

Accommodating Students with Disabilities Using Social Robots and Telepresence Platforms

SOME LEGAL AND REGULATORY DIMENSIONS

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Rights for schoolchildren with disabilities

U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- Article 24 – “Education”
- Adopted 2006

U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- United States Code Title 20
- Passed 1970 (as Education of All Handicapped Children Act)

Essential similarities of both regimes

Essential Protections: CRPD/IDEA

Access

- “children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory ... education ... on the basis of disability”
- Guarantee of “free appropriate public education”

Provision of related services

- “such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including ... orientation and mobility services ...) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education”

Mainstreaming

- “Inclusive education”
- Education in the “least restrictive environment” feasible

CRPD 24(2)

States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;**
- (b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;**
- (c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual’s requirements is provided;**
- (d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;**
- (e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.**

IDEA 20 USC

“[A] State eligible for assistance ... [shall] ensure that ... [a] free appropriate public education is available to all children with disabilities residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21. § 1412(a)(1)(A).

[C]hildren with disabilities ... are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” § 1412(a)(5)(A).

The term “free appropriate public education” means special education and related services that ... have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge. § 1401(9).

The term “related services” means such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including ... orientation and mobility services ...) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. § 1401(26).



“Robots in School” –

What types of robots do you mean? Distinguish between social robots and the telepresence platforms, although neither of these is passive in the sense of having no decision algorithms, and both are social.

Say I’m a parent and want my kid to have one of these. The school has to provide one, for free. This is a question of access, for free, and the provision of related services. It is also a business plan for educational robotics.

The cost of this technology is likely to decrease in time. Although initially I expect school resistance to providing this technology, it is easy to imagine its becoming cheaper than other kinds of accommodation, notably major structural accommodations in the school and one-on-one adult aides.

This implicates the mainstreaming requirement if schools come to push robotic intervention. Esp telepresence style platforms that replace actual presence of children.

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Thank you for having me and allowing me to participate.