

# How robots can effect on children's development

Technology, Information Technology



There are numerous valid reasons to be concerned about the use of robots in baby care and education. With the increasing research, man has been able to advance technologically, for instance, various computerized equipment has been developed whereby they are programmed, and thus, they do not require human attention at the time of their operation (Cangelosi & Schlesinger, n. d.). In the fresh past, technological advancements have extended its long hand to the caring of children and provision of education. In the development of robots, babysitter robots have been developed. More and more technology has been applied, in the designation of robots that seeks to ultimately replace human babysitters, for instance, robots with fully functioning arms, legs, and head. It can talk to your child about three diverse personality modes, and can recognize facial features and voices. The robots are equipped with voice recognition software that allows it to retain information and remember your child when they are interacting for the second time. Although this kind of technology has become of help, care should be taken in its adoption to avoid future challenges on the child being tendered by the robots.

The likely detrimental challenge that is bound to result from the use of robots to babysit and education a child is; the poor development of a child socially. It is very clear that robots can fully replace a human babysitter since it lacks human feelings. Moreover, robots cannot respond appropriately to the requirements of a child due to the changes taking place in the child's environment. Though they have got software installed in them, they can never have the ability to recognize the emotional feelings of a child or any other human beings.

Therefore, according to me, the use of robots to babysit children is a practice that needs to be done away with since it will negatively impact on the social and emotional development of a child. Babysitting of a child by a robot also leads to social neglect of a child. The will grow and get used to robots only, and thus, it deprives a child the right to interact with other human beings (Locsin & Barnard, 2007).

Babysitting a child by robots will likely lead to a poor social development of a child since the child will be left interacting with a robot during his early age in life. In as much as the robots are programmed to recognize speech, make eye contact (cameras act as eyes), and make purposeful movements as directed, the users are made to believe that the robots will attend to their children just like a human being. This perception is wrong since a computerized robots lack vital elements of perceptive social behavior, such as natural language processing, and activity recognition. Companies making robots advertise them and make the buyers believe that the robots are socially competent. The delusion of social competency relies on the user observing social behavior which is appropriate for the current social situation for the delusion to be sustained. While some robots can carry on an appropriate and engaging social interaction, but no robots as yet have the ability to carry on a meaningful and transparent social interaction persuasively enough for a human, whether adult or child and thus, parents have been deceived into thinking that the robot is socially competent (Locsin & Barnard, 2007). For such a misconception to be true, the robot software needs to be improved. Therefore, a child raised by a robot will not have the opportunity to interact socially just like a child raised by a human being.

Babysitting a child using robots has also led to a neglect of children by their parents since the parents trust the robots in babysitting children (Locsin & Barnard, 2007). The parents have been made to believe that the robots can take care of their children to a level that they expect. This is a pure lie since the manufacturers are making advertisements with the aim of making a big sale rather than taking into consideration the repercussions expected to result from the use of robots. The children when left under the care of the incompetent robots, the child will likely to experience challenges of not being served and attended to just like a human being can do. The child might be excited in first few days as they interact with the robots, but after that, the child will be able to study and get to know the social abilities of the robot.

Moreover, robots might lead to increase in populations if adopted by many people. In a typical situation, young children demand a lot of time from their parents especially during the first six months from birth. The use of robots to babysit children will thus reduce the time required for the parents to be with their children since the robots will do most of the work. Therefore, these parents will give birth to many children since they do not have to attend to their children. Moreover, the robots will be like surrogate mothers. The rich people who have a lot of money are in a better position to buy many robots and thus giving them a chance to get more children and subsequently will lead to population increase. Therefore, the use of robots to babysit children should be looked at more critically and care should be taken to avoid the negative consequences that may result.

Robots also can counteract fundamental parts of any healthy growing child since in most cases they are not programmed to examine and determine the health of a child. Children need a regular human contact to grow, gain knowledge, and develop and it is very unclear if a robot is in a position to replace human presence. Also, according to psychologists, a healthy development of a child requires love and empathy, which robots do not have. The robots have only been trained to recognize voices and faces and cannot examine the physiological and psychological states of an individual. Also, the kids are very fragile since their moods, health and behavior can change anytime; something that a robot may not monitor easily. Therefore, it will be very unfair to have a robot watch over a child and yet it does not understand the fundamental aspects of human health.

Researchers have proved that robots impoverish the emotional development of a child mainly for children who grew up in being taken care and being under the care of robots. Children mainly get attached emotionally to robots that have great abilities, for instance, playing games with them. A child ends up developing feelings for the robots such that if anything bad happens or if the robots are taken away from them, the children may get depressed. Children raised in this manner develop feelings for the inanimate robot therefore ending up psychologically hurt when the robots are hurt. Although there might be nothing wrong with children getting attached to robots, it would be much better if the children were getting attached to human beings rather than the inanimate robots. Therefore, parents should be very careful, and they should think twice before adopting the use of robots in babysitting children.

Robots are prone to software breakdown leading to poor performance or total failure (Stolfo, Stavrou, & Wright, n. d.). The robots are mainly controlled by operating systems which are mainly controlled remotely. At times, the operating systems may fail and thus due to physical or system interference. The disruption of its normal function will automatically lead to poor performance or total failure. If for example the robot is expected to babysit a child until a time when the parent is back, and its system fails before that time, the child will be left without being served as required. Also, system failure may lead to the robot doing undesired work, for example, hurting the child instead of feeding or playing with the child. Also, system failure in robots may lead to damages and thus losses, for example, unexpected system failure may lead to physical damage of the robot, and causing significant loss since it is very expensive.

Robots also have a limited number of tasks that it can perform depending on the pre-installed programs in it (Stolfo, Stavrou, & Wright, n. d.). The limited number of tasks, therefore, makes it unfit for baby caring and education. Robots, unlike human beings, can only perform tasks as directed by the user and the manufacturer's programs and on the contrary, the child being young requires a variety of activities and games to avoid boredom. Also, a robot is not flexible regarding the tasks that it can perform according to the demands of a child. For example, a child may finish or spill all the food that had been prepared for him and the robot may not be able to prepare more, and maybe at that time the parent may not be around to do the necessary. Therefore, it is worth noting that robots cannot perform an un-programmed task, and subsequently, it cannot serve its master very well.

**Counter argument**

However, we accept the fact that robots have made a significant impact on human life. Early childhood education and physical exercise are fundamental for a healthy growth of a child, and the said tasks can be well performed by robots (Konidaris, 2012). Young children aged above three years frequently require attention and they like playing a lot, and many at times, parents do may not have enough time to play or attend to their children. Therefore the best option is to have a robot play with and attend to a child. Robots also cannot get tired doing anything desired by the child. Consequently, the child will grow healthy since he/she is meeting all the required standards of a healthy lifestyle. The adoption of robots in baby care and education has therefore helped parents, help children grow socially and physically, and subsequently led to improved health of the young children in the care of robots.

**Conclusion**

There are numerous valid reasons to be concerned about the negativity of adopting robots in baby care and education since they affect the children socially and psychologically. Moreover, it affects the health of children as well as increasing the population if adopted widely by the rich people who can afford to buy them. Moreover, the child may feel neglected since he/she is under an inanimate robot which does not have any feeling for humans. Therefore, use of robots should be well scrutinized before being adopted by any parent.