Dental caries affecting preschool children has become a major health care problem in many countries. In the USA, the national health and nutrition examination survey (NHANES) revealed that 8.4% of 2 year old children had at least one decayed or filled tooth and by the age five almost 40.4% of children were affected. Dental caries in primary teeth is one of the major reasons for hospitalisation of children and is costly to treat. In Malaysia the prevalence of dental caries in children below the age of 5 years is 87.1% (Ministry of Health 1995). Early childhood caries (ECC) is the term used to describe dental caries in the preschool child (below 71 months of age). ECC if not managed early may result in rapid destruction of tooth structure and involvement of the dental pulp. This may cause pain, infection and result in early loss of the tooth at a very young age. ECC occurring in medically compromised children can further complicate their medical condition and put them further at risk. Indeed many of these children will end up needing to be treated in hospitals using General anaesthesia. The hallmark of management of ECC is prevention. It is therefore imperative that all health care providers especially those treating children should be aware of this infectious and highly debilitating disease and play an important role in preventing its occurrence and severity. This lecture will give a general overview of early childhood caries and its management.