

problems and night wakings experienced by young children ([Honaker and Meltzer, 2014](#)).

Motor activity levels continue to be high and allow preschoolers to explore their environment, begin learning physical games and sports, and interact with others. Sedentary activities, such as television and video or computer games, are increasingly appealing and can become unhealthy substitutes for active play.

Preschoolers' increased gross motor abilities and coordination allow them to engage in many physical activities, if only at a novice level. At this age, children benefit from free play and exposure to a variety of physical activities ([Stricker, 2014](#)). Whether young children should begin formalized training in an activity at this early age is controversial. Training programs must consider the child's physical and psychological immaturity, and readiness to participate in organized sports should be determined individually. The decision to participate should be based on the child's, not the parent's, motivation and enjoyment. Another key aspect of organized play for preschoolers is that the activity is developmentally appropriate and occurs in a nonthreatening, fun, and safe environment.

Dental Health

By the beginning of the preschool period, the eruption of the deciduous (primary) teeth is complete. Dental care is essential to preserve these temporary teeth and to teach good dental habits (see [Chapter 11](#)). Although preschoolers' fine motor control is improved, they still require assistance and supervision with brushing, and flossing should be performed by parents. Professional care and prophylaxis, especially fluoride supplements (if needed), should be continued. The frequency of professional dental care should be based on a child's individual risk assessment, including family history, sociodemographic factors, dental development, presence or absence of dental disease, special health care needs, and dietary habits ([American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Clinical Affairs Committee, 2009](#)). For children cared for away from home, parents should be encouraged to monitor the dental care provided by others, including minimizing cariogenic food and beverages in the diet. Trauma to teeth during this period is common, and prompt