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## Chess For Kids

The Game of Kings is hard to learn if you're a kid, but well worth the effort.

Chess not only improves problem-solving skills, it improves concentration, enhances logic skills, and teaches strategy amidst endless choices, tactics, clever planning, foresight, caution and courage. Kids can quickly learn the basics with the help of **Chess for Kids** by Kelvin F.R. Smith and Daniel C. Macdonald (Adams Media, \$14.95), a packaged set that includes a custom-designed chess board and a complete set of chess pieces. It also has an illustrated 64-page instruction guide to the game. **The Kids Book of Chess** by Harvey Kidder and Kimberly Bulcken Root (Workman, \$14.95) is also a boxed set with a 96-page book and plastic chess set. with straightforward explanations of how each piece moves and ways to build winning game plans. Either one will suffice if you don't have a set around the house.

Once you show kids how to set up the board, you will all enjoy **Checkmate at Chess City** by Piers Harper (Candlewick, \$12.99) which is a story wrapped around the logic of the chess board. In this adventurous journey, Chess City has been captured and the king and queen are being held captive. It is the reader's task to save them by learning how each chess piece moves and maneuvering the

pieces to the captive royalty's rescue. In each double page spread there are mazes and activities that teach how to move the knights, pawns, bishops and rooks to their best advantage and not get eaten or killed by hungry wolves, dangerous monsters and lethal critters lying in wait. Repeated practice moving the pieces to effect a rescue of the king and queen will help kids learn the game more quickly than just memorizing the moves. You could use a real chess piece on the book pages or just read along and use a finger to make the moves indicated. It's a delightful way to introduce chess to kids as young as seven, and the great artwork will keep them trying the mazes again and again. It all looks deceptively simple when you first read it but it's much more complex as you work your way through the challenges. Try it, you'll have a good time with the kids. Maybe it will even get them hooked on chess!

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Gwynne Spencer is the author of **What's Cooking in Children's Literature** (Linworth Publishing), a unique resource tool that connects picture books and snack recipes for kids.