



moody dolls  
chelsea johnson

# original project statement

## moody dolls

I am designing a series of plush toys for children ages 2-5 years that will serve as a visual aid in learning to label and understand emotions. My goal is to create an educational toy that kids will want to play with; a toy that has fun, exciting visual and textural qualities.

I am designing this product to be used in learning environments such as daycares and preschools. Children can play with them as plush toys and familiarize themselves with the various facial expressions. Or the teacher can use the plush toys as an educational tool when showing them how to recognize emotions and connect words to what they are feeling.

## goal

To create a product that is fun to play with but also allows children to express themselves and learn about their feelings

To create models that I can test with children at Trilok Preschool

Helping children to understand and be comfortable with their feelings will encourage them to be more verbal about their feelings as they get older. It will improve their emotional well-being and their ability to interact and communicate with others. It will also aid in their development of empathy.





Children experience many emotions, but they may be confused as to what they mean. To help understand what they are feeling, they must connect the feelings with facial expressions and body clues.

For example

happiness: smiles, laughter, & lightness

sadness: frowns, crying, heavy feelings

fear: tension, wanting to hide, tight feelings in face

anger: feel like your going to explode, snarling look on face

As children develop their language skills, they are increasingly able to label their emotions, thoughts, and intentions.

As they are more able to communicate their needs and feelings, they can more effectively regulate their emotional responses.

-transition from reflexive to reflective

It is important for children to understand their emotions so they can learn to empathize with others.

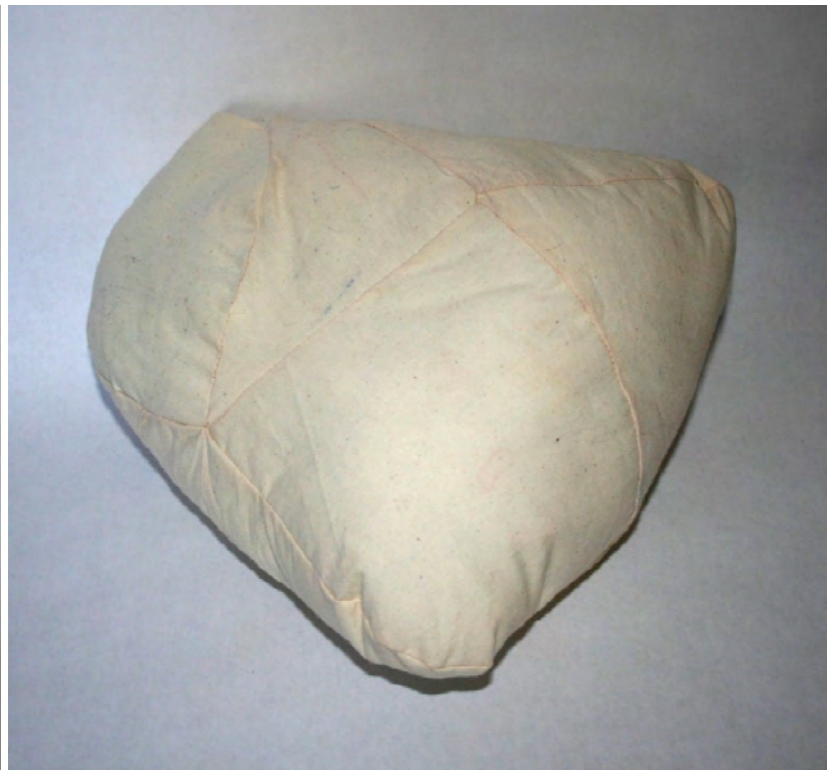
(Empathy: the ability to understand how another person feels in a given situation)

Children do not have the capacity to learn empathy until at least four years old. Introducing the concept of feelings from a young age will make it easier for the child to recognize and label what they're feeling, and eventually understand how others are feeling.

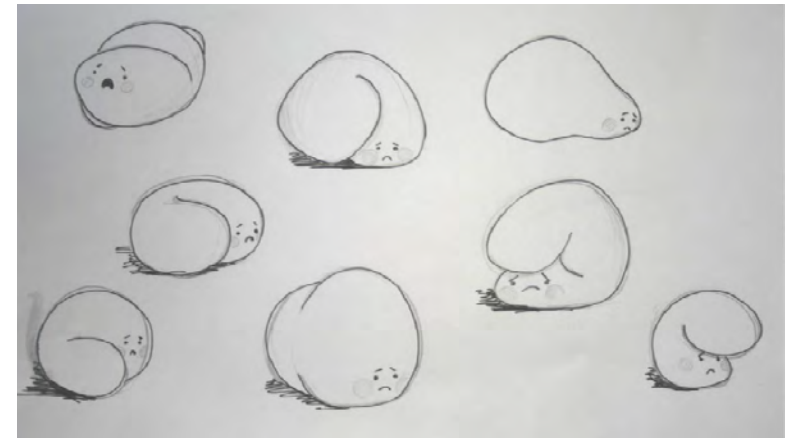
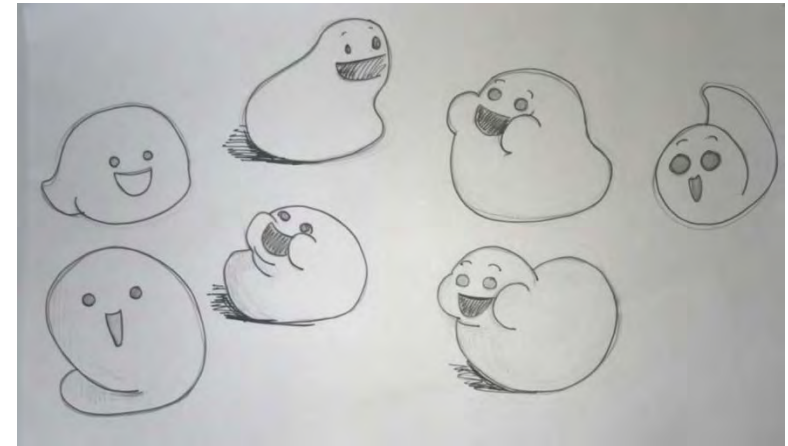
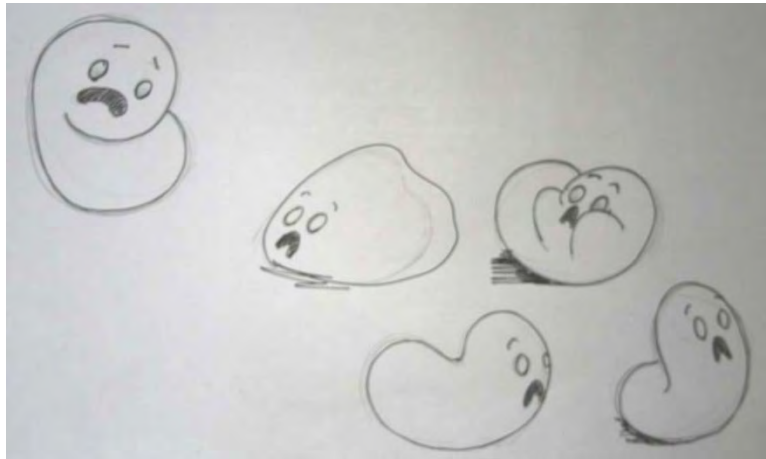
As children enter preschool, they are just learning to identify basic emotions through words. They are not used to using words to express their feelings, so they continue to physically act out what they feel.

## 3D development

I started out by experimenting with plush forms. The first form is a traditional doll form; the second two are starting to become more abstract.







sketches  
of forms and facial  
expressions

## initial moody forms

I made a few moody plush forms to experiment with materials and color combinations.



# Improved Project Statement

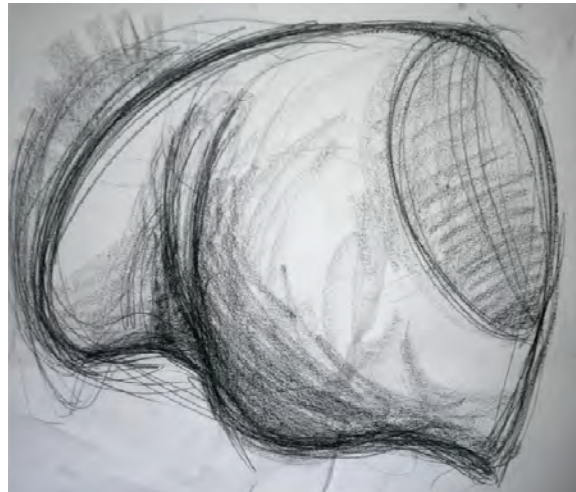
These three plush forms are inspired by different emotions and created to represent the emotions (happy, angry, and sad). My main objective is to create a plush toy that is visually stimulating and has interesting tactile qualities for children ages two years and older. Each form is primarily made of vibrantly colored polyester fiberfill and assorted fabric like tulle and mesh to give the three moody dolls captivating textures.





# large scale sketches

poster paper and charcoal

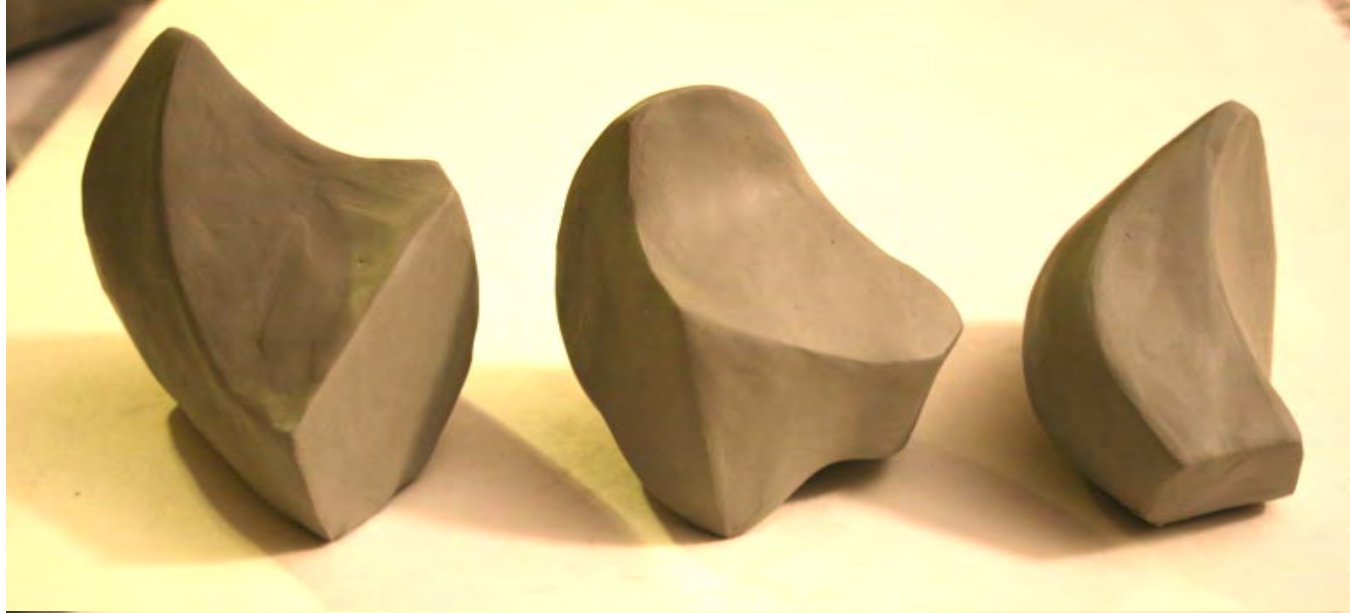












clay studies

# material exploration

hand-dyed polyester fiberfill, tulle, mesh, and thread







final models

happy  
joyful  
cloud-like  
bubbly  
bright  
cheerful  
comfortable  
light  
fluffy





angry  
chaotic  
explosion  
pointy  
aggressive  
strained  
uneasy



gloomy  
blue  
sad  
droopy  
depressed  
down  
heavy feeling



# bibliography

Carpenter, Siri and Karen Huffman. Visualizing Psychology. Hoboken: Wiley, 2008.

Bright Tots, Inc. Educational Toys and Resources Guide for Child Development. Choosing the Right Educational Toys for Children.  
[www.brighttots.com](http://www.brighttots.com)

The Parent Letter, March 2006. Anger- Helping Children Cope With This Complex Emotion.  
[www.aboutourkids.org](http://www.aboutourkids.org)

The Incredible Years. Helping Children Regulate Emotions.  
[www.incredibleyears.com](http://www.incredibleyears.com)

Missouri Families: Relationships. Helping Children Understand Emotions.  
[www.missourifamilies.org](http://www.missourifamilies.org)

Pictures:  
[www.trilokschool.org/blog](http://www.trilokschool.org/blog)

