



CASE STUDY: Children with autism in Spartanburg (SC) show dramatic improvement with Milo, the social robot.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bottom Line

The McCarthy Tetzler School in Spartanburg, SC, discovered that a humanoid robot named Milo was an extremely effective way to engage their students with autism and teach social skills, communication skills, and behavior management.

Background

The McCarthy Tetzler School provides services for approximately 240 special ed students, 90 of whom are on the autism spectrum. These students with autism represent some of the most challenging cases coming from 7 local school districts. Though standard therapies and instruction had been employed school administrators knew that these students were not progressing.

Developed by Robots4Autism in collaboration with top national autism experts, Milo is a highly expressive, advanced social robot designed specifically to teach critical skills to children with autism. Elena Ghionis, lead autism specialist for Spartanburg County, explained that one of the main reasons they chose Milo was because his “was the only curriculum we found that combined instruction in all three key areas of need: social skills, communication skills, and emotion regulation.”

Impact

Initially, 17 students were included in the study with Milo. Here are just a few of the results:

- Prior to using Milo, all 17 students showed minimal progress toward their IEP goals. After using Milo, all 17 showed significant progress or even mastery related to their social, communication, behavioral, and academic goals.
- Every child had a behavioral intervention plan to extend their school day. The center achieved that goal in 2½ months and was able to move those children to attend full day.
- Of the 17 students who participated in the study, 8 showed improvements on both the 4-score index and the 6-score index on the GARS 3.
- Of the 17 students who participated in the study, 5 or 6 will start the school year in a mainstream classroom.

The autism specialists at McCarthy Tetzler all agree that they now consider Milo and the Robots4Autism curriculum to be a vital therapy tool for their students with autism. As Ms. Ghionis put it, “Without Milo, we could not have good outcomes.”

To read the entire case study, please go to <https://bit.ly/2Tc7SLA>.