

In Silver Spring, Maryland, the four-year-old research and development firm

AnthroTronix is also using computer technology to advance well-being. One of the company's main interests is working with children with autism, Down syndrome and other disabilities. Children afflicted with these conditions have trouble communicating and coordinating basic bodily movements. So AnthroTronix has come up with a robot—called CosmoBot—that can help parents and carers teach the kids how to move and interact with others.

Former biomedical engineering professor Corinna Lathan founded AnthroTronix while on leave from her teaching position at the Catholic University in Washington D.C. in 1999. "I kept thinking, this needs to be out there and I can't believe it's not," says Lathan. "When I started working with kids, it was mind-boggling to me the lack of technology available to them." CosmoBot can help a child by testing motor and verbal skills. For example, when the child pushes a button on the robot's central command or "mission control" box, the robot moves in that direction.

CORINNA LATHAN
CEO, AnthroTronix

Friendly, toylife robots that teach communication skills to disabled children



The robot also comes with a videogame in which a computerized CosmoBot must jump to catch falling stars—an action that requires the child to push buttons and direct the robot on screen.