

# Robots in Autism Therapy

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JOYCE

Autistic children =  
incapable of social skills  
like empathy?

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HOW MAY ROBOTIC AUTISM THERAPY  
*CHALLENGE* THIS NOTION?

# MICHAEL TOMASELLO

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## Cognitive Development of Children

- Adults play an **active instructional role**
- Children need to **participate** in their cultural environment

Theory of Mind = understanding  
**intentions**

# MAJA MATARIC

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## Socially-Assistive Robots (SARs)

- Social robots with a physical presence
- Meant to be **personalised** for their owners

# HOW MAY MATARIC'S ROBOTS HELP CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN THEORY OF --- MIND DEVELOPMENT?

# THESIS

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Autistic children may learn to

- Interpret the thoughts of their personal robot OR
- Be guided by the robot in interpreting other people's thoughts

Theory of Mind development usually occurs in the presence of a mentor the child feels comfortable with.

SUPPORT #1

Autistic children prefer interacting with robots because robots have simpler and more predictable behaviour.

SUPPORT #2



Personalised robots for autistic children parallels the role of parents in the development of neurotypical children.

SUPPORT #3

SARs, being able to form emotional connections with autistic children, have great potential in autism therapy.

Thank You