

Educational Benefits of Chess

In today's world of high-tech video games such as Angry Birds, Call of Duty, Final Fantasy XV, Pokémon Go and a seemingly infinite number others played on electronic devices from smartphones, digital tablets, computers to smart televisions and even wristwatches, chess remains virtually unchanged since its origins nearly 1,500 years ago. Of course, chess can be played on any of the aforementioned electronic devices with an unknown opponent in a land thousands of miles away or against the computer itself, but no electronic version will ever supplant the feel of a real world chess board and the 32 tangible pieces. The game of chess, while fairly simple in terms of rules and moves when compared to the complexity of many online games, require skill, patience, planning, and imagination that continue to challenge even the most experienced player.

Chess is, no doubt, a form of entertainment and a great way to spend quality time with a friend or family member. When played in person on a traditional game board, it can spur friendly discussion and encourage quality time together away from the electronic world of today. But chess, unlike many other games has substantial additional benefits especially for children.

The benefits of chess in children have been thoroughly researched and documented. In several studies, the benefit of chess instruction and play among school children include:

- Significant increase in reading scores – *Stuart Margulles, "The Effect of Chess on Reading Scores," 1996*
- Increased gains in math-problem solving and comprehension – *Louise Gaudreau, "tude Comparative sur les Apprentissages en Mathématiques 5e Année," a study comparing the Challenging Mathematics curriculum to traditional math," 1992*

- Significant improvement in memory and verbal reasoning – *Robert Ferguson, “Development of Reasoning and Memory through Chess,” 1988*
- Consistently promotes self-esteem with the self-images of many students improving dramatically – *William Levy, “Utilizing Chess to Promote Self-Esteem in Perceptually Impaired Students,” 1987*

Extending the opportunity and encouraging our children to participate in chess lessons and play can have significant and tangible benefits. These benefits will serve them well throughout their school career and well into their professional and personal lives. The game of chess is not only timeless, fun and therapeutic, it can provide real advantages in life.

Ferguson, Dr. Robert C. “Chess studies summary.” [Web Blog Post](#). Chess studies summary. Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility at the University of Alabama, Web. 8 February 2017.