

## **Playing with AI: methods in action-based research with children**

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Since the release of Open AI's large language model Chat GPT in late 2022, the technological phenomenon of so-called artificial intelligence (AI) has become a fast-growing topic of discussion in nearly all aspects of modern society. The newly available technologies impact children's lives as well, as everything from social media platforms to the education system are making changes to adapt to the new pitfalls and possibilities. AI products are sometimes presented through some degree of anthropomorphizing, which resonates with earlier ways of presenting technologies in ways that invite us to interact (Bartneck et al., 2009). Our research project will be carried out with 8–11-year-old children in two after school clubs in Denmark.

The objectives of the research project are 1. to understand children's prerequisites for understanding and evaluating AI technologies, to 2. to identify the potential that lies in playful pedagogical approaches to exploring AI with children, and 3. to make visible how playful approaches to AI can be operationalized pedagogically while enabling children's agency as well as protecting them from risks related to privacy and datafication.

This paper reflects on using a combination of action research methods (Bradbury, 2015; Jensen, 2019) and speculative design methods (Wargo & Alvarado, 2020) to gather data with children and educators (pedagogues) in after school clubs. Specifically, data will be gathered in workshops designed in collaboration with the participating children and educators. The objective of the workshops will be to contemplate on AI as an "artificial friend" to whom we also need to become "artificial friends" to stay private/anonymous in regard to the service provider (technology companies). The data will be gathered during the spring, summer, and autumn of 2024. Previous research has shown that children are able to reflect upon their agency in relation to specific aspects of digital technologies, such as their various sensors (Main & Yamada-Rice, 2022). Our paper presentation will contribute to this growing field with methodological development and experiences from the field.

## References

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