

What did children do for fun?

Life wasn't all chores and lessons. For most children, there was time for play. In the side streets and backyards of Williamsburg, there was plenty of room for rolling a hoop or flying a kite. There were no cars, of course. But in the street, you did have to keep an eye out for horses and wagons.

Children played jump rope and hopscotch and tag and hide-and-seek. Boys chased girls and teased them. *Checks*, a game that was played with peach pits, was very popular with the girls. Boys played ball games such as *cricket*; *fives*, a kind of handball; and *base-ball*, which wasn't much like today's game. It was played in a field marked off to form a triangle.



*Georgie Porgie, puddin' and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry.
When the boys came out to play,
Georgie Porgie ran away.*



Indoors, young girls played “house.” They made believe they were cooking or cleaning or spinning. Gentry and middling-sort girls had miniature tea sets and held tea parties to which their dolls were invited.

Girls called their dolls *babies* even though most of the dolls were dressed in grown-up clothes. Some children had hand-carved dolls made by their father or a local wood-carver. Other girls owned a store-bought doll.

Older boys and girls played with cards and board games and worked on puzzles. Many puzzles taught something. For example, one geography puzzle was a map of the thirteen colonies.

