Emotional Learning

Example of a learning scenario to engage children in emotional inquiry

Key points for professional learning

- Imaginative play with the robot can enable children to experiment with different options to develop empathy, and demonstrate expressive language and communication skills that might not emerge in their usual peer-peer imaginary play situations.

- Purposeful, child-led imaginative play can support a sense of empathy and embody resilience to continuously persist on tasks at hand.

- All children to contribute to sustaining a scenario or achieving a shared goal.

VEYLDF Practice Principles focus

- Reflective practice
- Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- Integrated teaching and learning approaches

Outcomes for children

- Express emotions and behaviours in the form of words and questions
- Embody resilience during manipulative play with the toys and collaborating with peers to achieve a shared goal
- Evaluate encountered problems and pose solutions
- Engage in continuous questioning, suggest ideas and pose solutions between and/or amongst each other (with teachers and/or peers)

Learning Scenario

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Sara (9-year-old) and her sister (6-year-old, Kiana) engage in a play session where a codable Cat Bot (LEGO BOOST robotic toy) is a 'partner' in the play scene. Without directions, the parent provides the children free space [free-flow play] and place to interact with the robot.

This enables the child to become an involved agent in joint play with another child. Sara dramatises the Cat Bot as being hungry and asks Kiana to pat the cat. Kiana pats the cat and feeds it milk, while Sara codes the Cat to make sounds and actions.

Kiana notices the robot's actions as a modelling of expressions of positive feelings (i.e., wagging tail when being fed milk; meowing when happy).

These feelings demonstrated by the Cat Bot provide a stimulus for the child to respond (e.g., let's feed the hungry cat some milk) and verbalise their own feelings and emotions during play.

The Cat Bot acts as a potential partner to stimulate the child's social and emotional skills through triggering empathic responses and fostering opportunities for the children to co-create collaborative empathetic play scenarios.

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Discussion and line of inquiry

This vignette introduces a scenario of how through robot play, children such as Kiana (who is selective mute and from English as an additional language background) can engage in social interactions that enable them to potentially acquire skills for social and emotional adjustments and development.

In the case of above vignette of Sara and Kiana, the children co-created a scenario with the robot as a central character in their story and narrative.

- Kiana notices the robot's actions as modelling feelings (wagging tail when being fed milk) and words (meows when happy). These feelings demonstrated by the Cat Bot then allows for the child to verbalise their own feelings and emotions during play (let's feed the hungry cat some milk, let's feed it some cake).

- The robot acts as a potential partner to drive the child's emotional thought process, triggering empathy as seen in the playful dialogues. The child co-creates a 'self-generated' empathetic situation where she wants to continue feeding the Cat Bot new items and sing songs.

- The sibling joins in as a coding playmate to facilitate the child's social-emotional actions and feelings to feed to cat, which is being imagined to be hungry.

Example

The below is another example from a nursery context in England.

George (3years and 8months) and Theo (4years and 2months) in the nursery are using LEGO BOOST robot that is coded via a tablet .

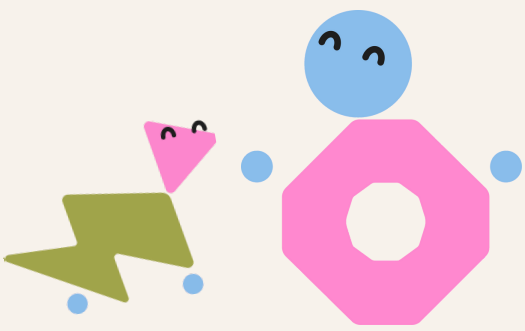
The teacher is present as this is a new addition to the portfolio of the toys in the nursery. The teacher explains to the children how the IoToy works and then steps back to allow them to explore it.

Both children start following the instructions and after a while, Theo brings some small wooden brigs and explains to George that they can build a bridge and they can code the robot to demolish the bridge.

They both build the bridge and then try to code the robot. Their first two attempts were not successful in order for the robot to demolish the bridge. Then they ask their teacher for help. With the help of the teacher, they try again and this was very successful.

They tried couple of times. Then they used Lego pieces and made a house.

They tried to see how they can demolish the house and this time coded the robot successfully on their one. During the coding process they were instructing each other “reflecting” on what they had learnt from the teacher.



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Questions for reflection

- How can role play with the robot affect a child’s understanding or being resilient and open to making mistakes?

- When responding to a child's social actions, how can you support their developing knowledge about what it means to be problem solve together with their peers?

- What role does child-robot and peer-peer interactions contribute to children’s collaboration play in supporting the development of children’s social communication skills and how can educators support this?