

Robots could help autistic children communicate more effectively

As excited or terrified as we might be by the latest advances in robot technology, they're still far from being the [ubiquitous helpers](#) portrayed in science fiction. But a new study [published](#) [August 22] in Science Robotics does seem to offer a glimpse of their potential in assisting children who have communication differences due to autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Its findings suggest that a month of robot-aided lessons might just help these children learn to communicate more effectively.

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For the experiment, they recruited 12 families of children who have communication difficulties due to ASD. The children, who were between the ages of six to 12, and their families were given a special computer setup to use at home, one that included an early prototype of Jibo, a 12-inch robot developed at MIT that is marketed as the first commercial social robot.

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The children, along with their caretaker, interacted with Jibo every day for 30 minutes.

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[The children] showed improvement in their ability to pay attention to the same thing as the adult they were with, a skill known as joint attention. The caretakers also reported that their children became more socially adept, willing to make more eye contact and to communicate more with others.

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There's still a lot of ground to be covered and questions to be answered regarding the use of robots in autism treatment.

Read full, original post: [How Robots Could Help Autistic Children Improve Their Social Skills](#)