



SPECIAL TRACK PROPOSAL

Title: Technological mediators to support the play of children with disabilities.

Key Organizer(s): Serenella Besio - University of Bergamo (Italy)

Topics:

- Special Education
- Inclusive Education
- Robotics and automation
- Accessibility Guidelines

Description and significance of the Special Track:

Play is one of the basic activities that humans and many animals perform to build and improve their abilities. Children with disabilities very often can find it difficult to play as a natural activity in life, due to the obstacles they meet: their functional limitations from one hand, and the ways their environments are adapted to their needs from the other. Play of children with disabilities should be appropriately prepared as to: accessible environments, adapted and accessible tools (toys), on-purpose technological toys (among which robots and assistive technology supported tools) are the more promising ones, proper play activity proposals, This will not turn the play activity into a rehabilitation exercise, rather creating the right opportunities for these children can freely play as they want, together with their peers. Inclusion is the result of a careful and targeted process, and play for the sake of play can be supported through an expert educational guide. On the basis of the studies developed by the COST Action "LUDI - play for children with disabilities", the Symposium presents consolidated methods and tools to reach this purpose. Within the track, a general framework for the play of children with disabilities will be presented, and it will be then discussed through: a) a methodological proposal about the concept of accessibility in this area; b) an in-depth review of existing robots for children with disabilities with experiences of use; c) assistive technology solutions for specific types of disability with experiences of use; d) a methodological proposal for designing robots for inclusive contexts of use.