

Foster Oral Health Project Summary

This qualitative pilot study focuses on the oral health experiences of foster families with children under the age of six. To gather this data, foster parents seeking services from Children's Institute Incorporated (CII) were recruited to participate in focus groups discussing home care routines, access to dental care, and delivery of dental services. Two focus groups, one in Spanish and one in English, were conducted virtually via Zoom, and participants included both kinship and traditional foster parents of children under the age of six. For each focus group, a detailed and well-outlined discussion guide was followed, and topics of discussion included oral hygiene routines, dietary habits, oral health trainings, finding a dentist, dental insurance, foster care paperwork, and experiences at the dental office. Both focus groups were transcribed, and the Spanish focus group was translated into English. A codebook was developed in order to outline the discussion themes of interest within the study, and these codes were applied using Dedoose in order to analyze the data. The analysis of this qualitative data will highlight the unique oral health disparities that foster families face with children under the age of six, and the ultimate goal of this body of research is to develop an oral health policy in dental care of foster children.