THE IMPACT OF FAMILY ON CHILDREN’S DENTAL CARE
Children are entirely dependent upon their parents and families to coordinate their dental care.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood*

Children miss twice as many school days due to dental treatment, pain, and infection than due to asthma*

Pain and infection from untreated tooth decay can lead to problems eating, playing, and learning*

In CT and nationally, children of color are more likely to experience dental disease

Children are entirely dependent upon their parents and families to coordinate their dental care.

The Connecticut Health Foundation commissioned research from Connecticut Voices for Children to examine why these differences persist.
CHILDREN’S DENTAL HEALTH CARE DOESN’T HAPPEN IN A VACUUM

Many factors play a role in whether or not children get dental checkups. The analysis found children were more likely to get preventive dental care if they had:

**Continuous Coverage**
More opportunity to use benefits when enrolled in health insurance for an entire year

**Well Child Care**
Regular checkups with a pediatrician are opportunities for dental referrals and family education on oral health

**Parents Who Got Preventive Dental Care**
Parents who get preventive dental care know the value of such care and how to navigate the system to get it for their children
THE IMPACT OF EACH FACTOR ON CHILDREN’S LIKELIHOOD OF RECEIVING PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE
ALL RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS

- WITH HUSKY A CONTINUOUS COVERAGE: 68%
- WITHOUT CONTINUOUS COVERAGE: 41%
- WITH WELL CHILD CARE: 71%
- WITHOUT WELL CHILD CARE: 51%
- PARENTS HAD PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE: 81%
- NO PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE: 52%
THE IMPACT OF ALL THREE FACTORS ON CHILDREN’S LIKELIHOOD OF RECEIVING PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE

More than 90% of all children in HUSKY A get dental care, and racial/ethnic disparities in utilization nearly vanish.
Steps to Ensure Families Have Access to and Use Dental Care

- **Ensure access** to health insurance, including coverage for preventive dental services, for low income children and their parents.
- **Advocate** for policy strategies that promote continuous eligibility and uninterrupted coverage for children.
- **Ensure pediatricians address oral health** when caring for children.
- **Educate parents** about good dental habits for the entire family and refer them to dental care.
The Connecticut Health Foundation commissioned this research from Connecticut Voices for Children in 2014. The work builds on independent performance monitoring in the HUSKY Program that is state-funded under a contract between the Connecticut Department of Social Services and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (#064HFP-HOU-04/13DSS1001ME), with a grant from the Hartford Foundation to Connecticut Voices for Children.

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