

## Business Leaders Support the Children's Initiatives Fund as an Investment in Core Values & a Skilled Workforce



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### Business Leaders Support the Children's Initiatives Fund Because its Accountable!

Programs operated through the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) are evaluated based on Evidence-Based Practice (EBP). [The Kansas Statewide Efficiency Review](#) released on January 12 said that CIF programs "are held to a higher standard for evaluation than many state programs." According to the report:

- Program evaluations for all CIF funded programs were completed in 2014 and 2015. Program evaluations, published in the Annual Investment Impact Report (AIIR), showed strong governance for CIF programs.
- Funding is clearly tied to strategic objectives outlined in the Children's Cabinet's Blueprint for Early Childhood.
- Programs are evaluated based on a clear set of criteria, and several programs improved their evaluation scores from 2014 to 2015.

### Business Leaders Link the Children's Initiatives Fund to the Business Alliance's Core Values

**Accountability.** CIF funded programs are subject to the gold standard of operation and evaluation.

**Transparency.** Results are publicly available so that program goals and accomplishments are connected and posted for public review.

**Return on Investment.** Research shows that investing in high quality early childhood programs saves funding in the long-term related to student performance (*e.g., fewer children being retained in grade, fewer children referred to special education, and fewer dollars spent on remediation efforts*) and serves to fuel our state's economy (*e.g., more students graduating high school, more students college and career ready, and more students as adults who earn higher wages*).

**Innovation/Choice.** The Children's Initiatives Fund invests in creative approaches to develop solutions with a proven return on investment.

**Student Focused.** CIF funded programs invest in children to ensure that children start school ready to learn and are better able to succeed once in school.

Business leaders know that programs that highly correspond to these core values represent a sound economic development strategy.

### Business Leaders Oppose Any Budget Games with the Children's Initiatives Fund

The Governor's budget would shift CIF funding to the Department of Education and open the door to CIF dollars supplanting state funding, instead of supplementing state dollars as current law requires.

- Business leaders know a shell game when they see one.
- This isn't an accounting change. It's a set up for dismantling our state's investment in our children, our state's strategy to promote a skilled workforce for our future and our future economic growth.
- About 200,000 children benefit from children's programs under the CIF. These programs serve children of all ages with the primary focus on children under age 5.
- It makes no sense to dismantle a strategy that is working well. Yet, the Governor's proposal takes us off course. In doing so, it undermines what families and employers need – what communities need for economic security and future growth.

**The Alliance's Recommendation:** Oppose the Governor's proposal to put CIF funds at risk.

The Alliance is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of business leaders committed to improving Kansas and Missouri's education systems. <http://aceinvests.org/>