Toolbox #9
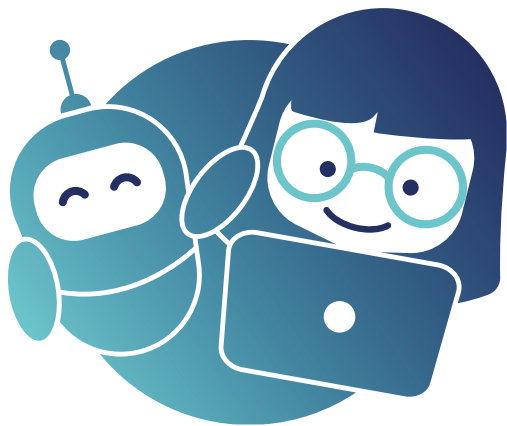
Can a robot be my friend?

Introduction

What is this about?

Fundamental questions about the morality and ethics of technologies, robots and AI are addressed in this toolbox. Connections are drawn between the development of human character and human virtues with the use of and interaction with robots. Contrasts between human-human interaction and human-robot interaction will be used to highlight parallels and differences. The activities proposed in the toolbox also contribute to the development of children's social and emotional competences. Moral action and friendship are at the centre of this.

In terms of content, there are references to Toolbox 8: Does a robot have feelings? in which the question of humanising robots is also addressed, and Toolbox 2: Who knows a robot? in which it is clarified that robots are constructed and controlled by humans.

Children's point of view

In which situations and situations in life can a robot be a friend?
In which situations could a robot replace a human being?
And in which situations could it not?

Questions from Children
What does the word „friend" mean?
What is friendship?
How can robots help us to develop ourselves?

9 What we know

The development of technologies now allows us to talk about social interaction and communication between humans and robots in roles such as friends, companions and tutors (Neumann, 2020). The concept of social robots has emerged in the last decades.

It is important to note that social robots can help people in various areas of social and everyday life, including but not limited to entertainment, leisure, personal services, cleaning, security and elderly care. Robots are also used in education, especially for learning languages, providing learning experiences and supporting learning in certain subjects such as biology, chemistry or mathematics, but the attitude of teachers and parents towards robotics in early childhood is more negative than positive.

Source Unsplash.com | Andy Kelly

Goals

Pedagogical professionals

Morality and ethics
Rise to the challenge of talking about morality and ethics
with the children.

Possible tendency to anthropomorphize robots
Understand that children anthropomorphise robots
and therefore also assume that they act morally.

Robots and AI-based device operations
Can question moral and ethical prinsiples in relation
to the action of robots or AU-based devices.

Children
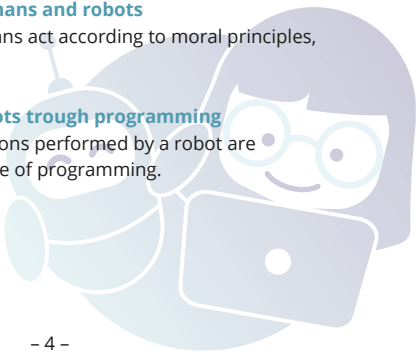
Differences between humans and robots
Knowing that humans and robots are different.

Moral principles: humans and robots
Recognise that humans act according to moral principles,
but robots do not

Operation of the robots trough programming
Understand that actions performed by a robot are
only possible because of programming.

Exercise   Level ● ○

Robots as pets

Materials

Tablet + Tamagotchi game
(or similar games Axolochi, Pet Dog, Huggy)

Preparation
Install Tamagotchi game into your tablet (for example Catgotchi or PakkaPets. You are also free to use other similar games.

Implementation
The children can choose one of the Tamagotchi characters and explain their choice. Try to raise Tamagotchi Pet for a few days. Teacher initiates discussion with children about the pet.

Reflection
Let's compare this animal with a real one.
How are they similar, how are they different?
How do you take care of him?
Is it fun for you to play with?
Does he cheer you up when you're sad?
Is he a good friend? Why?
A puppy or a kitten can be my best friend.
Can a Tamagotchi be my best friend?

9

Exercise   Level ● ○

Comparison between robot friend and animal friend (1)

Materials

Tablet + Tamagotchi game
(or similar games Axolochi,
Pet Dog, Huggy)
Chalk

Tape or large piece of paper
Scheme
Image Cards

Preparation

Play Tamagotchi game. After playing take anilams and robots
cards and discusse about differences between animals and robots
and possible emotions. You are also free to use other similar
games.

Implementation

After playing the Tamagotchi game, let's compare an animal
friend with a Tamagotchi friend. Draw 2 diagrams on the floor.
In the middle of one scheme put the image of a Tamagotchi
robot, in the other an animal. Take the cards with diferent
robots and animals pictures. Put in the scheme which cards
match the robot and which match the real animal. Speack with
children about emotions, with are related to robots and with
are related to animals.

Reflection

How is a robot similar to an animal? What is the difference between?
What feelings does a robot have? What feelings does an animal
have? What can the robot do/do? What can the animal do/act? What
motivates the robot friend to move, act? what motivates you to
move, act to befriend/unfriend an animal?

Exercise Level ● ●

Comparison between robot friend and animal friend (1)

Materials

Tablet + Tamagotchi game
(or similar games Axolochi,
Pet Dog, Huggy)
Chalk

Tape or large piece of paper
Scheme
Image Cards

Preparation

Play Tamagotchi game at a higher level. After playing take anilams and robots cards and discusse about friendliness and emotions characteristic of friendship. You are also free to use other similar games.

Implementation

Draw a diagram of similarities and differences on the floor (draw with chalk, use tape or a large piece of paper). Into the middle circles put Tamagotchi robot and animal.
Take the cards with animals, robots and animals robots. Arrange which cards match the robot, the animal, and which match both. Let's discuss about friendships with a Tamagotchi robot and an animal ore animal robot which friend would children prefer and which coud be the best frend. Talk about what characteristics are characteristic of a robot friend and which characteristics of an animal friend.

Reflection

Can a robot be a friend? What is characteristic/uncharacteristic of a robot as a friend on a computer screen? What is characteristic/uncharacteristic of an animal as a friend? what is typical/uncharacteristic of a robot animal?

Tips for in-depths study

Links

5 Best Personal Robots You Can Buy In 2023
https://youtu.be/eTQVZq9UTng

Tower Of Power | Preschool Learning Videos | Rob The Robot
https://youtu.be/xHobIEj1BGw

Shelly, a Robot Capable of Restraining Children's Robot Abuse
https://youtu.be/37jOzSOsK3c

Imprint

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