

## 1. Introduction



In recent decades, educational discourse has increasingly shifted from deficit-oriented interpretations of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) towards strengths-based and neurodiversity-informed perspectives.

In Bulgaria, despite legislative reforms promoting inclusive education, structured methodologies for identifying and nurturing the talents of children with ASD remain limited, particularly outside major urban centres.

## 3. Non-Formal Education as a Space for Creative Development of Children with ASD

Non-formal educational initiatives, such as community workshops, creative laboratories, and arts-based programmes, create opportunities for children to explore artistic practices in supportive and less restrictive environments.

## 5. Proposed Model for Photography Workshops for Children with Autism

A photography workshop designed for children with ASD could be structured in several interconnected phases.

Introduction and Visual Exploration

Guided Photography Activities

Reflection and Visual Storytelling

Role of the Educator or Facilitator

Flexibility and Adaptation

## 2. Literature Review. Autism, Inclusion and the Shift Toward Strengths-Based Perspectives

In recent decades, contemporary scholarship has increasingly embraced neurodiversity-informed frameworks, which recognise autism as a form of cognitive variation rather than a pathology requiring normalisation.

Photography-based activities may be especially suitable for children with ASD due to their often strong visual perception and attention to detail.

## 4. Ethical Considerations

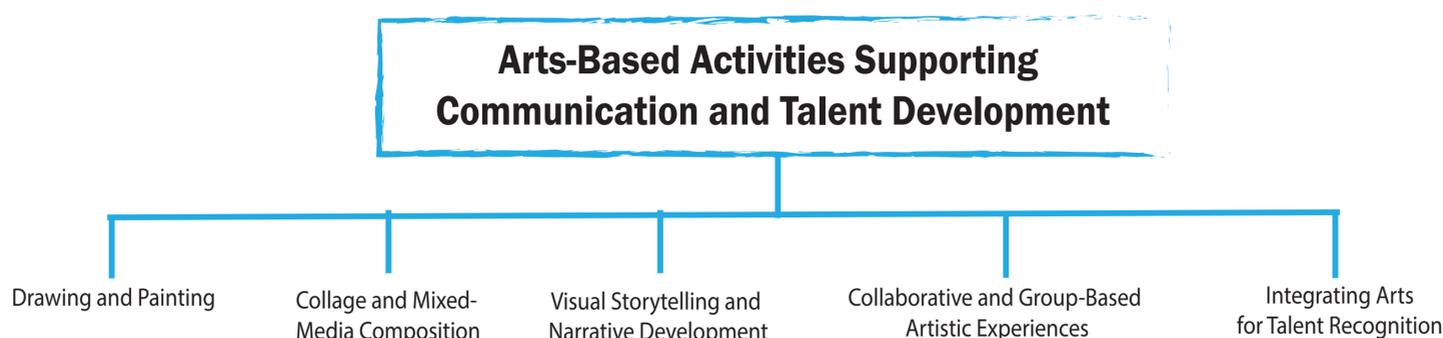
By establishing these ethical foundations, the study provides a safe and respectful context for exploring how arts-based and non-formal educational activities can support talent development, self-expression, and social engagement among children with ASD.

## 6. Arts-Based Activities Supporting Communication and Talent Development

Rather than serving primarily therapeutic purposes, arts-based practices can function as educational tools for fostering autonomy, observation, and cognitive development.



Children's workshop for children with autism, Down syndrome and Asperger's  
Referens: <https://www.mfa.bg/embassies/macedonia/news/19752>



## 7. Community Participation and Inclusive Exhibitions

Community participation and inclusive exhibitions represent a critical extension of non-formal arts education for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

- Proposed Model for Community
- Supporting Social Interaction and Communication
- Integrating Community Stakeholders
- Digital and Hybrid Exhibition Models
- Educational and Psychological Benefits

## 8. Conclusion

By combining non-formal, arts-based methodologies with community engagement, the framework provides a sustainable and scalable approach to nurturing creativity, confidence, and personal growth in children with ASD.

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