



The mission of Chess for Success (CFS) is to help children develop the skills necessary for success in school and life by learning chess. CFS is not a chess program; it is an educational program that uses chess to teach children high-level thinking and social skills.

The program is currently serving over 3,400 students in 82 schools in 20 school districts in Oregon and Washington where an average of 73% of students qualify for free-food programs. The average percentage of minority students in CFS schools, 50%, is much higher than the statewide average for Oregon of 27%. Approximately 35% of the participants are girls, an unusually high proportion compared with the average national participation (5 -10%) by girls in chess programs. Chess for Success provides an equal playing field for all students: boys and girls, first through eighth graders, special education students, high-achieving students, students with physical disabilities and non-English speakers.

Program

At each participating CFS school, program activities are managed by a paid coach, a teacher at the school, who provides chess instruction during after-school hours from October through March. The program is free for all students and they receive chess instruction; t-shirts that are designed by club members; chess sets to take home at the end of the year; and free entrance to CFS tournaments. Schools also receive all chess equipment for the clubs, including chess sets, demonstration boards, and a chess library for the school. To ensure the quality of program implementation, CFS trains the coaches and provides its coaches with a manual that includes 30 lesson plans designed to assist students in advancing their chess-playing skills.

Tournaments

Each year CFS organizes and produces 24 regional tournaments and the state championship tournament, open to all students in Oregon in grades K-12. At the regional tournaments 1,900 students compete and 600 advance to the championship tournament.

Proven Program

CFS has proven **results**. In 2003, the US Congress commissioned a study of CFS. The study compared the students involved in the CFS program with a matched comparison group of students from the same school with similar characteristics, who were not involved with the CFS program. The final report of the two-year study showed:

- CFS has accomplished its primary goal of training and enabling children to be patient and analytical in all problem-solving situations so that there is an increase in their academic achievement and self-esteem.
- CFS has also had an impact on increasing the interest of a strong proportion of girls in analytical problem solving, which in turn should increase their participation in mathematics and engineering programs and careers.
- The CFS students (91.7%) had a higher percentage in meeting or exceeding standards in reading in 2006 than the state (86.7%) and district (87.7%) percentages.
- CFS students (93.0%) had a higher percentage in meeting or exceeding standards in math in 2006 than state (88.3%) and district (89.7%) percentages.
- When evaluated with a comparison group of non-CFS students, 17% more of CFS students exceeded standards in math and 10% more of CFS students exceeded standards in reading than the comparison group.