

PARTNERSHIP FOR EARLY SUCCESS 2016 POLICY PRIORITIES



FUNDING FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

In 1999 the Kansas Legislature established the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) and the Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY) Fund to support programs promoting the health, education, and welfare of Kansas' youngest and most vulnerable children. The CIF was initially designed to serve as a year-to-year funding source for a wide variety of children's programs. The KEY Fund was structured to serve as an endowment to support funding for children's programs long-term - without relying heavily on state support. Unfortunately, both these funds have been nearly depleted in the wake of ongoing budget shortfalls. Since 1999, policymakers have swept more than \$200 million from the KEY Fund, leaving the endowment with just \$140,000 in 2017. Annual payments to the KEY Fund will decrease significantly after 2017. Because every dollar invested in quality early care and education generates between \$4 and \$9 back into the state economy, it is in Kansas best interest to restore this commitment to children.

The Partnership also supports the budget proviso approved in 2015 to ensure the state will backfill funding for early childhood programs in the event the annual tobacco settlement payment is lower than what was appropriated for children's programs.

IMPROVING CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICY

Child care assistance improves the quality of care for young children and helps keep low-income parents working. The 2016 legislative session offers a unique opportunity to strengthen child care assistance in Kansas as part of the implementation of the reauthorized Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). CCDBG serves as the major source of funding for child care assistance, and its reauthorization requires a number of updates to state policies.

Reviewing Kansas child care policy presents the opportunity to increase reimbursement rates for child care providers. Reimbursement rates for subsidized care in Kansas have not been increased since 2002, resulting in a growing disparity between private payment levels and state child care assistance payment levels. This creates a challenge for providers facing increased costs, as well as for families seeking care. The Partnership supports increased reimbursement rates to better reflect current market rates. This will help high-quality child care providers remain in business and participate in the child care assistance program.



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