WEATHERING THE STORM

Kansans know what it means to grow something over time. We understand that planting a seed is only the beginning. Yielding a plentiful crop requires investment in every part of the process—from tilling to harvest.

Just like Kansas fields, our children must also be nurtured from the ground up. From early childhood development to nutrition to health care access—early investments matter. When we cut corners or shortchange our kids' needs in the present, we hinder their ability to grow and carry Kansas' legacy forward.

As a state with such a strong agricultural heritage, you’d hope our policymakers would understand this concept. Unfortunately, faced with tough challenges in 2015, they abandoned the “end in mind” governing approach embraced by Kansas leaders in years past. Instead, they settled for poor, short-term choices and big, long-term consequences.

While there isn’t an abundance of sunny news to report from the 2015 Legislative Session, tough times do not weaken our resolve at Kansas Action for Children. We are more committed than ever to our mission and to weathering this storm. Together with supporters like you, we will continue to offer a voice for Kansas children and families who are otherwise voiceless in the State Capitol.

Shannon Cotsoradis
KANSAS ACTION FOR CHILDREN PRESIDENT & CEO
The state’s budget crisis is expected to continue and our economic forecast is equally gloomy. But we do feel the tipping point is near.

The state budget is the ultimate expression of Kansas values, and we value our children above all. Investments like Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)—among many others—give Kansas kids the boost they need to live happy, productive lives and escape the cycle of poverty. They are critical investments in our state’s future. For the first time this year, both the Governor and a growing number of lawmakers on both sides of the aisle seemed to recognize that. They admitted further budget cuts will not serve Kansas families well, which is why so much time in 2015 was devoted to finding new revenue rather than making more cuts. Despite the negative outcome of the 2015 legislative session, this is a major breakthrough in a debate that has—up to this point—been cemented in political ideology rather than sound policy.

We remain hopeful the dialogue will progress in 2016 and enough policymakers can find the will to finally address the root problem. Moving Kansas back to a sustainable tax structure where everyone pays their fair share is the only way to ensure Kansas families and children can attain the health, education, and economic security they deserve, both now and in the future.