

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

## The Games of Summer

It's 8 o'clock on a perfect summer evening – well, perfect by my standards anyway. The mercury never quite hit 80, cotton puff clouds dot the sky and a cool breeze is wafting in from the Gorge. I'm relaxing in a weather beaten lounge chair in our front yard, watching the neighborhood kids play "hide and seek." I feel like I'm time traveling. Except for the late model cars parked on the street and the preference of my son and his adolescent cohorts for long hair, this could be a scene from the '50s.

Kids, after all, have been playing "hide and seek" for generations. Other childhood games are time-honored as well: Capture the Flag, Hopscotch, Monkey in the Middle. (How they're passed on sometimes baffles me: Do the older kids teach the younger ones, in a generation-spanning, never-ending chain? Do the parents give instructions? I don't recall ever teaching my kids these games, yet they know them well.)

Some of the games I played as a child apparently *weren't* handed down. For example, I remember one favorite that we called "Statue;" I've yet to see the neighborhood kids play it. (I recall loving this game but, for the life of me, I can't remember how exactly it was played. I've asked my siblings and cousins, too – no one, it seems, can come up with the rules.) Water fights appear to have stood the test of time, albeit with updated props. I think we may have had very small water pistols as children; now my kids sport AK-47 lookalikes for the neighborhood water battles. (For the record, when my kids were younger – and I thought I could keep them gun-free forever – I sought out water "squirters" shaped like fish. I've since yielded to cultural pressures; besides, the storage tanks on the "squirt fish" simply can't

match the holding capacity of an "extreme soaker.")

It's times like these – when I see my kids rising above the technological temptations of the modern world to savor the timeless pleasures of just being a kid – that I realize that the ingredients for happiness (for kids and adults) are the same now as they were 50, 100 or even 1,000 years ago: Friends, a good game, a bad joke, a confidence shared, the laughter of children, a rickety lounge chair and a lemonade...

This summer, millions – perhaps billions – of people across the globe will tune in to another version of the "games of summer" – the Olympics. My kids and husband will probably watch their share of these competitions and I'll sit through a few myself. But, in my mind, the true games of summer – the ones that really matter – are those spontaneous gatherings of kids in backyards, in parks and on ball fields.



- Marie Sherlock, Editor  
editor@metro-parent.com

*P.S.: You can read more about the importance of an active lifestyle – including lots of play time! – in our Ages & Stages feature this month. See pages 12 through 18.*

*P.S.: And, if anyone out there does remember the rules for "Statue," could you let me know?*



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