

MATCH CHESS

TEN GREAT CHESS ACTIVITIES

1. **Team Chess Relay:**
 - a. Divide group into teams. Each team gets a board. Teams are set up in two different rooms or far enough away so that they cannot hear the other team's deliberations. A third board is placed in the between the two groups with a clock. The game is played on the middle board, but it is copied on each team's board. Runners go to the middle board, make a move, and hit the clock. If the runner forgets to hit the clock, time continues to run in the other team's favor. Ideally, coaches or teachers work with each team on their move, planning ahead while the runner waits for the other team's move. Once the other team makes a move, the runner comes back, makes the move on the team board and waits (or another runner gets ready) for the next move. Teachers and coaches do not offer specific moves, but general help, such as asking questions (e.g., What other moves would be good? What do you think the other team is planning?).
2. **Giant Chess Set Relay:**
 - a. Use a giant chess set (a regular set or demo board works also, but the giant pieces are more fun). Set the board up in the middle of a room or outside. Divide the group into teams. Teams line up far enough away from the board that they have to run to get to the board, but can still see the board. Players line up by age (less experienced players are often more comfortable making the initial moves of a game) and take turns running up to the board making moves and hitting the clock.
3. **Penny Game:**
 - a. Divide group into teams. Set up boards on long tables set up in a row. Use as many boards as there are players on a team. The boards should be set up so that black and white alternate on each side. Place a penny (or other object) next to white. The game begins with players standing at the boards. Teams stay on their side of the table and rotate to the back of the line once they reach the end of the table. White makes the first move on each board and moves the penny to the other side of the board. Players move to the next board, Black makes a move and moves the penny back to the other side. Players continue to rotate until all the games are complete. The penny helps keep track of whose turn it is on each board. The team that wins the most board wins the game.
4. **Edible Chess Boards**
 - a. Make chess boards and pieces out of food and eat them. If the kids are young, read Alex and the Wednesday Chess Club. This activity can be done individually, but dividing them in to small groups make the activity more time efficient and eating it more feasible. Different colored crackers or mini loaves of bread can be used for the board. Certainly, candy can be used for pieces, but healthier alternatives are also possible (e.g., grapes for pawns, cheese sticks for rooks).



5. **Make your own chess sets:**
 - a. These make great ongoing projects. Chess sets can be made out of nuts and bolts (see directions on our website), duct tape, wooden pieces (available online), clay, paper, etc. Directions are easy to find online.
6. **Puzzle stations:**
 - a. Make copies of several chess puzzles appropriate to the group's level (Mate puzzles, Mazes, etc.). Set these puzzles up on chess boards placed throughout the room. Leave the paper there so that players can set up the puzzle again once they are done. Students rotate around the room and solve the puzzles individually or in groups. An adult can check solutions at the boards or players/teams can write down the solutions to be checked via demo board discussion at the end.
7. **Team play against coach/teacher:**
 - a. Always generates a lot of excitement. Kids can discuss the next move together. Only works if the teacher is a strong player.
8. **Board Setup Races:**
 - a. Time kids to see who can set up the board the fastest or whether they can beat their own time in successive tries.
9. **Notation Practice:**
 - a. Divide kids into pairs. Give each team a list of eight squares, upside down. Say, "Go!" Kids turn over papers and see which team can put pawns on the each of the spaces the fastest.
10. **Chess Charades:**
 - a. Rules similar to traditional charades. Can be played individually or in teams. Students draw the names of pieces or other chess concepts (e.g., an opening or various chess terms such as 'development'). Students act out the terms for their team to guess.

Send us your ideas and we will publish them here.

