Children in foster care are more likely to have complex health needs. Compared to other children, they are:

- **2 times** as likely to have asthma and speech difficulties
- **3 times** as likely to have hearing and vision problems
  - **5 times** as likely to have anxiety
  - **7 times** as likely to have depression

Medicaid provides comprehensive health coverage to nearly all foster children, including former foster youth up to age 26.

Medicaid provides continuous access to health coverage despite changes in living arrangements or primary caregiver. In addition, the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit is a mandatory Medicaid service that ensures that children enrolled in Medicaid have access to:

- Well checks and immunizations on a recommended schedule
- Comprehensive developmental assessments
- Vision, dental, and hearing services
- Behavioral health & trauma services such as therapy and/or counseling, medication, and substance abuse treatment
Medicaid coverage is a lifeline for many foster and adoptive families who otherwise could not afford the high cost of treatment for the children in their care.

While children in the care of the Missouri Children’s Division account for fewer than one in thirteen children enrolled in Medicaid, their complex health care needs mean that these children account for 17% of overall Medicaid expenditures for children, and nearly one-third of spending on mental health services for children.

A strong Missouri Medicaid program can ensure children who have suffered child abuse and/or neglect can access the care they need and is one of the most effective ways to support foster and adoptive families.
i. Department of Social Services Children’s Division Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request

