Veteran player agent and concussion campaigner Peter Julill r1aLu::u -a1.1u C..'it:IIUVH premiership player John Barnes.

Mr Jess said Winmar had been through two of the three screening phases — transcra­ 

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AFL, clubs and club doctors.

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aration for a Federal Court damages action which could target the AFL, clubs and club doctors.

at least age six, to reduce chances that they will drop out.

A new Victorian study following almost 14,000 girls found 60 per cent who had begun organised physical activity at age four or five had stopped playing by age 10.

Though sport was becoming more popular for young children, she said that by the time they were teenagers participation rates had dramatically decreased.

"Modified programs were set up for 7-9 years of age to meet the developmental needs of that age so they can transition into club competition, but what we are seeing is a lot of four- and five-year-olds enrolled in organised sport," Dr Eime said.

"They are not going to play that modified sport program for four years. They will get bored and either drop out of that sport or sport altogether."

Her research found the ideal ages for children to start sport, to ensure they continued to take part, was 7-9; for them, there was only a 30 per cent dropout rate.

"I think young children should be active, but perhaps not in an organised setting when they are four or five," Dr Eime said.

But Dr Eime suggests children should be offered the chance to have fun being active and developing basic motor skills with informal physical activities instead.

Only girls playing a predominantly female sport were included in the study, which was published in BMC Public Health.

"We know that there are rising rates of overweight and obesity, with one in four children overweight or obese, so we need children to be active," she said.

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VicHealth executive director of programs Kirstan Corben said sport offered children exceptional physical and social benefits.

"We know that there are rising rates of overweight and obesity, with one in four children overweight or obese, so we need children to be active," she said.

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Delay competition, parents told

Just play, sport

LUCIE VAN DEN BERG

CHILDREN may be better off not playing sport until at least age six, to reduce chances that they will drop out.

A new Victorian study following almost 14,000 girls found 60 per cent who had begun organised physical activity at age four or five had stopped playing by age 10.

Lead author Rochelle Eime, of Victoria University, said pushy parents who thought an early start would give their child a competitive advantage, peer pressure, and a drive by sporting clubs to boost numbers of players might be behind rising rates of young children taking part in formal sport.

Twins Alyssa and Sienna, enjoy playing up, but aren't taking to the sport like field yet.

Picture: IAN CURRIE

"Outside of that they are just enjoying being four, playing and spending time together as a family," Mrs Jury said.

"I don't think they need any additional pressure or discipline at this age.

The research was funded by VicHealth and Sport and Recreation Victoria.

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