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.

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.