

Hide & Seek — Quu'uk, Nuya'itstaq

USWILLRARAAT QUU'UGTUT. – THE CHILDREN ARE PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK.



Photo: Boys playing on the beach, Karluk Spit, ca. 1960. Courtesy of Clyda Christiansen

Hide and seek is one of many popular outdoor children's games long played in Alutiiq communities. According to anthropologist Kaj Birket-Smith, who visited the Chugach Alutiiq people in the 1930s, children played *quuq* in Prince William Sound's tall summer grass. They also juggled with pebbles while singing special songs and imitated circling birds in a game similar to Ring-around-the-Rosie. Women and girls played this game in the fall, as birds migrated south. Participants skipped in a circle, moving in the direction of the sun. As they skipped they chanted, "Circle around, stretch your arms," then they squatted down and sang, "How do we get up there? Like a waterfall."

Kodiak Elders also remember playing *palutsqaq*, a game similar to the American favorite kick the can. A five-gallon can served as a base. One person was picked to be "it" and the rest would run and hide. When the seeker found a hider, both would race back to the can. Whoever reached the can first got to go and hide, and the other person became the seeker.