

Moodie Tales

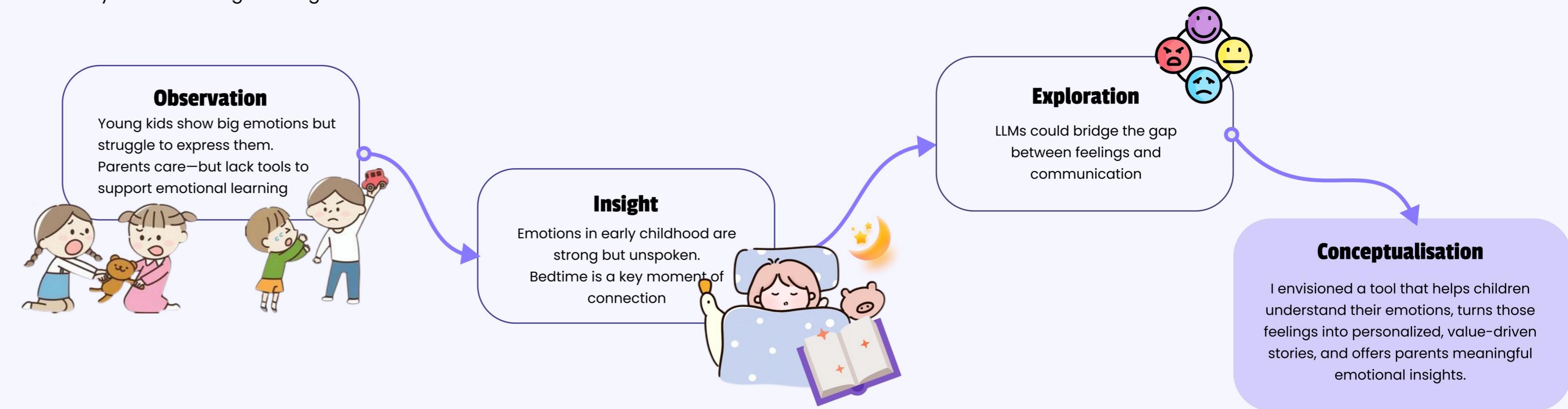
A story-based app that helps children understand emotions and grow through personalized bedtime tales

Personal Project
#EdTech #Interactive Design
Role: UX Researcher & Designer
Duration: 3 months
Tools: Figma & Miro



INSPIRATION

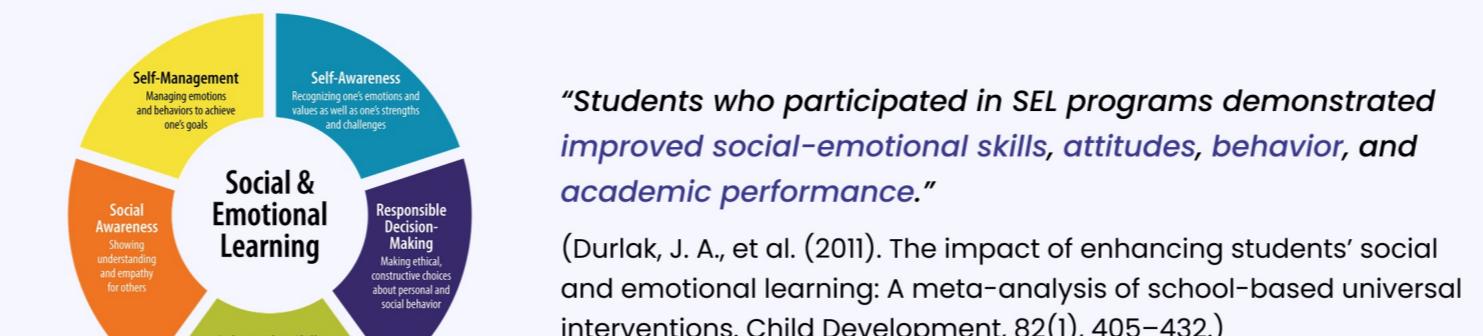
While spending time with young children, I noticed that their emotions are intense but often underexpressed—tantrums, silence, and sudden mood shifts reveal a rich inner world they're still learning to navigate.



RESEARCH

Theoretical Framework

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Early Childhood



- 3–8 is a formative period for SEL development.
- **Bedtime routines** and **short stories** are natural, effective channels for strengthening emotional literacy.
- **Interactive** and **guided** storytelling reliably enhance emotional expression and regulation.

KEYWORDS

Early childhood Bedtime routines Storytelling Emotion Awareness
Self- Regulation Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

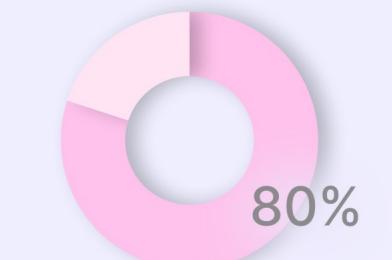
SURVEY INSIGHT

A user survey of 15 parents with children aged 3–8 revealed strong support for an emotionally intelligent, story-based educational tool. Parents of young children see strong value in a tool that combines emotion tracking with personalised storytelling.

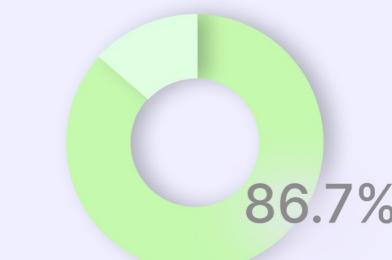
80% of parents regularly follow children's emotional development topics



66.7% agree that daily emotion tracking helps children understand and express feelings.



86.7% are interested in an app that generates bedtime stories based on emotional keywords.



PERSONA

The project focuses on two key users:

- Parents:** simple, time-saving tools that allow them to support their child's emotional growth without adding extra stress to their busy routines.
- Children:** playful, story-driven ways to express and understand their emotions, making abstract feelings easier to recognize and reflect upon.



Zoe
FULL-TIME WORKING MOM
Ages: 32

- Values her 5-year-old daughter's emotional growth
- Struggles to find time for structured emotional education

GOALS

I want to help Mia grow emotionally, but after a long day, I just need something simple that works.

ACTIONS

Overloaded
Connected
Guided
Intentional
Open-minded



Mia
DEPENDENT EXPLORER
Ages: 5

- Expressive but has difficulty managing frustration and sadness

FEELINGS

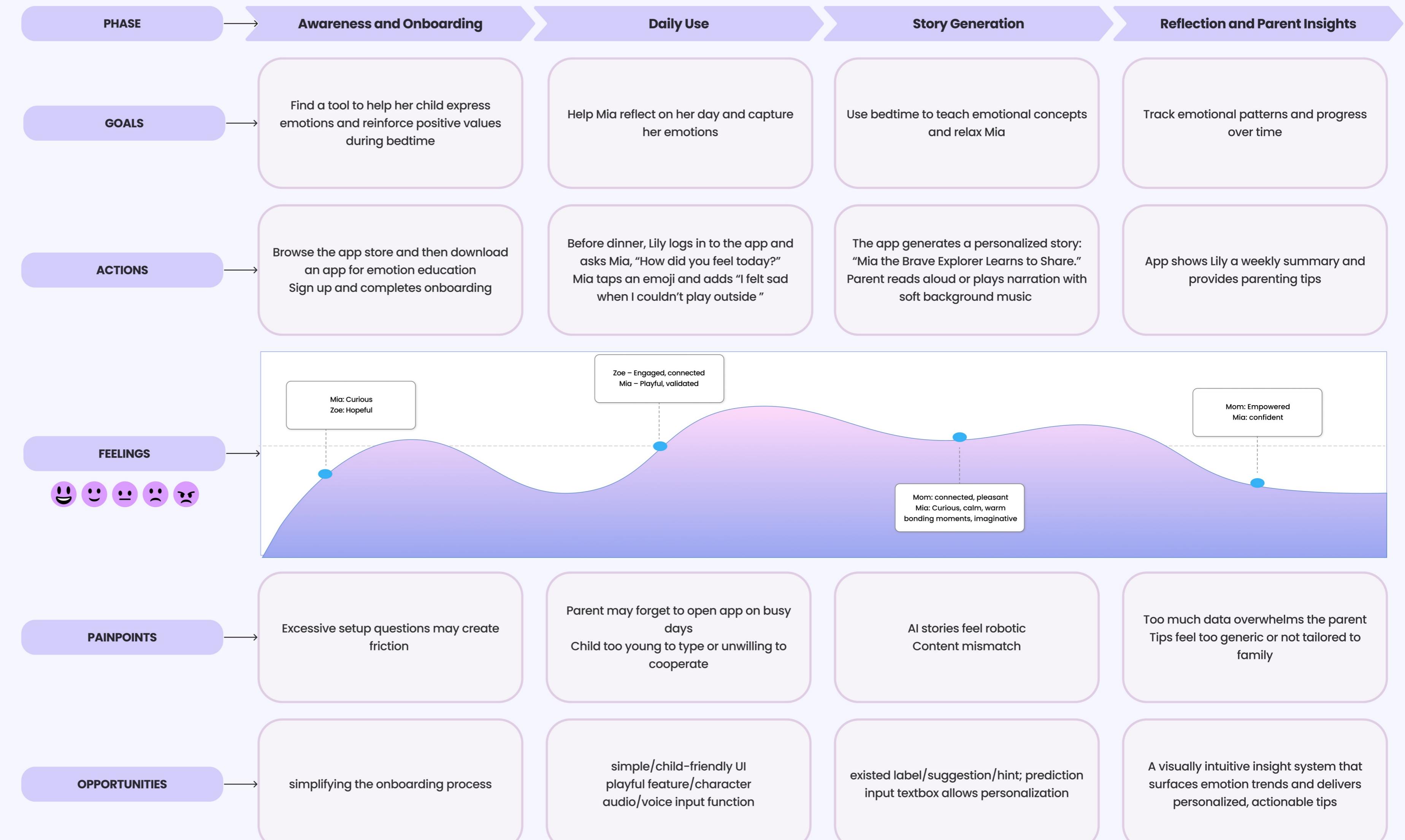
I don't know why I feel this way... can we just tell a story?

PAINPOINTS

Sensitive
Curious
Playful
Connected
Imaginative

JOURNEYMAP

I create a journey map to visualize the end-to-end experience of parents and children using Moodie Tales, helping to identify goals, emotions, and pain points at each stage so that design opportunities could be uncovered and prioritized.



HMW

HMW help young children express emotions naturally through daily interactions?



By designing playful, age-appropriate rituals that turn emotions into stories, not lessons.

HMW turn everyday emotions into personalized, emotionally resonant stories?

By using AI to craft warm, human-feeling narratives that reflect the child's real emotional world.



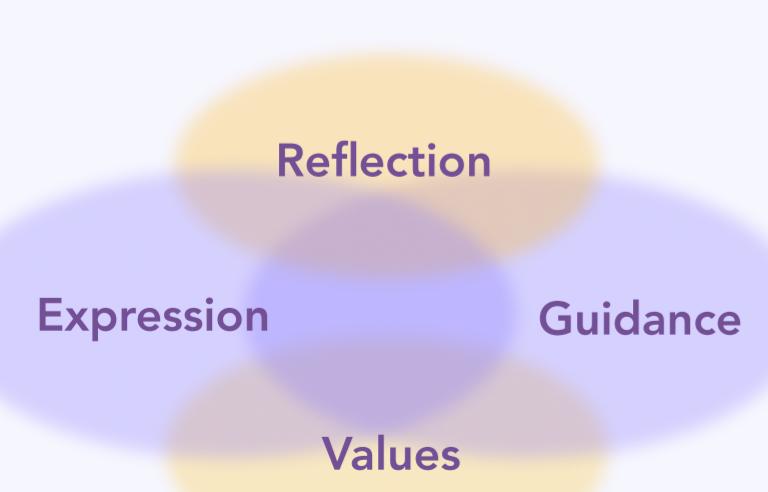
HMW support parents in emotional learning without adding cognitive load?



By offering co-creation tools and automated insights that feel intuitive, not instructional.

HMW empower families to reinforce shared values through storytelling?

By embedding universal themes like kindness or bravery naturally into personalized stories, so families can reflect on values together without needing explicit tagging.



- Emotional Expression**
- Story as Reflection**
- Light-touch Parenting**
- Values & Connection**

FURTHER RESEARCH

AI Storytelling & Early Learning

A 2024 systematic review^[2] concluded that **AI-driven storytelling tools** significantly improve early childhood language acquisition, literacy, and cognitive-emotional development. Features like **Interactivity**, **Personalization**, and **Adaptability** were identified as key educational enhancers across diverse learning environments.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

	Story Spark	Moshi Kids	StoryTime AI
Interface			
Usability	Create unique & personalized stories with custom characters, magical plots	A sleep-focused app that uses calming audio stories and meditations to help children relax	a personalized literacy platform, inspires a love of reading by bringing your child's unique stories to life
Pros	Emphasizes imagination and creativity for children, supporting co-creation	Large content library: 400+ audio tracks	Supports multiple languages, increasing accessibility
Cons	Focuses mainly on creative storytelling, less on emotional development or SEL	Doesn't capture the child's daily emotional experience	Doesn't provide feedback, progress tracking, or emotional reflection
Design Opportunity	<p>Create an emotionally intelligent storytelling app that helps children aged 3-8 recognize and reflect on their daily feelings—while empowering parents with insights and reinforcing shared values through personalized bedtime stories</p>		

DESIGN GOALS

Primary User:
Children aged 3-8

Goal: Help children recognize, express, and reflect on emotions through imaginative, age-appropriate storytelling rituals.

Objective**Emotion Recognition****Imaginative Learning****Description**

Enable children to identify and label basic emotions using visual, audio, or character-based input

Use narrative as a medium for children to understand emotional experiences and values

Theoretical Support

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) & Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (learning through storytelling, pretend play)

Secondary User:
Parents/Caregivers

Goal: Support caregivers in understanding and guiding their child's emotional development—without increasing cognitive or emotional burden.

Objective**Emotional Trend Awareness****Description**

Visualize mood trends and emotional "spikes" over time through a clear dashboard

Theoretical Support

Parental Scaffolding & Reflective Parenting Models

Key Features

Emotion Input System

LLM-generated bedtime stories

Parent Dashboard

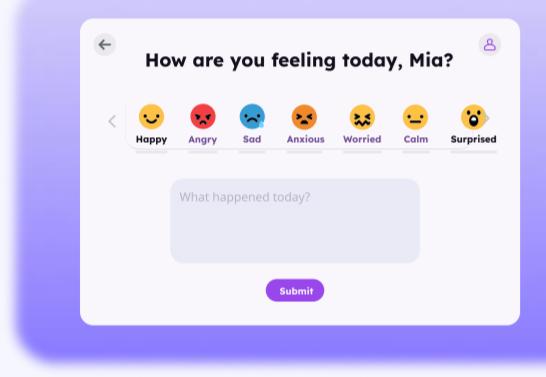
DESIGN ITERATION

This is an emotional learning app for children aged 3–8. Through daily mood check-ins, personalized bedtime stories, and parenting tips, it helps families support children's emotional growth and shared values.

Highlight Functionality



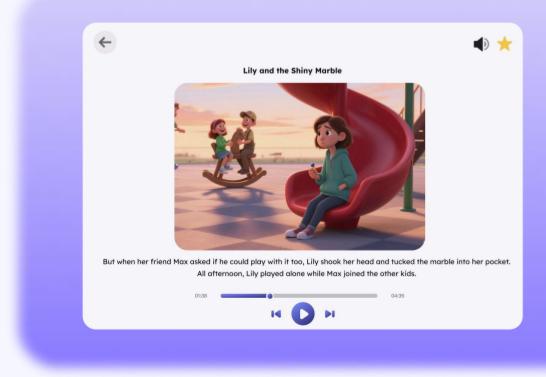
The Parent Dashboard gives parents a clear view of their child's emotional journey by turning daily moods and story interactions into easy-to-understand insights.



The Feeling screen allows children to record how they feel each day through simple emoji choices and short notes, making emotional expression easy and age-appropriate.



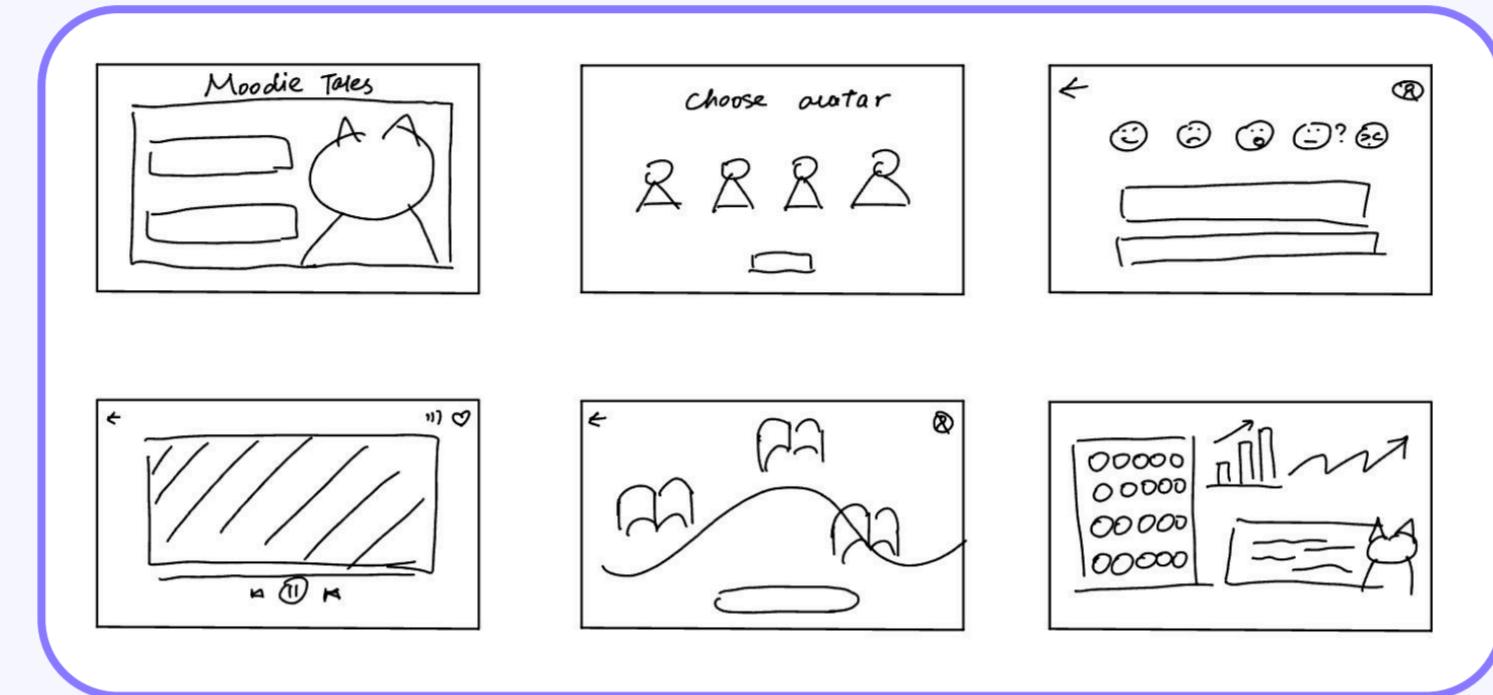
The Story Library organizes past stories along a playful journey map, helping families revisit previous experiences and track the child's emotional growth over time.



The Story Time screen transforms daily moods into engaging, illustrated narratives with narration, giving children a safe space to reflect and learn through storytelling.

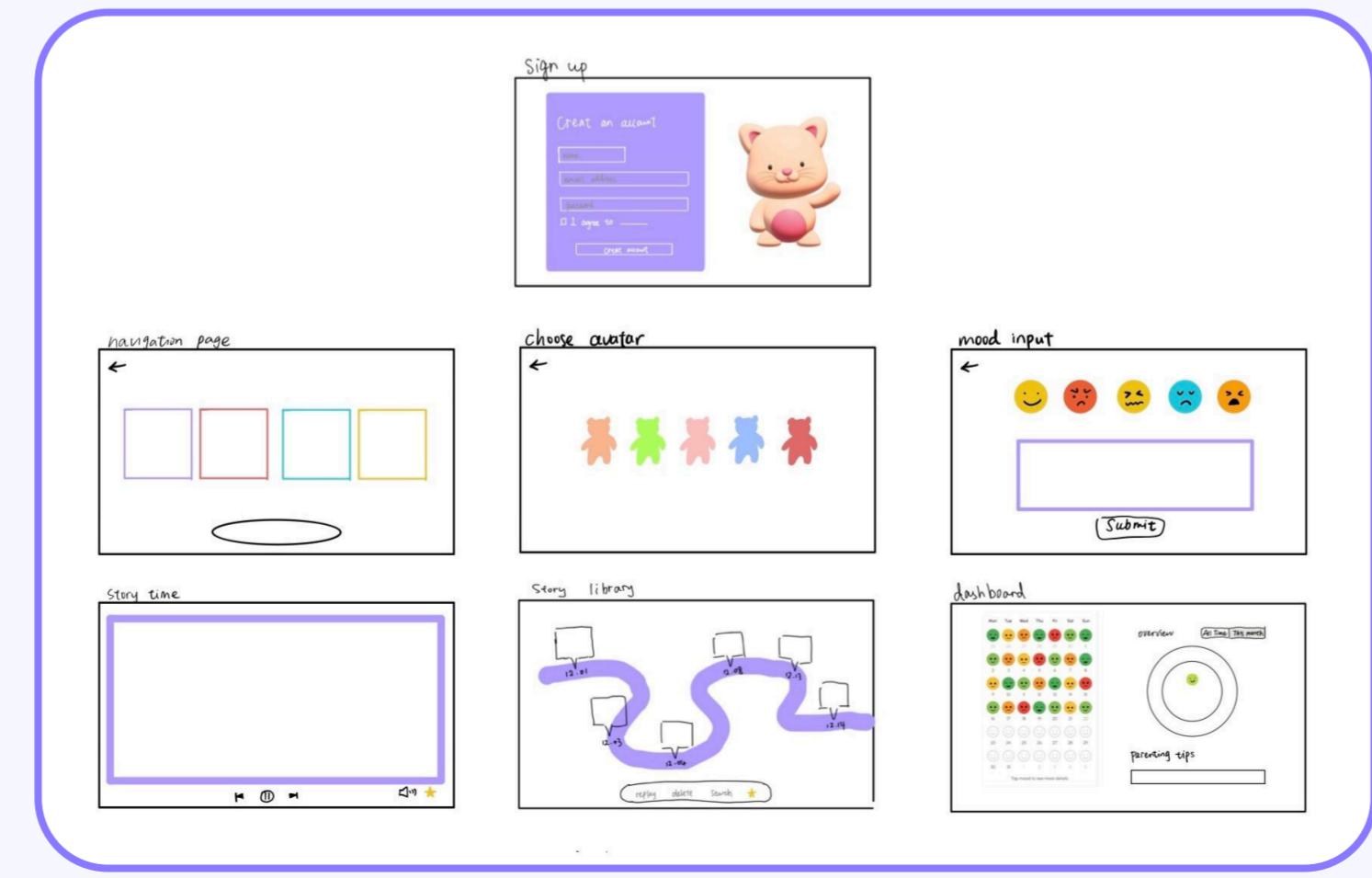
Sketches

Early sketches explored different layouts and flows for mood check-ins, character selection, story reading, and parent insights



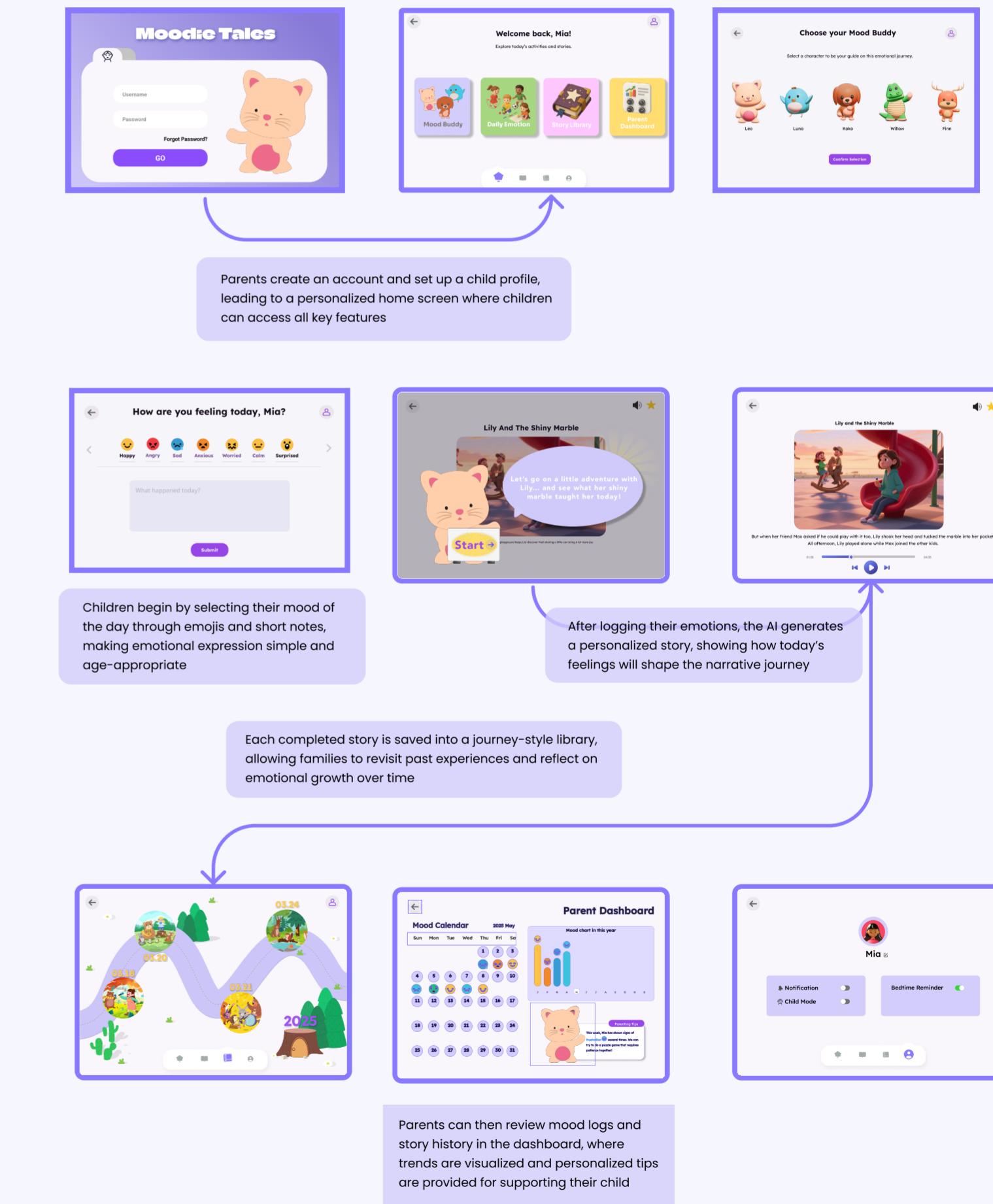
Wireframes

Wireframes translated these ideas into low-fidelity screens, defining navigation, interaction patterns, and key functions before visual design



First design

I translated initial wireframes into high-fidelity designs, focusing on child-friendly visuals, intuitive flows, and a balanced experience for both children and parents.



USABILITY TEST

Usability testing with parents and children was conducted to evaluate how easily they could navigate Moodie Tales and to gather insights for improving clarity, engagement, and overall user experience.

What worked

- Cute and easy-to-read mood calendar design
- Engaging story flow with illustrations and narration
- Parents appreciated the clear structure of onboarding and navigation
- Children enjoyed interacting with Mood Buddy and selecting emotions

Need to improve

- Story timeline felt disconnected because nodes used generic drawings
- Parent dashboard felt overloaded with data, making it harder to spot trends quickly
- Parents wanted a more practical way to share data
- Younger children occasionally found it unclear what to do after mood selection

Questions

- Can stories be saved or shared with teachers/family in an easy way?
- How can children be guided if they don't recognize a complex emotion?
- Could parents adjust how much data/insight they see on the dashboard?

Ideas

- Replace generic icons in story progress map with real story thumbnails for clarity
- Provide monthly exportable reports (PDF) for parents to share with educators
- Simplify dashboard with clearer hierarchy and optional detail toggles



FEEDBACK

Parents

"The mood calendar is cute and easy to read, but I'd like a monthly PDF summary I can save or share with a teacher."



Children

"I like the drawings, but I wish the story timeline showed the real stories I've read, so it feels more connected to my days."



Parents value exportable data for broader emotional tracking



Using recognizable story thumbnails for clarity and relevance

FEATURE UPDATE

Before & After

Case 1: Story Progress Map



- What:** Progress nodes updated to display thumbnails from the real stories.
- How:** Each checkpoint now uses the first illustration of the corresponding story, with simplified path visuals and lighter background bubbles.
- Why:** Helps children and parents easily recognize "which story was read on which day," while reducing visual clutter and improving usability.

Case 2: Parent Dashboard



- What:** Layout adjusted for clearer separation of mood calendar, mood chart, and parenting tips.

- How:** Increased spacing and hierarchy, with chart emphasized visually; parenting tip card anchored in the bottom-right corner.

- Why:** Makes emotional trends easier to interpret at a glance, lowers cognitive load, and helps parents focus on key insights without feeling overwhelmed.

FINAL DESIGN

UI Elements

Color Palette



Primary Buttons



Secondary Buttons



Typography

H1, Climate Crisis, 150px regular

H2, Climate Crisis, 100px regular

H3, Lexend, 74px bold

H4, Lexend, 70px bold

H5, Lexend, 52px medium

Body, Lexend, 30px regular

Main Characters



Friendly mood buddies designed to guide children through emotional learning with warmth, playfulness, and trust



REFLECTION

Designing Moodie Tales highlighted the need to balance playful engagement for children with simplicity and clarity for parents. A key challenge was delivering meaningful emotional insights without overwhelming users, which shaped iterations in visual hierarchy and interaction design. Future improvements could include more interactive storytelling, a more adaptable parent dashboard, and potential integration with educators.

