

INTRODUCTION

Anyone can reap benefits from learning chess, but young children often gain the most from the game. Chess provides children the opportunity to learn pattern recognition and critical thinking skills. Practicing basic chess skills motivates them to think, which, in turn, builds nerve connections in the brain.

Social benefits are often reaped as well. The game of chess rewards courage, sportsmanship, and self-control, while allowing children to positively interact with their peers. Chess players who learn to win and lose graciously often make many lifelong friends as a result. Perhaps the greatest social benefit chess can offer is an avenue for earned success, the kind that helps children build the confidence and self-esteem they need to excel in school.

Many parents feel daunted by the prospect of trying to teach their young children to play chess. If you are unsure of how to teach your child the game, fear not. The book you now hold in your hands, Igor Sukhin's *Gary's Adventures in Chess Country*, has been carefully designed to take the intimidation factor out of learning chess. Set in the magical realm of Chess Country, it reads like a children's bedtime story; yet, at the same time, it introduces the game of chess gradually, using stories, puzzles, riddles, and quizzes.

Too often I have seen young students overwhelmed by the task of learning the moves of the chess pieces. If the entire game is presented at once, without time for any review, frustration often results. *Gary's Adventures in Chess Country* continually reinforces what has been learned through its stories and chess problems. By the time your child plays his or her first game, he or she will already have solved dozens of puzzles reinforcing each chess rule. He or she will be able to make chess moves with confidence.

Finally, *Gary's Adventures in Chess Country* is more than just an instruction manual. It is a tool to help you create your own unique chess adventure with your child. It is an invitation to a chess expedition, an exciting journey that just keeps getting better. It is my hope that after reading about the adventures of Gary, Cassie, Riddles, and their friends, your child will embark on his or her own richly rewarding chess adventures.

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