Harnessing ICT to support the learning and interpersonal relationships of hospitalised children simultaneously: remote learning support for hospitalised children using avatar robots

Tottori Prefecture

OriHime

Background/Aims
- For hospitalised children, learning in groups is largely restricted for reasons such as limitations on movement and the need to avoid the risk of infection, and opportunities for interacting with other children are lacking. This has been an ongoing issue.
- In order to resolve this issue and increase the possibility of these children being able to participate in society, Tottori Prefecture has been endeavouring to enhance education by focusing on the potential of ICT, particularly robot technology.

Project Outline
- Providing support for hospitalised children's smooth return to school by having "Avatar Robots" participate in school lessons and activities on the children's behalf.

Features
- As the hospitalised child's avatar, the robot placed in the classroom enables the child to proactively participate in classes by raising their hand and commenting. This was previously not possible when a child would simply view the class via tablet.
- Through two-way communication that does not stop at words, interpersonal relationships with other schoolchildren can be deepened.

Results
- The presence of users (hospitalised children) in the classroom increased, and it was possible to gain a sense that communication had been strengthened between school classrooms and hospitalised students.
- As a measure against the spread of COVID-19, "OriHime" was an effective countermeasure for children with underlying medical conditions who are unable to attend school to allow them to participate in classes and other school activities.