

The Science of Calm

How Creative Artmaking Helps Kids and Teens Feel Peaceful and Focused

1. Art Helps Calm the Brain and Body

Research shows that hands-on creative activities like drawing, painting, and journaling lower stress hormones (cortisol) and activate relaxation responses in the brain. Just 20 minutes of creative play can help children feel calmer and more centered.

2. Making Art Builds Focus and Emotional Regulation

When kids engage in open-ended creative projects, they practice patience, decision-making, and problem-solving. This kind of focused attention supports healthy brain development and emotional control.

3. Art Journaling Encourages Reflection and Gratitude

Art journaling gives children a safe, gentle space to process feelings, notice beauty, and express what words can't. Studies show that expressive writing and visual journaling both promote emotional clarity and a greater sense of gratitude.

4. Creative Connection Boosts Joy and Confidence

When children create in a positive, encouraging environment, their brains release dopamine — the 'feel-good' chemical that enhances mood and motivation. This helps replace anxious thoughts with joy and curiosity.

Important Note

Comfort & Joy Art classes are not art therapy. They are part of the growing *Arts in Health* movement — using creativity as a tool for personal growth, peace, and self-expression.

Key References

- Kaimal, G., Ray, K., & Muniz, J. (2016). Reduction of Cortisol Levels and Participants' Responses Following Art Making. *Art Therapy*, 33(2), 74–80.
- Bolwerk, A. et al. (2014). How Art Changes Your Brain: Activation of the Reward System. *PLoS ONE*, 9(7).
- Reynolds, F. & Prior, S. (2006). The Role of Art-Making in Identity Maintenance. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, 33(2).