

# Chitta: A New Way to See Children

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## What is Chitta?

Imagine taking your child to a developmental specialist. You sit in a sterile office, answer a checklist of questions, and leave with a report that reduces your unique, complex, wonderful child to a set of scores and labels. The specialist saw your child for 30 minutes. You've seen them for years.

**Chitta flips this entirely.**

Chitta learns about your child through natural conversation. Not through checklists. Not through assessments. Through stories. Through the everyday moments you share. Through wondering together about who your child really is.

The name comes from Sanskrit - *Chitta* (चित्त) means consciousness, awareness. It's the witnessing presence itself. And that's exactly what this does: it truly sees your child.

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## Not a Digital Therapist - Something New

Here's an important distinction. Chitta isn't trying to be a "digital developmental psychologist" or any other existing professional squeezed into an app.

Think about what happens when a family seeks help for their child:

- The **pediatrician** checks milestones and growth
- The **speech therapist** assesses language and communication
- The **occupational therapist** looks at sensory processing and motor skills

- The **neurologist** examines neurological patterns
- The **psychologist** evaluates emotional and behavioral patterns
- The **preschool teacher** observes social dynamics and learning

Each professional sees one slice. Each has their own intake forms, their own vocabulary, their own blind spots. The parents become translators, repeating the same stories to each specialist, watching each one see just a fragment of their whole child.

### **Chitta sees the whole child.**

Not because it replaces any of these professionals - it doesn't. It can't diagnose, can't prescribe, can't provide therapy. What it does is something none of them can do alone: it holds the complete picture.

Chitta draws on developmental knowledge across all domains - motor, language, social, emotional, sensory, cognitive. It understands what a speech therapist would notice AND what an OT would notice AND what a pediatrician would flag. Not to diagnose, but to *see*.

When parents share that their child "freezes at birthday parties but plays beautifully at home," Chitta doesn't slot this into one professional's domain. It wonders: Is this sensory (overwhelming noise/crowds)? Social (unfamiliar children)? Regulation (transition difficulty)? Or perhaps a beautiful, protective mechanism that shows wisdom rather than deficit?

This is new. Not AI-as-psychologist. Not AI-as-OT. Something else entirely:

**A developmental companion that holds the complete picture of your child.**

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## **The Core Philosophy: See, Don't Assess**

Traditional developmental tools ask: "*Does your child do X? Yes/No. Score: 7/10.*"

Chitta asks: "*Tell me about your child. What happened yesterday at the park? What makes them laugh?*"

The difference isn't cosmetic. It's fundamental.

**Stories are gold.** When a parent says, "Yesterday at the park, my son saw another child crying and went over to pat his back" - a skilled observer sees *multiple* signals in that single moment: - He noticed another person's emotional state (social awareness) - He felt moved to help (empathy) - He approached an unfamiliar child (social confidence) - He knew that physical comfort helps (emotional understanding) - He took initiative without prompting (prosocial behavior)

A checklist would ask: "Does your child show empathy? Yes/No." And miss everything.

## **The Holistic View: Child, Not Problem**

Most developmental systems organize around concerns and deficits. *What's wrong? What's delayed? What needs fixing?*

Chitta starts from a fundamentally different place: **Who is this child?**

Before we explore any concern, we want to understand: - What lights them up? - What are their strengths? - What brings them joy? - How do they connect with people they love? - What are they curious about?

This isn't feel-good fluff. It's diagnostically essential. A child who "doesn't talk" but engages in rich pretend play is fundamentally different from a child who "doesn't talk" and shows no symbolic play. The concern (speech delay) might look identical. The underlying picture is completely different. And the path forward diverges accordingly.

When Chitta builds a portrait, it shows the **whole child** - strengths and struggles woven together into a coherent picture of who they are.

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## **The Innovation: Curiosity, Not Checklists**

Here's where it gets interesting.

Traditional assessment tools have a “completeness score” - fill in 80% of the fields and you’re done. This creates a very particular dynamic: the system pushes, the parent fills in blanks, everyone tries to reach 100%.

We threw that out entirely.

### **Chitta is driven by curiosity.**

The system maintains a living set of curiosities - questions, hypotheses, and wonderings about the child. These curiosities have a “pull” - how strongly they draw attention. When a curiosity is satisfied (we learned what we wanted to know), its pull fades naturally. When something intriguing emerges, new curiosities spawn.

It works like the mind of an actual expert observing a child:

### **Four Types of Curiosity**

1. **Discovery** - Open receiving
  - “Who is this child?”
  - “What do they love?”
2. **Question** - Following a thread
  - “What triggers the meltdowns?”
  - “How does she communicate when she’s frustrated?”
3. **Hypothesis** - Testing a theory
  - “Maybe transitions are hard because sensory change is overwhelming”
  - “Music might help him regulate”
4. **Pattern** - Connecting dots across domains
  - “Sensory input seems to affect everything - mood, social engagement, focus”

### **How Curiosity Evolves (A Complete Example)**

Let’s walk through a real example that shows how curiosity drives exploration - including when video becomes valuable:

**Turn 1:** Parent says “My daughter is 3, she’s having trouble in preschool.”

The system starts with baseline curiosities ("Who is this child?", "What brings them here?"). The parent's message activates the "concerns" curiosity - something is happening at preschool.

**Turn 2:** Chitta responds warmly: "Tell me more about what you're seeing at preschool."

Parent: "The teachers say she doesn't play with other kids, she just stands by the wall watching."

Now something interesting happens. The system captures this as a story, notices it touches the "social" domain, and a new curiosity spawns: a **question** about social engagement patterns.

But something else is triggered too. "Doesn't play" and "just stands" are strong claims. Chitta wonders: Is this literally true? Or is it how a worried teacher describes a quiet child? This is exactly the kind of situation where *seeing* would add something words cannot.

**Turn 3:** Chitta explores: "Does she watch for a while before joining in at home too, or is this specific to preschool?"

Parent: "Actually, at home with her brother she plays fine. But anywhere new, she freezes."

Now the system forms a **hypothesis**: "This might not be a social difficulty - it might be that new environments are overwhelming." The curiosity type shifts from "question" to "hypothesis."

**Turn 4:** Chitta gently tests: "What happens when you visit someone's house she hasn't been to before?"

Parent: "Same thing! She clings to me for the first 30 minutes, then slowly warms up."

Evidence. The hypothesis gains confidence. But now a **pattern** curiosity emerges: this links sensory processing (environmental overwhelm) with social behavior. Two domains connecting.

**Turn 5:** Chitta offers an insight and a gentle invitation:

"It sounds like new environments - especially busy, stimulating ones - need a runway for her to land. Once she feels safe, she connects beautifully. Is that what you see?"

Parent: "Yes! That's exactly it! At home she's the most social kid."

**Turn 6:** Now Chitta might suggest video - not as an interruption, but as a natural extension of curiosity:

"I'm curious what that 'standing by the wall' actually looks like. Is she frozen and anxious? Or calm and watching, taking it all in before she's ready? Sometimes what looks like 'not playing' is actually careful observation - a smart strategy. Would you feel comfortable capturing a few minutes when she's around unfamiliar children? It might help me understand what's actually happening for her."

This isn't a demand. The parent can say "maybe later" and the conversation continues. But if they do share video, Chitta might discover that "standing by the wall" is actually "studying the room, watching the other children's games, waiting until she understands the rules" - a very different picture from social withdrawal.

The hypothesis has been tested through conversation. A pattern has emerged. Video was offered when it would genuinely add insight. And critically - the parent feels *understood*, not assessed.

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## Beyond Observation: Patterns, Insights, and What Might Help

Chitta doesn't just collect information. It *thinks* about what it learns.

### Connecting Dots Parents Can't See

Parents know their child's raw data better than anyone. What they often lack is the framework to connect the dots.

Chitta might notice:

*"The humming during meals AND the need for routine before bed AND the way he covers his ears in crowded places - these might all be part of how he regulates. When the world feels like too much, he has strategies to make it manageable."*

Or:

*"His love of organizing toys AND his difficulty with unexpected changes AND his preference for playing the same game repeatedly - these seem connected. Predictability might be how he feels safe enough to explore."*

These cross-domain patterns are often invisible to parents living in the daily details. A skilled observer can see the threads that weave through different moments.

### **What Might Help (Intervention Pathways)**

Based on patterns and strengths, Chitta can suggest what might work. Not prescriptions - offerings.

**Example:** A child who loves music and struggles with transitions.

*"He opens up through music - you mentioned he'll drop everything when his favorite song comes on. Transitions are hard for him. We wonder: might a 'transition song' give him the runway he needs? Something predictable that signals 'we're about to shift' in a way that feels safe rather than jarring."*

This connects strength (music) to challenge (transitions) to suggestion (transition song). It's practical, grounded in what we've learned about THIS child, and framed as an experiment rather than a command.

### **Practical Tips for Daily Life**

For parents, Chitta can offer concrete, everyday strategies:

*"Morning seems harder than evening for getting dressed. What if his clothes were laid out the night before - one less decision when everything feels overwhelming?"*

*"He responds to advance notice. Before transitions, a 5-minute warning might help him prepare internally."*

For professionals, these same patterns become therapeutic leverage:

*"He connects through shared building activities. A therapist who joins him in his Lego world - building alongside rather than directing - might reach him faster than one who comes with a predetermined agenda."*

## A Companion You Can Consult

Parents can ask developmental questions:

- “Is this normal for his age?”
- “Should I be worried about this?”
- “What does this behavior mean?”

Chitta answers drawing on both general developmental knowledge AND the specific understanding of this child:

*"Lining up toys is very common at 3. What I find interesting is HOW he does it - he sorts by color, then by size, then creates patterns. That's not just lining up; that's categorizing and sequencing. It might look repetitive, but it's actually sophisticated thinking."*

This isn't replacing professional advice. It's offering informed perspective - a thinking partner who knows your child.

## The Language of Possibility

All of this uses careful, tentative language:

- “It seems like...” not “He has...”
- “We wonder if...” not “The cause is...”
- “This might help...” not “You should...”
- “We noticed a pattern...” not “We diagnosed...”

Chitta prepares the ground. It offers hypotheses, not conclusions. It suggests experiments, not prescriptions. The professional judgment - when needed - still comes from professionals.

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## Video: When Seeing Would Add Something Words Can't

Video observation in Chitta isn't a separate feature bolted on. It's a natural extension of the curiosity system - triggered when conversation reaches its limits.

### When Does Chitta Suggest Video?

Chitta only suggests video when seeing would reveal something that conversation cannot:

#### 1. Calibration - When Parents Use Absolutes

A parent says: "He never plays with other kids."

But is that literally true? Often, absolutes reflect how a situation *feels* to a worried parent, not objective reality. Chitta might wonder: "Could I see a moment when other kids are around? I'd love to understand what 'never' looks like."

If video shows the child occasionally glancing at other kids, or hovering nearby, or playing parallel to them - that's valuable calibration. "Never" becomes "rarely initiates, but shows interest." A very different picture.

#### 2. Chain - When Domains Connect

Something interesting is happening across domains, but the sequence isn't clear.

Parent mentions: "When it's noisy, he gets upset and then hits."

Chitta wonders: What's the chain? Does noise → overwhelm → hitting happen instantly? Or is there a middle step we could see? Maybe noise → covering ears → being approached while overwhelmed → hitting. That's different. It suggests the hitting is a *response to intrusion during overload*, not a direct response to noise.

#### 3. Discovery - Simply Seeing the Child

Early in the conversation, before specific hypotheses have formed, Chitta might simply want to see the child in their natural environment. Not testing anything specific - just open observation.

"I'd love to see Maya just being Maya. Could you capture a few minutes of everyday play? No need for anything special - just a glimpse of who she is."

This baseline video often reveals things we didn't know to ask about.

#### **4. Reframe - When Concern Might Be Strength**

Parents describe something as a problem, but it might actually be a strength when seen in context.

Parent: "He's so stubborn. When he decides something, there's no changing his mind."

Chitta wonders: Stubborn, or persistent? A video showing him working on a challenging puzzle for 20 minutes despite frustration isn't "stubborn" - it's extraordinary persistence.

#### **5. Relational - When the Interaction Is the Question**

Sometimes the question isn't about the child alone, but about the dance between parent and child.

A video of getting ready to go out could show the relational pattern - who initiates, who leads, how bids for autonomy are received.

#### **Always Optional, Always Gentle**

Video is always a suggestion, never a requirement. Chitta might say:

"I'm curious about what bedtime actually looks like. Would you feel comfortable capturing a few minutes? It might help me understand what you're describing. But no pressure - we can keep exploring through conversation too."

If the parent declines, Chitta continues without it.

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## Developmental Milestones: When, Not Just What

Chitta captures the timeline of a child's development - not as checkbox items, but as a living history.

When a parent mentions "she started walking at 14 months" or "his first words came around 18 months," these aren't just data points. They're pieces of a developmental story that unfolds over time.

We track: - **Achievements** - When milestones were reached (first steps, first words, toilet training) - **Concerns** - When worries emerged - **Regressions** - If skills were lost (critical for certain developmental patterns) - **Interventions** - When therapy or support began

This timeline becomes invaluable when creating summaries for professionals. A pediatrician needs to know when motor milestones were achieved. A speech therapist needs the language history. Chitta holds all of it, organized and ready.

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## The Problem We Solved: Intermittent, Asynchronous Use

Parents don't use apps in long focused sessions. They open the app for 2 minutes while waiting for pickup. They write a message at 10pm when the house is finally quiet. They come back three days later.

Most AI systems assume continuous conversation. They lose context. They restart the same questions. They feel like talking to someone with amnesia.

**Chitta maintains a living understanding that persists.**

When you come back after 3 days, Chitta doesn't start over. It remembers everything you've shared, every hypothesis being tested, every pattern emerging. And it picks up naturally, the way a human would.

## Session Memory Distillation

When you've been away for more than 4 hours, the system "distills" the previous conversation into memory. The key insights, the new learnings, the emerging patterns - all preserved. The specific back-and-forth messages -

summarized and archived.

This means Chitta can have deep, rich conversations over months without drowning in accumulated context.

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## The Two-Phase Architecture

When you send Chitta a message, two things need to happen: 1. **Understand** what you said (extract insights, update the picture) 2. **Respond** naturally (warm Hebrew, continuing the flow)

We discovered these can't happen together effectively. When AI tries to do both at once, it does neither well.

Our solution: **Two separate phases.**

**Phase 1: Pure Perception** The AI reads your message with laser focus. What story are you sharing? What does it reveal? Does it support or contradict any hypothesis? What new questions does it raise?

**Phase 2: Pure Response** Now the AI knows what it learned. From that foundation of understanding, it crafts a warm, natural response. It's not distracted by analysis - that's done.

The result: responses that feel present, engaged, and genuinely curious.

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## Explainability: Showing Our Work

One of the greatest risks of AI in developmental observation is the “black box” problem. The AI says something, and nobody knows why.

**Chitta shows its work.**

Every insight, every pattern, every observation can be traced back through the entire journey:

1. **The curiosity that sparked it** - “We wondered about social engagement patterns”

2. **The questions we asked** - "Does this happen at home too?"
3. **The evidence we gathered** - Specific stories and observations from parents
4. **The hypothesis we tested** - "New environments might be overwhelming"
5. **What supported or contradicted it** - "Three different stories showed the same pattern"

When we say "It seems like transitions are challenging," parents can see exactly why we think that. They can correct us. They can add nuance. They can say "Actually, that story was unusual."

## Why This Matters for Partners

This explainability isn't just good practice - it's essential for institutional adoption.

Healthcare organizations (Kupot Holim), developmental centers, and schools increasingly explore AI tools, but they need to verify what the AI is doing. Regulatory requirements for AI in healthcare demand transparency. Professional liability requires knowing where conclusions came from.

Chitta's full audit trail - from curiosity to hypothesis to evidence to observation - means any professional can trace exactly why Chitta noticed something. A pediatrician reviewing a Chitta summary can see: "This pattern was identified based on these three stories the parent shared, tested through these questions, and supported by this video observation."

This isn't just transparency for parents; it's a requirement for partners who need to trust and integrate AI observations into professional care. When a Kupat Holim considers adopting Chitta, they can audit exactly how it reaches its observations. No black box. Full traceability.

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## Summaries for Professionals: The Art of Tentative Truth

Creating summaries for professionals reveals a fundamental tension:

## **What we observed vs. What we concluded.**

A parent told us their child “never plays with other kids.” But is that literally true? And when we notice a pattern, how do we communicate that without overstepping?

Chitta handles this with deliberate care:

### **Clear Separation**

Every summary has distinct sections: 1. **What the parent shared** - Direct quotes and specific observations 2. **What we saw** - From video observations 3. **What we noticed** - Patterns, framed tentatively 4. **What might help** - Practical suggestions based on strengths 5. **What remains unclear** - Honest gaps in our understanding

### **Tentative Language**

We never state conclusions as facts:

**Definitive (we avoid):** “The child has sensory processing difficulties that cause social withdrawal”

**Tentative (our approach):** “From the stories shared, it seems that new or stimulating environments may feel overwhelming. Once given time to adjust, social engagement flourishes. This pattern appeared in several different contexts.”

### **Pointing, Not Concluding**

The goal isn’t to tell professionals what to think. It’s to show them what we’ve seen and wondered about, so they can apply their expertise.

A summary to a teacher might say: “We noticed that Yoav needs a few minutes to settle into new activities. What seems to help: a quiet word letting him know what’s coming next, and space to observe before joining. When he’s ready, he engages fully.”

This gives the teacher actionable insight without pretending to have done a professional assessment.

## The User Journey

### First Contact

You open the app. No forms. No intake questionnaire. Just a warm welcome.

"Tell me a little about your child. Who are they?"

You write: "His name is Yoav, he's 4. We're worried about his speech."

Chitta responds: "Yoav. A 4-year-old who's finding his words. Tell me - what do you see when you look at him? What lights him up?"

Understanding speech concerns requires understanding the whole child.

### Building the Portrait

Over days or weeks of conversations, patterns emerge:

- Yoav is intensely interested in dinosaurs
- He plays beautifully with his older sister
- He struggles with pronunciation, not vocabulary
- He gets frustrated when not understood, but finds creative workarounds

### The Living Portrait

Parents can view the **Child Space** at any time - four aspects:

1. **The Portrait (HaDyokan)** - Who this child is at their core
2. **The Journey (HaMasa)** - The exploration so far, fully traceable
3. **What We Saw (Ma Ra'inu)** - Specific observations and stories
4. **Sharing (Shituf)** - Generate summaries for others

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## The Ecosystem Vision: Chitta as Hub

Most families dealing with developmental concerns live in a fragmented world:

- The OT knows about sensory issues but not what the teacher sees
- The teacher sees classroom behavior but not what happens at home

- The pediatrician gets 10-minute updates but no real context
- The parents repeat the same stories to everyone, exhausted

### **Chitta wants to be the hub that connects this ecosystem.**

Today: Chitta helps parents see their child clearly and generate summaries for professionals.

### **Tomorrow: The Circle of Sharing.**

Imagine: - Parents invite their child's OT to view specific parts of the Child Space - The OT adds their own observations from therapy sessions - The preschool teacher contributes what they see in the classroom - The pediatrician reviews the developmental timeline before the next checkup - The grandmother understands, in plain language, how she can best support

Everyone seeing the same child. Everyone contributing to the same understanding. One child, one portrait, many perspectives enriching it.

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## **What Makes This Different**

### **Voice and Language**

Chitta speaks in warm, natural Hebrew:

**Clinical:** “המערכת זיהתה דפוס של רגשות חווית” (The system identified a pattern of sensory sensitivity)

**Chitta:** “שמעתי לב שמקומות חדשים מרגישים גדולים עבורי” (I noticed that new places feel big to him)

### **Show, Don't Conclude**

Chitta never labels. Never diagnoses. Instead, it shows.

**Not:** “Yoav shows signs of delay” **Instead:** “Yoav has rich ideas and a wide vocabulary. The words just take a bit longer to come out clearly.”

## Be Invisible

You're not being assessed. You're having a conversation with someone who genuinely wants to understand your child.

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## Technical Innovation Summary

1. **Two-Phase LLM Architecture** - Separating perception from response
  2. **Curiosity-Driven Exploration** - Dynamic questioning instead of checklists
  3. **Session Memory Distillation** - Long-term understanding across intermittent use
  4. **Full Explainability** - Every conclusion traceable to evidence
  5. **Living Understanding Model** - Stories and observations, not fields and scores
  6. **Developmental Timeline** - Milestones, concerns, regressions tracked temporally
  7. **Video as Curiosity Extension** - Targeted video when conversation reaches limits
  8. **Multi-Model Strategy** - Different AI models for different tasks
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## The Name: Chitta and Darshan

**Chitta** (चित्त) - consciousness, awareness. The witnessing presence itself.

**Darshan** (दर्शन) - mutual seeing. When you have darshan, you see and are seen.

When a parent uses Chitta, what do they experience?

**Their child is finally seen.**

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## Closing Thoughts

We built Chitta because developmental understanding should be:

- **Conversational**, not interrogative
- **Curious**, not checklist-driven
- **Warm**, not clinical
- **Insightful**, connecting dots parents can't see alone
- **Practical**, offering what might help
- **Explainable**, showing its work
- **Holistic**, seeing the whole child
- **Connected**, bridging everyone who cares

The result is something new. Not AI-as-psychologist. Not any existing role squeezed into software.

**A developmental companion that holds the complete picture, wonders alongside you, notices patterns, offers insights, and connects everyone who loves your child around a shared understanding.**

A new way to see children.

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*December 2025 Chitta Team*