

evaluation by a dentist is warranted if oral trauma occurs. Preservation of the space previously occupied by an avulsed tooth is necessary for proper eruption of the secondary tooth.

Injury Prevention

Because of improved gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and balance, preschoolers are less prone to falls than toddlers. They tend to be less reckless; listen more to parental rules; and are aware of potential dangers, such as hot objects, sharp instruments, and dangerous heights. Putting objects in the mouth as part of exploration has all but ceased, although accidental poisoning is still a danger. Pedestrian motor vehicle injuries increase because of activities such as playing in parking lots, driveways, or streets; riding tricycles, bicycles, and other play vehicles; running after balls; or forgetting safety regulations when crossing streets.

In general, the guidelines suggested for injury prevention in Table 11-3 apply to children in this age group as well. However, emphasis is now on education concerning safety and potential hazards in addition to appropriate protection. This period is an excellent time for enforcing the use of safety items, such as bicycle helmets to prevent head trauma; children are less likely to warm to the idea later in life because of peer pressure. Because preschoolers are great imitators, it is essential that parents set a good example by “practicing what they preach.” Children quickly observe discrepancies in what they are told to do and what they see others do. Establishing good habits at this time, such as wearing protective equipment, can create long-term safety behaviors.

Anticipatory Guidance—Care of Families

The preschool years present fewer childrearing difficulties than do the earlier years, and this stage of development is facilitated by appropriate anticipatory guidance in the areas already discussed (see [Family-Centered Care](#) box). There is a shift in childrearing practices from protection to education. Whereas injury prevention previously focused on safeguarding the immediate environment with less emphasis on reasoning, now the protective guardrails or electrical outlet caps may be replaced by verbal explanations of