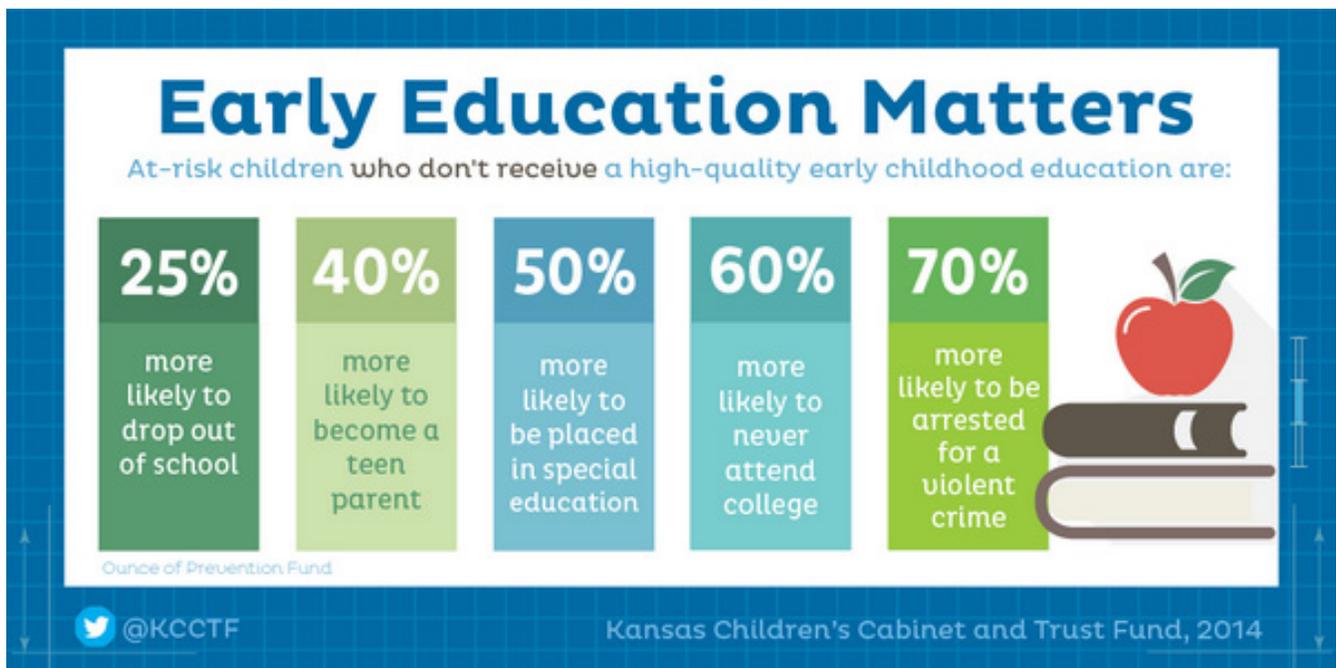
Proposals to eliminate the KEY Fund and CIF would result in an automatic transfer directly into the SGF of MSA dollars, instead of the KEY Fund. Permanently funding CIF programs through the SGF would eliminate existing protections for early childhood funding and jeopardize one of Kansas' most innovative, forward thinking legacies by eliminating a stable funding stream.

CIF: A GOLD STANDARD FOR EFFICIENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY IN STATE GOVERNMENT

A 2015 audit of state government elevated CIF as the gold standard of government accountability and efficiency. It cited the existing funding structure and the work of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund as an innovation driver of children's programs. It highlighted millions of dollars in savings CIF-funded programs generated simply by future cost avoidance, thereby providing an 11 percent return on investment.

THE KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET A SYSTEM THAT WORKS

Shifting tobacco funds into the SGF weakens critical checks and balances within the early learning system. It will undermine the current role of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. The Cabinet was originally created as a bipartisan, quasi-governmental government agency to ensure accountable investment in children's programs. Their role is critical to the success of Kansas' early childhood system.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawmakers should protect current funding levels for the CIF and keep its structure intact. This is the best way to ensure a consistently high return on investment for Kansas taxpayers and positive outcomes for Kansas kids. Setting aside tobacco settlement dollars in the KEY Fund and the CIF designates them for their intended purpose. This infrastructure has created a successful system that the Kansas Legislature's own efficiency audit described as a gold standard for government accountability.

The state's premier system for early learning is not only good for the state's bottom line, it's in the best interest of the Kansas economy. It takes time and resources to grow a competitive workforce, but leaders in the private sector understand the difference between an expense and an investment. A child's environments in the first five years can set the trajectory for an entire life. The lost return on investment that could occur if the CIF were eliminated would have a more damaging long-term impact on the Kansas economy than reducing the short-term expense of programs for children and families.