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Light the Creative Flame: How to Get Children With Learning Disabilities Interested in the Arts

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“Every child is an artist,” Pablo Picasso [said](#). And if you think of children seated at tables with markers, crayons, fingerpaints, and a few large sheets of paper, you can see that he’s right. You can watch their creativity in action. There’s no inhibition. Children learn [many skills](#) when they participate in the arts, everything from thinking with an open mind to problem-solving. Children with learning disabilities can [learn and benefit](#) from the arts, too, especially since participating in the arts also teaches collaboration and, more importantly, confidence, which may help with other areas of learning.

Since children are naturally creative, it might not be too difficult to find an art form that a learning-disabled child enjoys. The challenge becomes finding one that the child will continue with into adulthood. Because as Picasso said in the second part of the earlier quote, “The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.”

Here are three suggestions from [Bloom Academy](#) to light the creative flame and get a learning-disabled child interested in the arts.

1. Observe

Watch the child carefully during any type of play involving something creative - drawing, singing, dancing to music - and notice how they behave as they do it. For example, does your child on the autism spectrum focus on details of the drawing? Does your child with ADHD spread his finger paints far and wide across his canvas?

Does there seem to be some contentment in your child as she works? If you suspect an interest in an art form, ask the child if she would like to keep trying. If there seems to be an aptitude toward music, find an instrument that is age- and [skill-appropriate](#). Keep in mind, too, that playing music is [ideal](#) for special needs children, because it is a multisensory experience (touch and sound), is non-verbal, and requires using both sides of the brain. If you think your little one will benefit from the gift of music, use the internet to research the best instrument for her to play - buying an inexpensive [used instrument](#) is a great way to save money as she gets started with her new hobby.

2. Encourage

Once you find your child has a certain artistic talent, encourage its development. For autistic children who like to draw, artist Ryan Woodward [instructs](#) parents to encourage their child to draw what *they* love to draw, even if it's the same picture over and over again, and not to talk about becoming more skilled as time goes on. The same could be said for other art forms. Let children develop their own love for the art. You don't want to push them to the point where they hate it. The encouragement should come like their art: naturally and, as Paula Bernstein states on *Parents.com*, at its [own pace](#).

You may also want to consider bringing this encouragement to others. Many parents are looking for teachers and tutors to help their own children learn more about the arts, and you may be able to provide that service! If you decide to begin helping others learn and appreciate the arts, you'll need to make sure you keep yourself and your business protected. Once you've put together a solid [business plan](#), research the different ways you can register with the state. If you'd like to register as an LLC, for example, learn about what you need to do to register with the state of [Nevada](#). After you've taken care of the paperwork, you can begin sharing your passion with others!

3. Support

If you were in a band or took dance lessons or even played a sport in school, you remember how important it was to have your family support you by showing up at a performance or a game. Children with learning disabilities need that, and more. Showing up means more than just going to a concert or recital. It means participating with the child. Get your adult coloring book and pencils, and work alongside your child as he draws. Clap your hands or tap your feet in time as she practices her trumpet. Dance alongside him, or play DJ with his favorite music. Don't isolate them - make their practice time part of [your day](#) as well. The point is to let your child see that you are as involved with the art as she is. Your showing up at the recital or at the school art exhibit will then be a big bonus.

If you work to observe what art interests your child, encourage the development of it, and support your child as their love for it grows, you will light the creative fire that will stay throughout adulthood and help the child improve other skills along the way.

If you're ready to watch your child flourish, register with [Bloom Academy](#)! As a self-directed learning center, we encourage students of all backgrounds to learn how to discover and develop the skills they're most passionate about. Visit our site to learn more, or [register](#) to get started.