

TAKE  
A SIDE**Debate****Directions:** Read the article. Study the facts. Decide what you think. Write an opinion essay.

# Should Trampolines Be Banned?

It's all fun and games until someone smashes a tooth **By Justin O'Neill**

**N**ine-year-old Caroline and her friend Nina were bouncing on Nina's trampoline, their giggles rising up into the sky. Soon, Nina's brother Kyle joined in, and the three were impressing each other with wild leaps and flips.

Suddenly, Kyle stumbled and bumped into Nina. In that instant, Nina's head became like a flying bowling ball headed for Caroline.

And that bowling ball hit a strike—right into Caroline's teeth.

Nina collapsed, clutching her head. But it was Caroline who was badly hurt. One of her teeth was shattered.

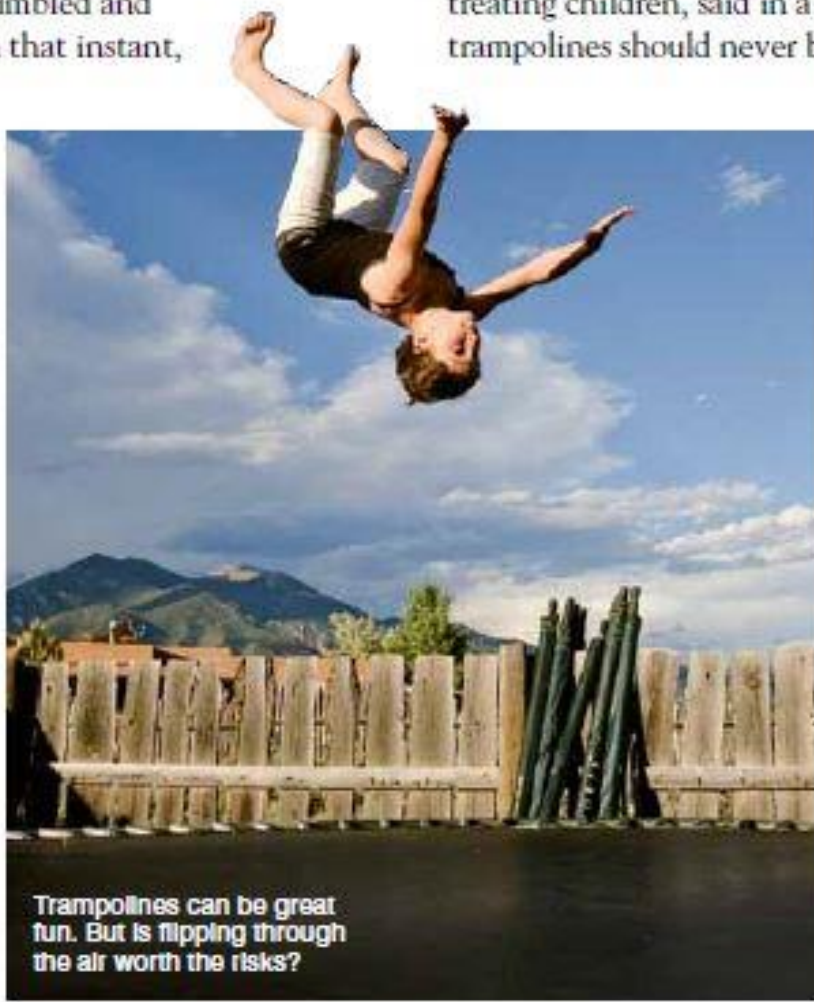
## Not a Toy

Even if you've never been injured on a trampoline, chances are you

know someone who has. Trampolines caused nearly 95,000 injuries in 2012 alone, most among kids. Up to 37 percent of emergency-room patients hurt on trampolines were younger than 6. These injuries are such a big problem that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a group of doctors who specialize in treating children, said in a 2012 study that trampolines should never be used at homes or

in playgrounds. Never.

Trampolines can cause strains, sprains, broken bones, bruises, and more serious injuries to the head and neck. One out of every 200 trampoline injuries leads to permanent brain damage. The biggest risk is falling off (safety nets make little or no difference), but kids also get hurt on the springs or when they collide.



Trampolines can be great fun. But is flipping through the air worth the risks?

"This is not a toy. It's a piece of equipment," says Dr. Michele LaBotz, an author of the AAP study.

Indeed, when it was invented in the 1930s, the trampoline was meant to help acrobats in their performances. Later, it was used to train military pilots. It caught on, and now 900,000 are sold to the public each year.

### Don't Jump to Conclusions

Some argue that trampolines are a great source of exercise for kids. The heart-pumping workout you get on a trampoline—pushing with your muscles to get airborne—is aerobic, similar to running, dancing, or playing soccer.

Others point out that every athletic

activity involves risks. Kids fall off bikes and skateboards, get tackled on the football field, and trip on the diving board. And, as with any sport, there are ways to reduce your chances of getting hurt on a trampoline. For instance: Never allow more than one person on a trampoline at a time. Don't do flips, and always have an adult supervisor. Shouldn't kids who use trampolines safely be permitted to bounce?

Caroline will certainly think twice about hopping on another trampoline. Replacing the tooth with a shiny gold one cost \$800. Her parents now have a strict no-trampoline rule, and Caroline isn't arguing. She might miss out on some fun, but as she points out, "At least I won't lose any more teeth." ■

**WHAT  
DO YOU  
THINK?**

## Should trampolines be banned?

Go back to the article and find information to support each side.  
Write the information on the lines below.

**YES** They are too dangerous!

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NO** They are too much fun!

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Study the points on both sides of the argument—and think about your own opinion. State your opinion in one sentence below. It can become the thesis statement for an opinion essay on this topic.

**FIND AN  
ACTIVITY  
SHEET  
ONLINE!**