

# JOY LIVES HERE



## INSTRUCTIONS

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**Joy Lives Here** is a project of the New America Learning Sciences Exchange (LSX). Research shows that joy strengthens relationships, reduces stress, fosters empathy, promotes belonging, and enhances imagination and creativity for both children and adults. Joy also paves the way to increased focus and engagement. Joint joyful activities encourage problem solving, memory, attention, motivation, and other fundamental cognitive processes. In the end, joy undergirds true learning.

The purpose of these Joy cards is to celebrate and support the caregivers of young children who transform everyday events—such as preparing a meal, riding the bus, or cleaning up a spill—into joyful learning moments.

The cards are divided into color-coded themes that suggest ways to incorporate joy into various aspects of life and learning. Draw a Joy card and perform the activity as part of your daily joyful practice. You can also create your own Joy activities on the blank cards provided and use them to create a new joy ritual!

## THE SCIENCE OF JOY

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1. Joy is a profound and complex positive emotion. We often associate joy with happiness, but there is a difference between the two. Though joy is often a response to a positive event, it is also something that we can control and cultivate. Our capacity to experience joy can be developed through practice. In this way, we can feel joy even during unhappy times.

2. Joy works on the 'brain's reward system' and can elicit positive emotions. This, in turn, improves cognitive processes such as executive functions, decision making, and reasoning, helping to improve memory and retention over time.

2. Joy fosters collaboration. We are social beings. Spending time and engaging in rituals with family and friends—such as sharing a meal or celebrating accomplishments, as well as expressing our ideas and feelings to others can produce therapeutic effects in the brain. Joint activities promote better problem solving.

3. While it is difficult, joy can be found in embracing mistakes. Understanding that others face similar challenges as we do, can create a sense of empathy, connection, and relief. This in turn may lower anxiety and stress and improve cognitive processes in ways that enhance creativity and problem solving.