

Architecture and Students with Autism: Exploring Strategies for Their Inclusion in Society Mainstream

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Abstract : Architecture, as an art and science of designing, has always been the medium to create environments that fulfill their users's needs. It could create an inclusive environment that would not isolate any individual regardless of his /her disabilities. It could help, hopefully, in setting the strategies that provide a supportive, educational environment that would allow the inclusion of students with autism. Architects could help in the battle against this neuro-developmental disorder by providing the accommodating environment, at home and at school, in order to prevent institutionalizing these children. Through a theoretical approach and a review of literature, this study will explore and analyze best practices in autism-friendly, supportive, teaching environments. Additionally, it would provide the range of measures, and set the strategies to deal with the students with autism sensory peculiarities, and that, in order to allow them to concentrate in the school environment, and be able to succeed, and to be integrated as an important addition to society and the social mainstream. Architects should take into consideration the general guidelines for an autism-friendly built environment, and apply them to specific buildings systems. And that, as certain design elements have great effect on children's behavior, by appropriating architecture to provide inclusive accommodating environments, the basis for equalization of opportunities is set allowing these individuals a better, normal, non-institutional life, as the discussion presented in this study would reveal.

Keywords : architecture, inclusion, students with autism, society mainstream

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