

# GROWING UP

Children from all but the poorest homes were brought up to serve the State and help to improve their family's position in society. Boys were trained for service in the army or the government, while girls were expected to marry well and produce children who would become loyal Roman citizens in their turn.

## STARTING LIFE

When a child was born, its father would lift it in his arms to show that he accepted it into the family.

Every Roman parent wanted a healthy baby boy - baby girls and sickly boys were sometimes left outside to die. Babies were named at eight or nine days old and were given a lucky charm - called a *bulla* - to ward off evil spirits. But many children died in the first few years of life - a woman might have as many as six or seven babies and still end up childless.



*A gold bulla like this would have belonged to a child from a very wealthy family.*

## FUN AND GAMES

Roman children played a wide variety of games, including hide-and-seek, leapfrog and hopscotch. A baby's first toy was usually a pottery rattle, often shaped like a bird, with small pebbles inside. Older children had toy animals to play with, as well as seesaws, swings, hobbyhorses, marbles and hoops for rolling along the ground.

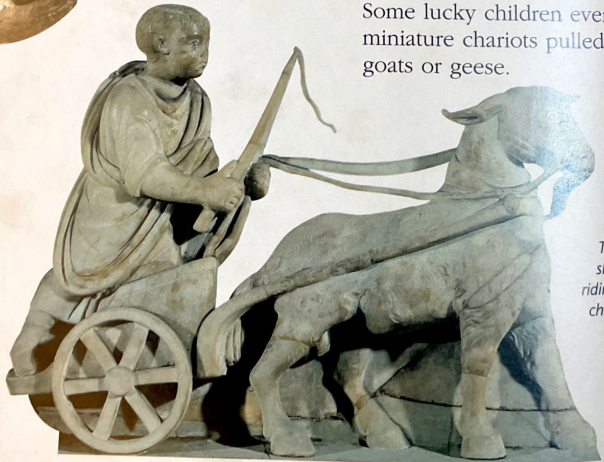


*Marbles were made from glass or pottery.*



*A linen doll stuffed with rags and pieces of reed, called papyrus*

Girls played with dolls made of wood, clay or cloth, while boys had wooden swords. Some lucky children even had miniature chariots pulled by goats or geese.



*This carving shows a boy riding in a tiny chariot pulled by a goat.*

## INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can find out about different Roman ball games, and discover what life was like for Roman children, go to [www.usborne-quicklinks.com](http://www.usborne-quicklinks.com)

