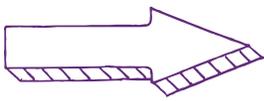


# Success for Every Child



## SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:



## Virtual Dental Home

While the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that children see a dentist when their first tooth appears or no later than their first birthday, for many families in San Mateo County, accessing dental care is a real challenge. Cost, distance, schedules and unfamiliarity can all act as deterrents. The Virtual Dental Home (VDH) seeks to address all of these. A signature investment of First 5 San Mateo County (F5SMC), the VDH helps to improve and maintain the oral health of children and the community by providing dental care in places where people live, work, attend school, receive social services, and beyond. Since F5SMC began funding the program in 2012,

more than 1,125 children  
have been served.

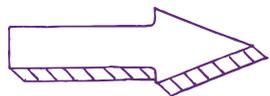
One of the ways that the VDH program provides services to children in San Mateo County is by bringing dental services to them. Schools enrolled in the program are given the option of having a dental hygienist and a program navigator set a schedule based on the number of



children being served. A part of the VDH model includes the signature “big red chair” that is used during dental visits. This, along with bringing dental care to schools, was put in place to be more inviting and provide services to children who may have a fear of seeing a dentist out of their comfort zone.



# SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:



## Virtual Dental Home

Take for example four-year-old Henry.\* Henry received the preventive dental care he needed from the VDH right at his very own preschool. Henry was once terrified of dental equipment and not very comfortable going to the dentist, but with the help of patient and reassuring VDH staff, and the “big red chair”, he got over his fear and even participated in his own examination. Getting exposure to early dental care in a comfortable place was a critical step for Henry, who is now connected to regular care after graduating from the VDH program.

San Mateo’s transitional housing facility First Step is one of several locations where VDH currently provides services. There, three-year-old Jacob\* complained about the extreme pain he was having in his preschool classroom. A visit from the VDH allowed program staff to learn about the severe and rampant decay in Jacob’s teeth - it was apparent that Jacob needed urgent care. But as a single mom working two jobs, it was difficult for Jacob’s mother to accommodate the time needed for his additional dental work. Without hesitation, the VDH team and site dentist shifted their schedules to accommodate the family and successfully complete Jacob’s dental treatment.

Run by the Ravenswood Family Health Center, the VDH has provided dental services in 11 locations in the last year alone, serving 650 children.

**The virtual model allows extremely talented and passionate people to give convenient preventative dental care services, decrease children’s fear of dental care, increase dental health literacy of families, improve oral health outcomes, and establish a primary dental home.**



Thanks to VDH, families in San Mateo County can receive the dental care services they need and establish a healthy dental routine for their future.

*\*Names changed to protect privacy.*



First 5 San Mateo County is entrusted with the strategic investment of nearly \$7 million public dollars each year specifically earmarked to help children and families in our county succeed. We work on behalf of the more than 53,000 children ages zero to five living here to ensure their every need is met, their families are supported and their future is a priority.