

# Let's Play a Game

Kids – especially young boys – are infinitely willing to play, infinitely willing to try new games, infinitely willing to suspend disbelief if it means they can compete and practice.

Seeing this is one of the most charming things in the world.

Today I got to see that firsthand with my little cousins (boys aged 5 and 8) when they asked me come swimming with them at my uncle's pool. These young bros were showing off their jumps from the high-dive, showing off their swimming prowess, and in all ways showing a zest for life. And the games didn't stop.

We played water gun tag, basketball, hot potato, "dinosaur hunter" (I played the dinosaur – they shot at me with water guns), and the simple old favorite "shoot James in the face with water".

If you have the pleasure of being around this pure energy for play and improvement, you'd better take it. This will keep you young. Kids who know how to play are rehearsing the fundamental skills necessary for a good life: physical fitness, graceful movement, and social cooperation. Who of us couldn't stand a little improvement in those areas even in adulthood?

It's remarkable to see them practice these skills, but even more impressive to see their capacity for game-making. They will accept literally any kind of game with any kind of parameters and rules – as my two cousins accepted most suggestions (even half-baked) I made for games. That kind of imagination can never feel boredom.

Play is the driver for the most intense learning of a human's life, and these boys showed me the energy and imagination I've been missing even in my finest moments. Probably one of the best things we can hope for is to keep that passion and openness as we level up in discipline and skill.

*Originally published at [JamesWalpole.com](http://JamesWalpole.com).*