

## Little Cute One — Aa'icagaq

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ELLTUWAQA AA'ICAGAMEK AP'RTAAQA. – I CALL MY GRANDDAUGHTER “LITTLE CUTE ONE.”

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Photo: Two examples of Aa'icagaq: an Old Harbor boy and his puppy.

The Alutiiq word *aa'icagaq* is a common term of endearment that means “little cute one”—similar to “sweetie” or “cutie pie” in English. People use this word when speaking to or describing children. You might say, “Come here *aa'icagaq*” to your sister’s chubby toddler, or tell a friend “Oh! Your baby is such an *aa'icagaq*.” And in Alutiiq communities, where people often acquire nicknames as children, there are those who are called *Aa'icagaq* throughout their lives.

Although most frequently used to refer to children, the word *aa'icagaq* can be applied to anything you might call cute in English, from baby seals to stuffed animals or even a good-looking woman. With a twinkle in his eye, one Elder calls almost every woman he meets *aa'icagaq*! Similarly, because this term refers to small, attractive things, and it is a word that many students of the Alutiiq language learn, it is also used as a name for objects. For example, the rowboat used at Dig Afognak, a local culture camp, is called the *Aa'icagaq*.