



User Research Report



Released April 15, 2019

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Background	2
Methods Overview	2
Secondary Research & Interviews	3
Thematic Analysis	3
Competitive Analysis	4
Secondary Research & Interview Findings	4
Design Requirements Summary	9
Competitive Analysis Findings	10
Competitor Comparison Table	10
Competitor Product Analysis	11
References	16
Appendix: Thematic Analysis	17

Introduction

This report contains the background, methods, and findings of our user research, which was conducted with two main objectives. Our primary aim was to solidify BoBo's audio content by interviewing therapists and teachers about dialogue that helps children recognize, communicate, and manage their emotions. Secondly, we wanted to validate the physical form of BoBo as well as the emotions represented on the different limbs.

Background

We are designing and refining an interactive teddy bear, named BoBo, that helps children recognize, communicate, and regulate their emotions at home. BoBo is an emotion-teaching teddy bear, parenting tool, and snuggle buddy that supports children of early ages in learning to identify, convey, and cope with their emotions.

Previously, we conducted ethnographic observations and interviews to understand patterns of early brain development, children's difficulties with emotional regulation, and parent's pain points regarding their children's emotional wellness. Based on our past research findings, we formed a list of product specifications that led to the creation of BoBo. For this report, we used these product specifications in our competitive analysis to understand how competing products compare to BoBo. Though this previous research informed BoBo's physicality and features, we are revisiting the user research process to create the audio content.

Methods Overview

Our primary research methods were secondary research and interviews; both of which directly influenced BoBo's design requirements via thematic analysis. Our secondary method was competitive analysis, which contextualized BoBo in the current market.

Through these methods, we sought to answer the following research questions:

What methods do health professionals employ to support young children's emotional development? How can we translate relevant methods used in the therapy space into a product used in the home space? How can we refine BoBo's design to help parents better support their children's emotional needs? How can BoBo's content effectively educate parents about emotional development in an easily digestible way? What similar products currently exist in the marketplace?

Secondary Research & Interviews

For our secondary research, we aggregated scholarly articles both from online and through our network at Seattle Children's Hospital. To extrapolate relevant findings, we took notes on information that helped us answer the following questions:

Why is emotional development important, especially for children?

Purpose: to validate our design problem

Why is our approach effective?

Purpose: to validate existing product specifications and/or age group

What methods are proven to be effective for emotional development?

Purpose: to explore audio content ideas and frameworks that are proven to be effective

Ultimately, our secondary research gave us background on how children emotionally develop as well as specific techniques therapists and caretakers employ to support children's emotional wellness.

For our interviews, we recruited professionals who support children's emotional wellbeing and development on a daily basis. We interviewed three professionals: a physical therapist from Seattle Children's, a preschool teacher, and a child and family counselor. This diverse set of interviews allowed us to understand and contextualize methods of emotional development and regulation in therapy and school settings. Through these interviews, we aimed to understand participants' insights on challenges and approaches related to children's emotional behavior and development. We also learned about tools and methods therapists and teachers currently use to support the emotional needs of their patients or students, respectively.

Each of these interviews were semi-structured. We collaboratively constructed relevant questions based on the participants' profession and asked follow-up questions on interesting insights or for clarification. During each interview, we designated a team member to facilitate and another team member to take notes. The note-taker was responsible for cleaning up the notes, which were later interpreted during thematic analysis.

Thematic Analysis

After conducting our user research, we used thematic analysis to identify salient findings and design requirements. We began by compiling our secondary research and interview notes into one document. Each team member then read through the document to identify prevalent themes; afterwards, we aggregated our own themes into one overall list: benefits of emotional intelligence, parent/child interactions, physical form, screen time, age range, behavioral methods, visual representation, curriculum, pain points, dialogue/discussion methods, emotions, and market considerations.

We then color coded and sorted our notes based on these themes (see the Appendix for

reference). By organizing our evidence in this way, we were able to recognize patterns within and across thematic categories. These patterns ultimately enabled us to extrapolate findings and create corresponding design requirements.

Competitive Analysis

We also conducted competitive analysis to analyze existing products and to contextualize how the design of BoBo thus far adds to the current market. Ultimately, conducting competitive analysis of similar products helped differentiate BoBo from its competitors.

We defined a competitor as a product that addresses children's emotions, prioritizing products that share a similar form of a plush toy and/or goal of encouraging the development of emotional intelligence. After finding products that were conceptually similar to BoBo, we compared each competitor to the product specifications that BoBo addresses. We then listed which of BoBo's specifications the product met and which specifications the product did not meet. By analyzing competitors that relate to these existing product specifications, we were able to identify the market need that BoBo addresses.

Secondary Research & Interview Findings

After conducting thematic analysis across both secondary research and three interviews, we extrapolated ten salient findings. For each finding, we highlight evidence that supports the finding, followed by a design requirement(s).

1. Physical Form. Due to the ways children develop and the negative effects of screen time, emotional literacy is best taught through play and social interactions as opposed to digital media. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, skills such as emotion regulation "are best taught through unstructured and social play" [1]. Thus, products designed to support children's' emotion regulation should encourage social play without the use of a digital interface. This is due to the raised concern about using media as an emotion coping tool. The American Academy of Pediatrics also states that "using media as strategy to calm could lead to... the inability of children to develop their own emotion regulation" [1]. Instead, parents and caretakers can employ a variety of physical tools that are used to help children's emotion regulation. One common tool children gravitate towards when feeling uncomfortable emotions is a stuffed toy. When asked about how students calm down after experiencing uncomfortable emotions, a preschool teacher we interviewed, Sally, recalled her students "taking belly breaths, closing their eyes, cuddling a stuffed animal, or reading a book."

To best support social play and limits on screen time, BoBo will take the physical form of a stuffed bear and will not require children to interact with a digital interface.

2. Visual Representation of Emotions. Visual representations of facial expressions allow children to recognize and label different emotions. Understanding the range of one's emotions is crucial for developing one's emotional intelligence. In both therapy and educational settings, almost all curriculums built for emotional development employ visualizations in forms like posters, cards, or emotion wheels to help children place their emotions. In our interview with Dennis, a child therapist, he recounted that a common tool in counseling centers is a "big poster showing all the emotions. Visuals of other people's faces allow children to point to one and say 'that's me, that's how i feel'". When speaking with Angela, another child therapist, she was able to list a variety of existing tools used in the therapy space. These tools included emotion wheels that use color association to help children place their emotions as well as cards with facial expressions. These visualizations are crucial because visual emotional cues are how children learn to recognize feelings. When Sally, another interviewee, asks her preschool students, "how do you know this person is feeling mad?", they might respond by saying, "Well his face is like tough and his hands are in fists."

To remain consistent with proven therapeutic and educational practices, BoBo will include visual representations of each emotion, particularly via facial expressions and color associations.

3. Child/Parent Attachment. The involvement of parents is the most important factor affecting children's emotional development, magnifying the importance of co-play. Skills such as emotional intelligence are nurtured through human interaction and "for children, the most important human interactions happen with their parents" [2]. Moreover, the dialogue children hear from caretakers (parents, guardians, etc.) about emotions directly influences the child's emotional literacy [3]. As previously explored through the parent/child attachment theory, fostering the emotional development of a child requires the prolonged involvement of their parents. Dennis, a child counselor we interviewed, spoke to the unequivocal role parents play in their child's emotional development. According to him, "the fundamental building block is... the parent showing the child how special and loved they are".

Because the involvement of parents is so crucial in fostering children's emotional development, BoBo will support parent and child co-play, thereby emphasizing the importance of parent/child attachment.

4. Emotional Security. Emotional security is crucial to the emotional development of a child, and occurs when children feel that their emotions are valid. Both health professionals and educators emphasize the importance of communicating and talking through uncomfortable emotions. However, talking about emotions can be difficult, and requires the "kids to know that it's safe, and that feelings can be shared" (Dennis). To foster this safe environment, it is important for caretakers to label and validate the emotion a child is feeling, helping them recognize and tease out the differences in their own emotions. In the emotion coaching curriculum provided by Seattle Children's Hospital, the first step is to label and validate a child's emotions. This practice is

important because it shows the child that their caretaker is empathizing with them as well as validating their emotional experience [4]. One of Gottman's five steps of emotional coaching is to listen and validate children's feelings, encouraging parents to "reflect back what you hear, thus telling your child you understand what they're seeing and experiencing" [5].

To mirror these emotion coaching techniques, BoBo will label emotions through text and audio to encourage children's emotion recognition. Moreover, with the goal of fostering a safe space where children can confidently share their emotions, BoBo's audio content will include phrases to validate the child's emotions.

5. Free Emotional Expression. Health professionals and teachers encourage dialogue to create a safe space for children to talk about their feelings. In fact, "the most efficient method of emotional self control is not suppressing emotions, but integrating them within the interpretation process" [6]. Many research-based methods like emotion coaching—defined as such by both Gottman and Seattle Children's—encourage parents to openly engage in conversations with their child about feelings. Additionally, these methods are reflected in the interactions of both health professionals and teachers. With therapists trained to create these safe spaces and preschool methods of "a lot of talking and communicating what they're feeling", as stated by Sally, a preschool teacher, this finding emphasizes the importance of welcoming the "feelings conversation" in the first place. She would encourage open-ended prompts like "why are you frustrated?" and "how can we make you feel better?", a child will be more inclined to start discussing their emotions.

To address the pattern of emotional expression as a step toward fostering emotional intelligence, BoBo will encourage children to openly express their emotions. Additionally, to emulate the dialogue used to promote free emotional expression, BoBo will talk to the child (in second person), instead of acting as the child; thereby imitating a casual, approachable conversation.

6. Behavioral Coping Mechanisms. Child therapists and teachers encourage children to practice diaphragmatic breathing, or belly breaths, to cope with difficult emotions. All of our interview participants mentioned breathing exercises as a behavioral coping mechanism when dealing with more negative emotions. Dennis, a child and family counselor, defines belly breathing (kids) or diaphragmatic breathing (adults) as a coping method when you "breathe deep into your belly, breathe in through the nose, hold it, and then breathe out through your nose." This mechanism has a physiological response of calming heightened emotions and anxiety. A preschool teacher, Angela, also utilizes belly breathing in the classroom as an actionable step for children to calm down. She explains that if a child feels uncomfortable or has difficulty controlling their emotions, she will ask them "to take some belly breaths, calm down, and once you're ready, join us." This participant went on to express the efficacy of this method, saying that afterwards "they calm down really fast". Anglea, a physical therapist, also mentioned breathing exercises, yet with different terminology—during sessions, she tells children to "fill up your balloon and pop it".

To incorporate behavioral coping mechanisms used in both classroom and therapy settings, BoBo will encourage belly breaths as a coping mechanism. Meanwhile, BoBo can introduce this physiological effective method to families at home, so parents are better equipped to navigate their children's emotional needs..

7. Autonomy in Emotional Problem Solving. As encouraged by research based curriculum, therapists and teachers support children's autonomy by allowing children to find solutions to problems on their own. In both Gottman's and Seattle Children's methods of emotion coaching, they highlight the importance of working with children to navigate their emotions and problem solve, emphasizing that emotion coaching is a collaborative effort [4, 5]. Seattle Children's recommends that parents "Work with [their] child to come up with solutions to deal with or prevent problems next time" [4]. Our second participant, Sally, mentioned that preschool teachers are "encouraged to not solve [children's] problems" and instead let the child devise their own solutions. This idea was further echoed by Dennis, a child and family counselor, who stated that "in research the most important concept is 'being with', which also entails the parent figuring out their child's emotion *with* them".

To respect children's emotional autonomy, BoBo will teach parents to allow children to suggest their own solutions for their emotional needs. Additionally, BoBo's audio content will prompt children to start thinking about solutions.

8. Emotions. Six emotions are commonly expressed by young children in school and therapy settings: happy, sad, mad, excited, frustrated, and scared. Though others emerged during our research of what emotions are understood and expressed by young children—namely jealous, disappointed, and shameful—the aforementioned six emotions were most prevalent across our three interviews. In her work with young kids as a Seattle Children's therapist, Angela, our first interviewee, named seven feelings her patients frequently express: happy, sad, mad, excited, frustrated, scared, and tired. She specifically called out the need for children to tease out the differences between mad and frustrated and between happy and excited. Without understanding the nuances of what they're feeling, Angela explained, children won't be able to adequately cope. Another participant, Sally, recognized the emotions commonly exhibited by her class of preschool children: happiness, sadness, anger, excitement, fear, frustration, and disappointment. Moreover, when asked what emotions children commonly express during his counselling sessions, Dennis listed sadness, shame, anger, fear, joy, and delight. In particularly tough cases, children "can have intense feelings of sadness, anxiety, and rejection." Overall, although children can potentially feel a wide plurality of emotions, six emotions are regularly recognized by toddlers and young children, according to our research.

To ensure our product meets children's needs, BoBo will incorporate (yet not be restricted to) the following emotions: happy, sad, mad, excited, frustrated, and scared. In future co-design sessions with health professionals and children, we will determine whether a seventh emotion should be accommodated (to coincide with BoBo's seven body parts).

9. Parent Education on Children's Emotional Needs. Parents are often unprepared or uneducated on how to best support their child's emotional needs. In other words, many parents lack awareness about how to approach their children's emotions—if they even know to do so in the first place. During each of our three interviews, participants discussed this challenge. One participant, Angela, called out the lack of accessible resources on this topic, asking, "What if your child is having trouble expressing their emotions... where do you go?" According to Angela, many of the families she interacts with are uninformed about the association between certain behavioral cues and their underlying emotional cause. Sally, another interviewee, further validated this knowledge gap by stating, "parents don't know how to handle kids when they're going through uncomfortable feelings." During our last interview, Dennis shared a similar sentiment; in his experience, "sometimes parents feel uncomfortable handling their children's range of emotions, or don't think about it." Among the vast range of parent responsibilities—including feeding, bathing, and ensuring the safety of their child—fostering their emotional wellbeing is relatively neglected.

To combat unawareness on this subject, BoBo will educate parents on methods to support their children's emotional needs. This information could potentially be embedded in a parent pamphlet or website that accompanies BoBo.

10. Target Age. In addition to having differing cognitive and physical abilities, infants and toddlers express and regulate their emotions in disparate ways. Thus, to adequately support children's emotional needs, products for toddlers must be uniquely tailored to their age range. Our first participant, Angela, who has worked with children ages 0 to 18, identified this discrepancy by stating that emotional regulation and communication "changes a lot between ages." She went on to discuss some unique features of products designed for infants, ranging from audio consisting of primarily sounds (rather than verbiage) and weighted blankets for comfort; toddlers, on the other hand, don't necessarily benefit from such features. In addition, parts of our secondary research revealed the unique abilities of different age groups. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign, children are only able to get excited around other children, demonstrate defiant behavior, say short sentences, and follow simple instructions by age two [7].

To maximize our product's potential impact, BoBo will be specifically designed for children ages two and up. In other words, BoBo's features will not be catered toward infants' particular needs. Moreover, we will adhere to industry standards by not setting a maximum age for our product's target audience—after all, many of the products we explored during our competitive analysis follow this structure.

Design Requirements Summary

Below is a list of our design requirements and the finding each corresponds to. Going forward, we will be creating our audio content and refining the physicality of the bear based on the following:

- BoBo will avoid digital interfaces by creating a stuffed toy (F1)
- BoBo will include visual representations of each emotion, via facial expressions and color association (F2)
- BoBo will support parent/child attachment through co-play (F3)
- BoBo will label emotions through text and audio (F4)
- BoBo will create a safe space by validating children's emotions (F4)
- BoBo will encourage children to engage in dialogue and emulate casual conversation by talking to children in the second person (F5)
- BoBo will encourage belly breaths as a coping mechanism (F6)
- BoBo will prompt children to start brainstorming their own solutions and encourage parents to do the same (F7)
- BoBo will include (yet not be restricted to) the following emotions: happy, sad, mad, excited, frustrated, and scared (F8)
- BoBo will educate parents on methods to support children's emotional needs (F9)
- BoBo will exclude infants, focusing instead on children ages 2+ (F10)

Competitive Analysis Findings

The secondary component of our user research is competitive analysis. In this section, we summarize key correlations in a Competitor Comparison Table and include an in-depth product analysis.

Competitor Comparison Table

The following competitor comparison table illustrates whether or not each competing product meets the product specifications that stemmed from our original user research.

	My Special Aflac Duck	Moodsters	Daniel Tiger for Parents	LeapFrog My Pal Scout	Worry Eater
<i>Product Specifications</i>					
Prioritizes the development of emotional intelligence	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Encourages parent-child communication of emotions	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Provides interactive feedback (through physical audible features)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Supports parents' limits on screen time	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Includes representation/ visualization of emotions	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Supports a wide range of emotions in a single product	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Supports child attachment to parent through play	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Educates parents about emotional development	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
<i>Other Considerations</i>					
Price	\$200 (production); \$0 (patients)	\$12 - \$56	\$0	\$22	\$23
Audience	Children w/ cancer ages 3+	Ages 3+	Ages 3+	6-36 months	Young children/ Parents
Form	Toy + App + cards	Variety of products	App	Plush toy w/ parent app	Plush toy

Competitor Product Analysis

The following section provides a more in-depth analysis of five competing products: My Special Aflac Duck, Moodsters' toys, the Daniel Tiger for Parents app, LeapFrog My Pal Scout, and Worry Eaters. For each product, we provide a brief summary of the product, a list of the product specifications that are met or unmet, and a description of how the product differs from BoBo.

My Special Aflac Duck

The Aflac Childhood Cancer Campaign has introduced My Special Aflac Duck, a comfort companion that is a combination of a robot, toy, and medical device. My Special Aflac Duck is designed for children with cancer, aiming to enable children with cancer to play, engage, and connect through medical play. This interactive companion “mirrors young patients' moods, endures the same painful therapies and dances, quacks and nuzzles to help comfort children when they need it most” [8]. Children can place emoji cards on the duck to communicate how they feel and for the duck to emulate their emotion. Additionally, the second component, a digital app, uses augmented reality to allow the child to mimic care routines.

Specifications Met

- Encourages parent-child communication of emotions through emoji cards
- Provides interactive feedback through the duck's physical movements and sounds (quacks)
- Support parents' limits on screen time
- Includes representation/visualization of emotions through emoji cards and physical feature of the Aflac Duck being able to mimic that emotion
- Supports multiple emotions in a single product through 7 emoji cards: happy, silly, scared, nauseous, angry, calm, sad

Specifications Unmet

- Does not prioritize the development of emotional intelligence and instead focuses on coping with emotions rather than teaching of emotions
- Does not support child attachment to parent through play by prioritizing the duck as a stand-alone product rather than joint engagement with child and parent
- Does not educate parents about emotional development with no content or tool that is for the parent

Differentiation

The Aflac duck is an interactive tool that exclusively supports children who are coping with cancer. On the other hand, BoBo is intended to support the emotional intelligence of all children. Additionally, the Aflac duck serves its primary goal by helping children cope with their emotions through lifelike behaviors like taking deep breaths. BoBo instead aims to help children recognize, communicate, *and* cope with their emotions, specifically through emoticons, color association, and audio feedback.

Moodsters

Moodsters is a brand that features personified emotion characters that educate and entertain children about five emotions: happy, angry, afraid, love, and sad. Through the use of these characters, stories, and toys, Moodsters aims to help children understand their emotions, learn to communicate them, and practice strategies to handle challenges. These characters are present throughout the wide range of products sold, ranging from notebooks to yoga mats. [9]

Specifications Met

- Supports parents' limits on screen time by offering products such as books, notebooks, and physical toys that do not include screens
- Includes representations of emotions and emotion regulation through the use of characters visualizing different emotions
- Prioritizes the development of emotional intelligence by aiming to improve the social and emotional development of calming techniques
- Supports nonverbal communication by having toys such as the "Moodster Meter" which allows children to non-verbally express their emotions
- Educates parents about emotional development through an online blog that provides techniques, resources, and tools to support their children
- Provides interactive feedback by having products such as the "Moodster Mirror" that elicits audio messages when the child turns a dial on the mirror

Specifications Unmet

- Does not support a wide range of emotions in one product, and instead focuses on five emotions across many different products

Differentiation

Though the underlying goal of enhancing the social and emotional development of children is directly correlated, BoBo employs a different approach to help children navigate their emotions. In particular, BoBo does not aim to personify emotions into characters; instead, BoBo embodies all of the emotions in a single toy. The advantage of this feature is that customers will not need to purchase more than one BoBo to be educated on a plurality of emotions. Moreover, Moodsters use a narrative approach, pairing plush toys with an activity book. On the other hand, BoBo stands alone and encourages open play to support emotional intelligence.

Daniel Tiger for Parents App

The Daniel Tiger for Parents app supports parents in fostering their children's social and emotional growth. Based on the popular PBS KIDS series, Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, the app features 38 of the show's songs (and videos) to help parents and children navigate feelings, confidence, self-control, new experiences, responsibility, and kindness. Parents can access over

90 conversation starters and tips to understand how and when to use the songs with their children [10].

Specifications Met

- Prioritizes the development of emotional intelligence by featuring songs to help children learn about and cope with various emotions
- Encourages child-parent attachment and communication, particularly by offering conversation starters for parents
- Provides interactive audio feedback by including songs kids can sing along to
- Includes some visual representation of emotions by incorporating illustrations of the show's animated characters depicting various facial expressions
- Supports many emotions in a single product, including feeling jealous, disappointed, frustrated, mad, and sad
- Educates parents about emotional development by reminding parents that children can have trouble expressing their feelings and encouraging parents to practice emotion expression with their children

Specifications Unmet

- Does not support some parents' limits on screen time

Differentiation

The most apparent distinction between BoBo and the Daniel Tiger for Parents app is the physical form. Though BoBo's features are manifested as a soft teddy bear, Daniel Tiger for Parents is exclusively digital; thus, if parents choose to limit their children's exposure to screens, as many do, kids may gain relatively less value from the app than a stuffed toy. Moreover, while BoBo aims to begin fostering emotional intelligence in the first three years of a child's life—the most critical stage for brain development—the Daniel Tiger for Parents app is catered toward older children, as it heavily relies on the memorization of catchy song lyrics. Since BoBo also integrates visual cues (namely distinct colors and facial expressions) to promote early learning of emotion recognition skills, our product is appropriate for a younger age group. Lastly, though the app helps children navigate a wide range of experiences (including saying goodbye, exploring nature, and trying new foods), BoBo's focus is more targeted on emotional wellness.

LeapFrog My Pal Scout

Leapfrog My Pal Scout is a personalizable, learning toy that teaches a variety of concepts, including counting, colors, emotions, and first words and phrases. Scout includes musicality to help children sleep and to encourage children to sing along, focusing on developing early language skills. Furthermore, the product is paired with an application that allows parents to customize Scout, allowing them to change the songs played and embed their child's name [11].

Specifications Met

- Provides interactive feedback through audible features and light from the buttons
- Support parents' limit on screen time
- Support child attachment to parent through play

Specifications Unmet

- Does not prioritize the development of emotional intelligence and instead focuses on language and arithmetic
- Does not include representation/visualization of regulating emotions
- Does not supports multiple emotions in a single product or a wide range of emotions/scenarios
- Encourages verbal communication of developing language skills, yet does not encourage parent-child communication of emotions specifically
- Does not educate parents about emotional intelligence

Differentiation

The physicality of BoBo and Leapfrog My Pal Scout apply similar concepts of buttons on different parts of the plush toy. However, the content and goal of the products are very different. BoBo focuses on emotional intelligence and early emotional development, while Leapfrog My Pal Scout focuses on other skills like language and arithmetic development. BoBo emphasizes the importance of emotional development, which is not reflected in this specific product or the market in general.

Worry Eaters

The Worry Eaters are a collection of plush toy monsters who have zippers for mouths. Children are encouraged to write down or draw their worries on a piece of paper and put it in the Worry Eater so that it “eats” the problem. Later, parents can go back and look at what their child wrote down to uncover the root of the problem and try to solve it [12].

Specifications Met

- Supports parents' limits on screen time, since the stuffed toys do not require the use of any accompanying app or website
- Supports nonverbal communication by encouraging children to share their feelings through writing or drawing

Specifications Unmet

- Does not prioritize the development of emotional intelligence since it does not teach children to recognize, communicate, or manage emotions
- Does not provide any interactive feedback, as the product is a static plush toy
- Does not support child attachment through play by supporting only one interaction and not encouraging this play to parents

- Does not include any visual representation of emotions by having a static “face” on the product that does not represent any single emotion
- Does not support a wide range of emotions, since Worry Eaters only addresses one emotion: worried
- Does not educate parents about emotional development because it does not provide any guidance on how to use the product to support their child’s emotional needs

Differentiation

Although BoBo and the Worry Eaters are both plush toys that aim to improve the emotional well-being of children, the two products have very different goals. The Worry Eaters provide a very focused interaction: writing down a worry and putting it in the monster’s mouth. Unlike BoBo, the Worry Eaters do not encourage children to recognize or differentiate between their emotions. BoBo does so by including emoticons, colors, and audio feedback to help children identify various emotions. The two products also take very different approaches to help young children cope with their feelings. On one hand, the Worry Eaters encourage children to tuck their worries away, with the toy acting as a safekeeper for their problem. On the other hand, BoBo encourages children to openly express and cope with their emotions, thereby drawing from methods adapted from therapy techniques and literature.

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Appendix: Thematic Analysis

Themes

Benefits of E.I (social, emotional, performance)
Parent/child interactions and conversations
Physical form
Screen time
Age range
Behavioral methods
Visual representation
Curriculum
Pain points
Dialogue/discussion methods
Emotions
Market considerations

Interview: Therapist

Participant: Angela

Background

- PT in pediatrics only
- Started 0-18 (all kids)
- If you like connections with other people, worked closely with OTs
- Older kids do better with emotional expression
- Moved to early intervention (0-3)
 - At that age, a lot of our goals are just about overall development
 - Social, emotional, and adaptive skills
 - How they can communicate their needs
- Now just does 0-1 year olds
 - Where it all begins - parent/child connection is so crucial
 - Job to teach parents how to read child's nonverbal cues (in the NICU)
 - When babies are born early, crying isn't even part of their communication yet
 - Splaying fingers and stretching - sign of being overwhelmed
 - Or if they're breathing too fast
 - Help parents respond to that

Where parents learn about these cues

- Lack of resources
- Every family I interact with doesn't know about this
 - Sees stretching as cute, not informative

Alert Program

- OTs use it at SCH in Bothell
- Go to website to learn more!!
- Teach kids about their “engines”
 - Use different characters for younger kids
 - Tigger - wild
 - Eeyore - sad
 - Pooh - content
 - Older kids use colors - cutoff is around four years old
 - Green is good
 - Yellow is in between
 - Blue is not so good

Age Ranges

- Customizable is a good thing
- Emotional regulation/communication changes a lot between ages
- Our emotions are complex - kids don't understand a lot of them at a young age
- Infant
 - **Audio would be more sounds, rather than verbiage**
 - **White noise, waves crashing, shhhh**
 - If you could record the mom's voice singing to them
 - Focusing more on emotional regulation vs. emotional expression
- Talking about kids w/ autism or others where communication is a barrier
 - Kids are using dif forms of communication (ipads) at age 2 or 3
- If you're focusing on 0-5 year olds
 - Proud, jealous, embarrassed, and nervous - harder to comprehend
 - Younger kids - happy, sad, mad
 - You could try scared, but even that's kind of hard
 - **Tired** might be a good one
 - Often manifests as tantrums

Visuals are going to be really important for younger kids

Fine to leave the labels in there

- For infants and toddlers, add more visuals
 - Maybe add a mirror to the belly

Measuring Progress

- Primary outcome measures are not related to emotions, instead
- Neonatal behavioral assessment scale
 - Irritability, excitement, can they self sooth or do they need assistance, eye contact, etc.
- Older kids might have outcome measures?
 - Can connect to OTs to learn more

- Participation is a primary factor
 - Can kids participate with their family? Peers? Can they focus at school?
 - If not, they see them
- Goal attainment scaling
 - Work with family to set goals
 - Goal of get through recess without screaming at someone
 - Writes 5 levels to attain goal
 - 0 level is baseline - "George is not having healthy interactions with anyone at any time"

Challenges of Kids

- **Disconnect between parents and kids**
 - Really good that we're making this product
 - Deals with attachment
 - Hard to have a baby who is hooked up to IVs/wires and you can't hug them
 - Work on facilitating attachment at that age
- Exposure to substance abuse prenatally
 - Studies that demonstrate that affects their social and emotional skills later on
- Challenge of resources
 - What if your child is having trouble expressing their emotions? where do you go?

Emotions

- Mad is easiest to express
 - Much more salient - heart rate is faster...
- Happy is easy
- Sad comes a little bit later - need to tease out the difference between sad and mad
- If mom is frustrated, kid will internalize that as mad
 - Hard to kids to process other people's emotions
- Late elementary school is when kid would understand jealousy, etc. (like 3rd grade/4th grade and up)
 - More schools are starting to incorporate emotional teaching
- More applicable emotions
 - **Frustrated** - important to distinguish between mad and frustrated
 - A lot of kids who will need BoBo might be frustrated
 - Adding more positive emotions
 - **Excited** - hard to tease out b/t happy and excited
 - "I think excited would be a good one"
- Interesting research about how babies respond to their mother's voice (not dads)
 - Ask Angela for that research !!
 - **Volume matters - list different decibels and how babies respond**

Developing Audio

- Very different audio between coping vs. expressing
- Explore different interactions for different feedback
- “I think it would be very useful, not just in therapy.. It’s something our society is really lacking”
- Think about accessibility
 - If you want the dialogue part, it might not work for someone who is nonverbal
 - Someone with CP might not be able to press
 - Dial down to what is most important to you
- Good to think about whether it’s first person vs. third person
 - Talking to the kid vs. acting as the kid?
 - **For the kids who are nonverbal, typically make it in the first person - that is their voice**
 - Kids already respond so differently, you won’t be able to cater to everyone
- Work with HuskyADAPT to make toys accessible?

Products in Therapy/Retail

- Primary one is iPads or iPhones
- With the babies, use a lot of soothing tools
 - White noise makers, weighted Frobbies (blanket) over babies gives them comfort
 - If BoBo was heavy, that might be cool
- I think I saw a bear that looked like it had different things you could squeeze ? I’ll check back
- Emotion wheels
 - Wheel out of construction paper
 - Different colors w/ pointer
- Short breathing exercises
 - Bee breathing, fill up balloon and pop it - ask Angela

Limitations of BoBo

- In Seattle, limitation is language
 - If BoBo is only in English, that’s a big limitation
- Cost - how expensive will he be?
 - Could insurance pay for it?
- Could be cool to have BoBo at WIC centers (Women, Infants, and Children)
 - Strategically placing him around populations who need him
- If parents can record, we need to provide prompts (in the manual)

Boyer - teachers there would probably be happy to have us observe

Interview: Preschool Teacher

Participant: Sally

1. Can you talk about what a typical day in the classroom looks like?

Response:

- Schedule - come in, change shoes, wash hands, put things away
- They chose table activity
- Assembly
- We mostly do math in the morning counting activities
- Transition time where we give the kids activities like jumping
- Then we do concept studies: For example we did road study where they learn about roads
- Switch classes
- Center time for 45 minutes where they just play around at different centers

2. What is the age range and backgrounds of the children in your classroom?

a. Do you see any challenges the children are facing? If so what are they?

Response:

- 4-5 year olds , very diverse classroom
- A lot of challenges, because this is where we teach them to be human beings in the world
- We teach them how to be social and how to interact with other people
- In the beginning of the year we we have to take observations for each child to see what they need work on. All of them in the beginning need social/emotional which is how to manage feelings, how to interact with peers, how do they make friends, how do they talk about their emotions, what do they do to calm down. Because in the beginning they don't know, and their parents don't really teach them how to deal with their emotions

3. How do you work to support the emotional development of your students?

a. How do you measure progress or improvement?

Response:

- First we teach them through this curriculum called Second step, it's amazing. Each week we focus on one aspect, like this last week we talked about uncomfortable feelings: anger, frustration, disappointment, fear. We use a poster board for each week. For example when we did angry or frustrated we did a puppet show showing the characters get frustrated. We teach them how to recognize when someone is angry, in a sense we're teaching them emotional intelligence, it's called Emotional Que's and its important for them to recognize these emotions in other people as well that means they're growing.
- We ask them how do you guys think blank is feeling right now? And if they say "angry" we ask what is he doing that makes you think he's angry? And they might say "Well his face is

like tough and his hands are in fists.” And then we ask them “What do we do when we’re angry?”

We have what we call the calm down faze. First if it’s an uncomfortable feeling, we teach them to put their hands on their stomachs and say “stop”. Then we tell them to name their feeling so they would say “I’m mad”. Then after that we have them take belly breaths where they take at least three deep breaths in through their nose out of their mouth.

- Some kids come to the teacher to solve problems but we want them to solve their own problems. So we ask them “how would you solve this?”
- We measure progress through bands and we document them in our learning strategies in the report cards. There are different bands, and we are on the blue band.

Progress bands they need to progress through them through the year:

a. Manages feelings

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Uses adult support to calm self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calms self when touched gently, patted, massaged, rocked, or hears a soothing voice • Turns away from source of overstimulation and cries, but is soothed by being picked up 		Comforts self by seeking out special object or person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets teddy bear from cubby when upset • Sits next to favorite adult when sad 		Is able to look at a situation differently or delay gratification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the block area is full, looks to see what other areas are available • Scowls and says, “I didn’t get to paint this morning.” Pauses and adds, “I have an idea. I can paint after snack.” 		Controls strong emotions in an appropriate manner most of the time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asserts, “I’m mad. You’re not sharing the blocks! I’m going to play with the ramps.” • Says, “I’m so excited! We’re going to the zoo today!” while jumping up and down 	

b. Responds to emotional cues

Not Yet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Reacts to others’ emotional expressions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cries when hears an adult use an angry tone of voice • Smiles and turns head to look at person laughing • Moves to adult while watching another child have a tantrum 		Demonstrates concern about the feelings of others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings a crying child’s blanket to him • Hugs a child who fell down • Gets an adult to assist a child who needs help 		Identifies basic emotional reactions of others and their causes accurately <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says, “She’s happy because her brother is here.” “He’s sad because his toy broke.” • Matches a picture of a happy face with a child getting a present or a sad face with a picture of a child dropping the banana she was eating 		Recognizes that others’ feelings about a situation might be different from his or her own <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says, “I like riding fast on the trike, but Tim doesn’t.” • Shows Meir a picture of a dinosaur but doesn’t show it to Lucy because he remembers that she’s afraid of dinosaurs 	

- For emotional Q’s In the beginning of the year, it would be just recognizing that someone is angry, and as they progress it’s knowing how to deal with that anger
- For managing feelings, being able to talk about it when they are frustrated. For example one student will get frustrated and just sits in the corner and talk to no one
- We have like 20 objectives social emotional is one of them

9:09

Pause at 10:10

4. What emotions do children most often express during a school day? And how do children express those emotions?

Response:

- Frustration, anger, and sadness are the uncomfortable ones
- There's also happy and excited
- When they're happy they are smiling, running around, and comfortable
- When they're excited they get really loud, so we acknowledge that feeling by saying "yes we're excited and that's great but we need to remember our indoor voices"
- With anger and frustration we have to address that so we ask why are you frustrated, how can we make you feel better?
- We're encouraged to not solve their problems, they have to come up with their own solutions. Like a big problem that everyone will say at least once a day is "blank said she/he isn't my friend anymore!"

5. Which emotions do children struggle to express or communicate?

a. How do you approach this challenge?

Response:

- Frustration and disappointment are the hardest to communicate. We try to tell them what the emotions are. For example, we tell them disappointment comes when you really want something and you didn't get it. And sometimes we have to explain that sometimes, you don't get everything you want. Sometimes that toy is with someone else and they don't want to give it to you but we should direct our attention to something else. We have to teach them about sharing, or waiting for your turn. A lot of the disappointment comes from wanting things immediately and having to wait for it.

6. Do you use certain techniques/approaches to support children's emotional development?

a. If so, what does this process look like?

Response:

- A lot of it is just talking, communicating what they're feeling so that they know.
- And then we do calming down steps if they feel uncomfortable we tell them to sit down, maybe sit in the reading corner, take some belly breaths. Once you're ready to talk about it we're here to talk about it. If you want to talk to your friend about it, then do that.
- If it's really hard for them to control their emotion we direct them to the reading center, it's a little couch with bean bags, stuffed animals and books. We ask them to go there, take some belly breaths, calm down, and once you're ready to join us let us know. And you can see them do that, taking belly breaths, close their eyes, cuddle a stuffed animal, or read a book. And they calm down really fast.

7. Are there any tools or products you employ in the classroom to help children, recognize, communicate, or cope with emotions?

a. For each therapy or product, ask how effective they think they are?

- i. **How would you like to improve upon that therapy or product?**
- ii. **How did you learn about this therapy/product? Is this a typical place/way to be introduced to the product?**
- b. **Are there any products or therapies you don't currently have access to that you would find helpful?**

Response:

- We have the second step posters that we put up after we teach them
- The posters have stories on them, like a snapshot of a kid that's really angry, and a split screen showing him doing belly breaths for example
- We have stuffed animals they can play with or something they can cuddle
- Timer made out of slime that calms them down you stare at the bubbles and the slime
- Sensory activities they can play with like moon sand or play dough

8. Can you tell me about a scenario in the last week or so where you had to help a child feeling a strong emotion? What did you say or do?

Response:

- We had an incident where this girl H was at recess who is possessive over her friend K. She is super possessive over K this is problematic because it doesn't allow her to broaden her horizons, and we've talked to her mom about it.
- At recess, H was playing with K but then K wanted to play with another girl J. H got really angry because her friend was playing with someone else and said "No you're my friend" and she went and sat in a tunnel the entire recess. J also through a fit and sat under the slide.
- I talked to K she told me I'm really mad and I asked her why she's mad and how
- They apologized and made up, they had a lot of calming down time which really helped

9. Are there any times where you educate parents about the emotional development of their children?

- a. **If so, what do you tell them? What are they least knowledgeable about?**

Response:

- Sometimes, but through this curriculum because its so in depth, we explain it to them for example, we'll tell them what emotional Q's are
- Parents don't know how to handle kids when they're going through uncomfortable feelings a lot of the times kids need to be heard and they solve it themselves after we teach them about how to deal with difficult scenarios like sharing.

10. Is there any extra training you needed to undertake in order to better support the emotional needs of your students?

- a. Can you tell me more about this training? What did you find most valuable? Are there any aspects you learned that you find yourself using in the classroom? Are there any aspects you wished you learned/what to learn more about?**

Response:

- We still do, we had a training on how to follow up the second step curriculum. It teaches you how to explain to the kids what the emotions are. On the back of the poster it tells you everything to say to the kids so you don't need to think about scenarios.
- In the moment, its hard because the training is broad.

After the interview ended:

We also teach them how to use self talk, it's part of the curriculum.

Interview: Child & Family Counselor

Participant: Dennis

- Research - adults/caregivers have a procedural memory (sadness, shame, anger)
- Important to be with the child → empathy → becomes safe → feels understood
- Important to be comfortable with range of emotions and sometimes parent's feel uncomfortable handling that or don't think about it

Can you talk about what a therapy session typically looks like involving child and parent?

With the younger kids, it's a lot about availability, that parents follow their parents' needs. Behind every behavior is a need. The underlying foundation is let's identify the need behind each behavior. Then finding different mechanisms that can address those needs. Then it rests on the parents to be available when that need arises. Delight is a huge component. Another huge component is language. For instance, rather than saying "don't spill the milk" say "lets see if we can keep all that milk in the cup!" There is a lot of play therapy where we use metaphors or through art for example, asking children to draw their families. For instance, may ask child to draw picture of their family - might show real big father and small mom, brother might be far and detached.

How do you facilitate interactions?

When kids get older, we focus on inclusion, and giving the children a voice. But pre-verbal, its difficult. A lot of theory says to ignore unwanted behavior but little kids can't conceptualize this so it's more important to worry about needs than it is to worry about conditioned response. It's about providing predictability so they know they have a parent that will react to their distress.

Older kids - inclusion

Preverbal - difficult

- Parents think to ignore it, to not respond to unwanted behaviors
- Reinforcing unwanted behavior but little kids don't have a way conceptualize this
 - PAY MORE ATTENTION TO NEEDS THEN CONDITION RESPONSE
 - Kids can't conceptualize nor understand manipulation

What emotions do children most often express?

Emotion: Sadness, shame, fear, joy, delight

The importance of expression is tied to the attachment with their parents. If there's a lot of shame, sadness, etc. could be a sign they aren't being responded to. The parents mirroring the sad face their child is facing. It's important to mirror to the child what the child is showing them.

- Importance of expression has to do with parent's availability → unmet need
- Nonverbal communication - child in distress, sad shown in facial feature and it's important to mirror and duplicate same nonverbal communication

- Sadness in parent's face is reflective in child
- Importance of mirroring back to the child in what they reflect to you → gives sense that you are with them → help draw them out of negative emotion into contentment rather than putting a face

Resource: Circle of Security - diff attachments, exploration vs. nurturing

- Predictable love and intimacy when they need it - interesting concepts in Circle of security
- Depends on parent's experience
- Helicopter parents → insecurity/fear of exploration
- Lack of nurturing → fear attachment and connection in relationships
- 0-6 year old study: Circle of Security Study
- Found that the best way is to be with them

Do you use certain therapies/products/approaches to support children's emotional development?

Every elementary school counseling center has this big poster showing all the emotions. Visual Q's of other people's faces allow children to point to that and saying "that's me, that's how i feel" For kids to know that it's safe, and feelings can be shared and that there are things to do internally in order to dissipate the intense feelings of sadness anxiety, rejection.

- Chart of all the faces common in elementary school - **confused**
- Visual cues of other people's faces will create opportunities for kids to identify how they feel → what they mean? How to cope? → mirroring and match that visual
- Important for kids to know that it's safe, feelings are okay and that they can be shared or held!
- Children can feel rejection, depression

Are there any coping methods you suggest to your patients both inside and outside of therapy sessions?

Belly breathing. With kids belly breathing makes sense because you put your hand on your belly and you breathe into your stomach. It has a physiological effect. But in the research the most important concept is "being with". Not trying to move them out of the emotion.

- Diaphragmatic breathing (adult) vs. belly breathing (kids)
- Breathe deep into your belly, breath in through nose, and hold it and out through nose → physiological response to calm emotion and anxiety

Common ingredient is holding a child chest to chest/ hearth to heart. The holding piece is very critical as well.

- STUDY: To hold child chest to chest → increased attachment → actual physical touch was a common denom. In diff. Cultures
- Being with them is really important to know they are being cared for
- Holding is really critical

The fundamental building block is being delighted, however that parent shows it so the child knows how special and loved they are.

Secondary Research

Questions	Evidence
<p>Why is emotional development important, especially for children?</p> <p><i>Purpose: To validate our design problem</i></p>	<p>Source: Methods of developing children's emotional intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "research in this field demonstrates that emotional intelligence is a more trustworthy predictor of success in life than IQ" - Benefits of developing emotional intelligence: lowered stress levels, increased productivity, more positive interpersonal relationships, better self-control, and an improved ability to understand emotions when they appear
	<p>Source: Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Research suggests emotional intelligence is twice as strong a predictor as IQ"
	<p>Source: (Seattle Children's Hospital) Parenting Tool: Emotion Coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Emotionally intelligent children will enjoy increased self-confidence, greater physical health, better performance in school, and healthier social relationships."
	<p>Source: Parenting Styles and Children's Emotional Intelligence: What do We Know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Research is confirming the relation between emotional intelligence and some positive developmental outcomes such as subjective well-being (Gallagher & Vella-Brodrick, 2008), adaptive coping styles and mental health (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007), mental ability and positive personality traits (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004), academic achievement (Schute et al., 1998), and physical and psychological health (Tsaousis & Nikolaou, 2005)." - "In a study of 200 children and their parents participating in the Getting Ready parental engagement program have shown that intervention targeting parents can indeed improve children's socioemotional competencies"
<p>Why is our approach effective?</p>	<p>Source: Methods of developing children's emotional intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "the most efficient method of emotional self control is not suppressing emotions, but integrating them within the interpretation process of reality and intentionally guiding their potential towards those actions that produce

<p><i>Purpose: To validate existing product specification and/or age group</i></p>	<p>constructive effects”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Compared with analytical intelligence or IQ which changes very little after adolescence, emotional intelligence seems to be mostly learned” <p>Source: American Academy of Pediatrics “Media & Young Minds”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Validation of potential health concerns of a screen and design decision to be screenless:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Interactive media for young children [is] accompanied by fears about their overuse during this crucial period of rapid brain development, research in this area still remains limited.” - <i>Validation of encouraging parent-child engagement</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasizes “the importance of parent–child shared media use” - “Higher order thinking skills and executive functions essential for school success, such as emotion regulation are best taught through unstructured and social (not digital) play” - Recommends families to “avoid using media as the only way to calm your child...there is concern that using media as strategy to calm could lead to problems with limit setting or the inability of children to develop their own emotion regulation.” - <i>Validation of age range (why 2?):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Children younger than 2 years need hands-on exploration and social interaction with trusted caregivers.” - “Toddlers cannot learn from traditional digital media as they do from interactions with caregivers, and they have difficulty transferring that knowledge to their 3-dimensional experience.” - “Children younger than 2 years... adult interaction with the child during media use is crucial, and there continues to be evidence of harm from excessive digital media use” - <i>Validation of the user-centered design & co-design approach/method</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Unfortunately, most apps parents find under the “educational” category in app stores have no such evidence of efficacy, target only rote academic skills, are not based on established curricula, and use little or no input from developmental specialists or educators” - “Most apps also generally are not designed for a dual audience (ie,
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	<p>both parent and child).”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommends industry to “work with developmental psychologists and educators to create design interfaces that are appropriate to child developmental abilities, that are not distracting, and that promote shared parent–child media use and application of skills to the real world” <p>Source: CDC’s “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Validation of age range:</i> What most children are able to do by age 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social and emotional: copy others (especially adults and older children), get excited around other children, demonstrate defiant behavior - Language/communication: say short sentences, follow simple instructions, repeat words overhead in conversation <p>Source: Parenting Styles and Children’s Emotional Intelligence: What do We Know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Validation for visual representations:</i> “In these new ability tests, respondents are required to give answers to different emotional tasks. Examples of such tasks are: identifying emotions in pictures of faces or in photographs.” - <i>Validation of co-play with parents and educating parents:</i> “it is important to study how children can develop greater emotional intelligence. While abilities can be trained, personality dispositions may need more subtle nurturing through human interaction. For children the most important human interactions happen with their parents.” <p>Source: Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Validation of physical form/limits on screen time:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Balancing screen time with other activities can promote the health of children” - “Kindergarten and first graders who watch more television are at increased risk to be overweight by the end of third grade “
What methods are proven to be effective for	<p>Source: CDC - Child Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parenting tips for toddlers (2-3 years):

<p>emotional development ?</p> <p><i>Purpose: to explore audio content ideas and frameworks that are proven to be effective</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Keep television sets out of your child’s bedroom. Limit screen time, including video and electronic games, to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day.” - “Encourage free play as much as possible. It helps your toddler stay active and strong and helps him develop motor skills.”
	<p>Source: Bibliotherapy in the Classroom Using Literature to Promote the Development of Emotional Intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bibliotherapy appears particularly viable for promoting EI because the technique strengthens insight and understanding by pairing literature with mediation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of stories and readings to enhance children’s emotional development
	<p>Source: Mother-Child Emotion Dialogues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attachment theory suggests that dialogues that constitute a “psychological secure base” for the child promote such representations by supporting children's confident exploration of their inner worlds.
	<p>Source: Dr. Gottman’s 5 steps to emotion-coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Dr. Gottman’s research shows children of parents who emotion coach are physically healthier, do better in school, and get along better with friends.” - Dr. Gottman draws on his studies of more than 120 families. He then translates his methods into an easy, five-step “<u>emotion coaching</u>” process to help parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step 1: Be aware of your child’s emotions. Parents who emotion coach are aware of their own feelings and sensitive to the emotions present in their children. They do not require their child to amp up their emotional expression for the feelings to be acknowledged. - Step 2: See emotions as an opportunity for connection and teaching. Children’s emotions are not an inconvenience or a challenge. They are an opportunity to connect with your child and coach them through a challenging feeling. - Step 3: Listen and validate the feelings. Give your child your full attention while you listen to their emotional expression. Reflect back what you hear, thus telling your child you understand what they’re seeing and experiencing. - Step 4: Label their emotions. After you have fully listened, help

your child develop an awareness of and vocabulary for their emotional expression.

- **Step 5: Help your child problem-solve with limits.** All emotions are acceptable but all behaviors are not. Help your child cope with his or her emotions by developing problem-solving skills. Limit the expression to appropriate behaviors. This involves helping your child set goals and generating solutions to reach those goals.
- Dr. Gottman found that emotion coaching parents only followed all five steps 20-25% of the time, suggesting there is no need for guilt as no parent can complete this process all the time.

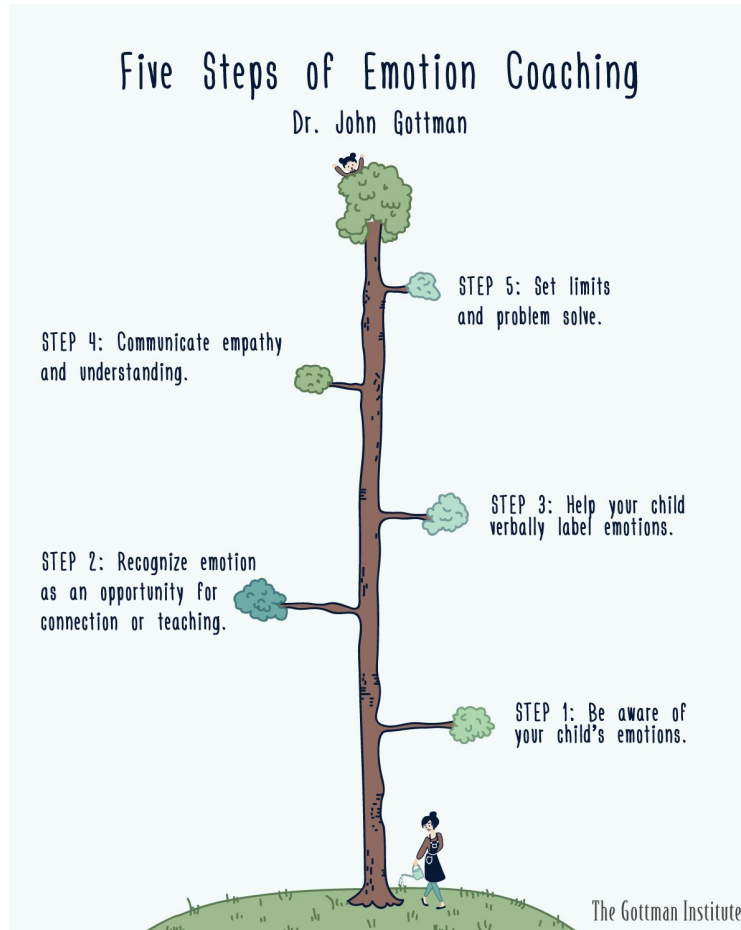
Source: **(Seattle Children's Hospital) Parenting Tool: Emotion Coaching**

- Emotion coaching - "a parenting tool that can help prevent and lower your child's strong negative emotions and reactions (such as anger, yelling, saying mean things and throwing things) during times of distress"
- Key aspects of emotion coaching:
 - Be aware of your child's emotions
 - Recognize that when your child shows emotion, it is a change for closeness and teaching
 - Listen thoughtfully and let your child know you understand and accept (validate) their feelings
 - Label emotions (angry, sad, frustrated) in words your child can understand
 - Help your child find better ways to solve a problem or deal with an upsetting situation
- Emotion coaching steps:
 - **Step 1: Label and validate your child's feelings.** Labeling the feeling ("you seem really frustrated right now") shows that you empathize with what your child is feeling, and may help them better recognize their own feelings. Then, validate their emotional experience ("it makes sense that you are frustrated").
 - **Step 2: Deal with the problem behavior.** If your child becomes very upset (escalated), have them take a brief time-out/chill-out to calm down first. Help your child see that that it is okay to have the emotion but that they are still responsible for their behavior. For example, "It is okay to feel angry and frustrated, but you still have to be safe with others. After you take some time to cool off, you can

	<p>apologize to your brother and then we can talk about what happened.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step 3: Problem solve. Find out what triggered your child to be upset. For example, “Did something happen today at school to make you upset.” Then, empathize and validate your child’s feelings. It is important not to tell your child that they should feel a different way but to help them understand what they are feeling—whether the emotions are positive or negative or some of both. Work with your child to come up with solutions to deal with or prevent problems next time. <p>Source: Parenting Styles and Children’s Emotional Intelligence: What do We Know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition, Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1997) found that when parents accept children’s displays of emotionality and help children to understand them and to use the information of those emotions to behave in positive and efficient ways, a group of parental practices that has been termed emotional coaching, children show a higher ability to regulate their emotions.
Open notes and insights	<p>Source: Methods of developing children’s emotional intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mayer and Salovey’s definition of emotional intelligence: “skills by which a person can discriminate and monitorize his own and other people’s emotions” - Intrapersonal intelligence refers to the labeling of one’s own emotions, while interpersonal intelligence refers to the understanding of other people’s emotions - Age group in study is 10-14 <p>Source: American Academy of Pediatrics “Media & Young Minds”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They recommend industry to “make high-quality products accessible and affordable to low income families and in multiple languages.” <p>Source: Parenting Styles and Children’s Emotional Intelligence: What do We Know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are three emotional constructs that have been extensively studied (though separately) in relation to those parenting practices and that can be considered some of the most important dimensions of emotional intelligence: children’s emotion knowledge, children’s emotion

understanding, and children's emotion regulation. Emotion knowledge refers to the ability to accurately perceive and label emotional expressions and situational and behavioral emotion cues. Emotion understanding refers to the individual's awareness and identification of one's and others' emotions. Emotion regulation refers to the ability to handle frustrating, stressful, or harmful emotional arousal

Source: **Dr. Gottman's Visual Representation of Emotion Coaching**



Source: **How to Foster Toddlers' Mental-State Talk, Emotion Understanding, and Prosocial Behavior: A Conversation-Based Intervention at Nursery School**

This study wanted to examine the efficacy of an intervention based on conversing about emotions with small groups of 2- to 3-year-old children. The intervention was designed to promote toddlers' mental-state talk, emotion understanding (EU), and prosocial behavior. The training group significantly outperformed the control group in the use of mental-state language, especially emotional-state lexicon, EU, and prosocial behavior toward peers.

Sorted Evidence

Theme	Evidence
Benefits of E.I (social, emotional, performance)	<p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All of them in the beginning need social/emotional which is how to manage feelings, how to interact with peers, how do they make friends, how do they talk about their emotions, what do they do to calm down. <p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emotional intelligence is a more trustworthy predictor of success in life than IQ - Benefits of developing emotional intelligence: lowered stress levels, increased productivity, more positive interpersonal relationships, better self-control, and an improved ability to understand emotions when they appear - emotional intelligence is twice as strong a predictor as IQ - Emotionally intelligent children will enjoy increased self-confidence, greater physical health, better performance in school, and healthier social relationships - emotional intelligence and some positive developmental outcomes such as subjective well-being (Gallagher & Vella-Brodrick, 2008), adaptive coping styles and mental health (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007), mental ability and positive personality traits (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004), academic achievement (Schute et al., 1998), and physical and psychological health - improve children's socioemotional competencies - emotional intelligence seems to be mostly learned
Parent/child interactions and conversations	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0-1 year olds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where it all begins: parent/child connection is so crucial - For infants: maybe you could record the mom's voice singing to them - Hard to have a baby who is hooked up to IVs/wires and you can't hug them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on facilitating attachment at that age - If mom is frustrated, kid will internalize that as mad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard to kids to process other people's emotions - Interesting research about how babies respond to their mother's voice (not dads)

	<p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of the times kids need to be heard <p>Dennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adults/caregivers have a procedural memory - Important to be with the child → empathy → becomes safe → feels understood - Important to be comfortable with range of emotions - With the younger kids, it's a lot about availability, that parents follow their parents' needs - A lot of theory says to ignore unwanted behavior but little kids can't conceptualize this so it's more important to worry about needs than it is to worry about conditioned response. - Providing predictability and consistency for younger kids so they know when I am distressed then a parent can help - The importance of expression is tied to the attachment with their parents - Nonverbal communication - child in distress, sad shown in facial feature and it's Important to mirror and duplicate same nonverbal communication - Parent's face is reflective in child - Helicopter parents → insecurity/fear of exploration - Lack of nurturing → fear attachment and connection in relationships - Common ingredient is holding a child chest to chest/heart to heart. - Being with them is really important to know they are being cared for - The fundamental building block is being delighted, however that parent shows it so the child knows how special and loved they are <p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the importance of parent–child shared media use - avoid using media as the only way to calm your child - promote shared parent–child media use and application of skills to the real world - While abilities can be trained, personality dispositions may need more subtle nurturing through human interaction. For children the most important human interactions happen with their parents - children of parents who emotion coach are physically healthier, do better in school, and get along better with friends - SCH Emotion Coaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be aware of your child's emotions - Recognize that when your child shows emotion, it is a change for closeness and teaching - It is important not to tell your child that they should feel a different way
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	<p>but to help them understand what they are feeling—whether the emotions are positive or negative or some of both. Work with your child to come up with solutions to deal with or prevent problems next time</p>
Physical form	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maybe add a mirror to the belly (for infants/toddlers) - Babies: weighted Frobbies (blanket) over babies gives them comfort - If BoBo was heavy, that might be cool <p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have stuffed animals they can play with or something they can cuddle - Timer made out of slime that calms them down you stare at the bubbles and the slime - Sensory activities they can play with like moon sand or play dough
Screen time	<p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive media for young children [is] accompanied by fears about their overuse during this crucial period of rapid brain development - there is concern that using media as strategy to calm could lead to problems with limit setting or the inability of children to develop their own emotion regulation - adult interaction with the child during media use is crucial, and there continues to be evidence of harm from excessive digital media use - “Balancing screen time with other activities can promote the health of children” - Kindergarten and first graders who watch more television are at increased risk to be overweight by the end of third grade - Limit screen time, including video and electronic games, to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day
Age range	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moved to early intervention (0-3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At that age, a lot of our goals are just about overall development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social, emotional, and adaptive skills - How they can communicate their needs - 0-1 year olds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where it all begins: parent/child connection is so crucial - Certain emotions for 0-5 year olds: happy, sad, mad, tired, maybe scared - Late elementary school is when kid would understand jealousy, etc. (like 3rd grade/4th grade and up)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older kids do better with emotional expression/ Emotional regulation/communication changes a lot between ages <p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preschool: 4-5 year olds <p>Dennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0-6 year old study: Circle of Security Study <p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children younger than 2 years need hands-on exploration and social interaction with trusted caregivers - <i>Validation of age range</i>: What most children are able to do by age 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social and emotional: copy others (especially adults and older children), get excited around other children, demonstrate defiant behavior - Language/communication: say short sentences, follow simple instructions, repeat words overhead in conversation
Behavioral methods	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotion wheels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wheel out of construction paper - Different colors w/ pointer - Short breathing exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bee breathing, fill up balloon and pop it <p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have what we call the calm down faze. First if it's an uncomfortable feeling, we teach them to put their hands on their stomachs and say "stop". Then we tell them to name their feeling so they would say "I'm mad". Then after that we have them take belly breaths where they take at least three deep breaths in through their nose out of their mouth. - We do calming down steps if they feel uncomfortable we tell them to sit down, maybe sit in the reading corner, take some belly breaths - If it's really hard for them to control their emotion we direct them to the reading center, it's a little couch with bean bags, stuffed animals and books. We ask them to go there, take some belly breaths, calm down, and once you're ready to join us let us know. And you can see them do that, taking belly breaths, close their eyes, cuddle a stuffed animal, or read a book. And they calm down really fast.

	<p>Dennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - play therapy where we use metaphors or through art for example, asking children to draw their families. For instance, may ask child to draw picture of their family - might show real big father and small mom, brother might be far and detached - Belly breathing. With kids belly breathing makes sense because you put your hand on your belly and you breathe into your stomach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diaphragmatic breathing (adult) vs. belly breathing (kids) - Breathe deep into your belly, breath in through nose, and hold it and out through nose → physiological response to calm emotion and anxiety <p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emotion regulation are best taught through unstructured and social (not digital) play - different emotional tasks. Examples of such tasks are: identifying emotions in pictures of faces or in photographs - Encourage free play as much as possible. It helps your toddler stay active and strong and helps him develop motor skills - Bibliotherapy appears particularly viable for promoting EI because the technique strengthens insight and understanding by pairing literature with mediation
Visual representation	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alert Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use different characters for younger kids - Tigger - wild <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eeyore - sad - Pooh - content - Older kids use colors - cutoff is around four years old - Green is good - Yellow is in between - Blue is not so good - Visuals are going to be really important for younger kids - Fine to leave the labels in there - Maybe add a mirror to the belly (for infants/toddlers) - Existing product: emotion wheels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wheel out of construction paper - Different colors w/ pointer <p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kids might say "Well his face is like tough and his hands are in fists." <p>Dennis</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parents mirroring the sad face their child is facing. It's important to mirror to the child what the child is showing to them. - Importance of mirroring back to the child in what they reflect to you → gives sense that you are with them → help draw them out of negative emotion into contemptment rather than putting a face - Every elementary school counseling center has this big poster showing all the emotions. Visual Q's of other people's faces allow children to point to that and saying "that's me, that's how i feel" - Chart of all the faces common in elementary school - confused - Visual cues of other people's faces will create opportunities for kids to identify how they feel → what they mean? How to cope? → mirroring and match that visual
Curriculum	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alert Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OTs use it at SCH in Bothell - Go to website to learn more!! - Teach kids about their "engines" - Measuring progress at SCH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary outcome measures are not related to emotions, instead - Neonatal behavioral assessment scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irritability, excitement, can they self sooth or do they need assistance, eye contact, etc. - Goal attainment scaling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with family to set goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goal of get through recess without screaming at someone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writes 5 levels to attain goal - 0 level is baseline - "George is not having healthy interactions with anyone at any time" <p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First we teach them through this curriculum called Second step, it's amazing. Each week we focus on one aspect, like this last week we talked about uncomfortable feelings: anger, frustration, disappointment, fear. We use a poster board for each week. For example when we did angry or frustrated we did a puppet show showing the characters get frustrated. We teach them how to recognize when someone is angry, in a sense we're teaching them emotional intelligence, it's called Emotional Que's and its important for

	<p>them to recognize these emotions in other people as well that means they're growing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We measure progress through bands and we document them in our learning strategies in the report cards. There are different bands, and we are on the blue band - Progress bands they need to progress through them through the year - For emotional Q's In the beginning of the year, it would be just recognizing that someone is angry, and as they progress it's knowing how to deal with that anger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have like 20 objectives social emotional is one of them - We have the second step posters that we put up after we teach them - The posters have stories on them, like a snapshot of a kid that's really angry, and a split screen showing him doing belly breaths for example - we had a training on how to follow up the second step curriculum. It teaches you how to explain to the kids what the emotions are. On the back of the poster it tells you everything to say to the kids so you don't need to think about scenarios. <p>Dennis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every elementary school counseling center has this big poster showing all the emotions. Visual Q's of other people's faces allow children to point to that and saying "that's me, that's how i feel"
Pain points	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where parents learn about infant distress cues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of resources - Every family I interact with doesn't know about this <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sees stretching as cute, not informative - Our emotions are complex - kids don't understand a lot of them at a young age - Can kids participate with their family? Peers? Can they focus at school? - Disconnect between parents and kids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard to have a baby who is hooked up to IVs/wires and you can't hug them - Challenge of resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What if your child if having trouble expressing their emotions? where do you go? - Kids already respond so differently, you won't be able to cater to everyone <p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parents don't really teach them how to deal with their emotions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sometimes that toy is with someone else and they don't want to give it to you but we should direct our attention to something else. We have to teach them about sharing, or waiting for your turn - Parents don't know how to handle kids when they're going through uncomfortable feelings - Second step training is broad <p>Dennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sometimes parents feel uncomfortable handling their children's range of emotions, or don't think about it
Dialogue/ discussion methods	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older kids do better with emotional expression - Emotional regulation/communication changes a lot between ages - different audio between coping vs. expressing - If you want the dialogue part, it might not work for someone who is nonverbal - first person vs. third person: talking to kid vs. acting as kid? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For the kids who are nonverbal, typically make it in the first person - limitation is language - If parents can record, we need to provide prompts (in the manual) <p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Step: We ask them how do you guys think blank is feeling right now? And if they say "angry" we ask what is he doing that makes you think he's angry? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We ask them "What do we do when we're angry?" - Some kids come to the teacher to solve problems but we want them to solve their own problems. So we ask them "how would you solve this?" - For managing feelings, being able to talk about it when they are frustrated - "Yes we're excited and that's great but we need to remember our indoor voices" - Why are you frustrated, how can we make you feel better? - We're encouraged to not solve their problems, they have to come up with their own solutions - We tell them disappointment comes when you really want something and you didn't get it. And sometimes we have to explain that sometimes, you don't get everything you want - Preschool methods: A lot of it is just talking, communicating what they're feeling so that they know

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once you're ready to talk about it we're here to talk about it. If you want to talk to your friend about it, then do that. - Kids need to be heard — often solve it themselves after we teach them about how to deal with difficult scenarios like sharing <p>Dennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delight is a huge component. Another huge component is language. For instance, rather than saying “don’t spill the milk” say “let’s see if we can keep all that milk in the cup!” - Important for kids to know that it’s safe, feelings are okay and that they can be shared or held! - But in the research the most important concept is “being with”. Not trying to move them out of the emotion. <p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the most efficient method of emotional self control is not suppressing emotions, but integrating them within the interpretation process - Attachment theory suggests that dialogues that constitute a “psychological secure base” for the child promote such representations by supporting children's confident exploration of their inner worlds - Emotion coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be aware of your child’s emotions. Parents who emotion coach are aware of their own feelings and sensitive to the emotions present in their children - See emotions as an opportunity for connection and teaching - Listen and validate the feelings. Give your child your full attention while you listen to their emotional expression. Reflect back what you hear, thus telling your child you understand what they’re seeing and experiencing - Label their emotions. After you have fully listened, help your child develop an awareness of and vocabulary for their emotional expression - Help your child problem-solve with limits. All emotions are acceptable but all behaviors are not. Help your child cope with his or her emotions by developing problem-solving skills. Limit the expression to appropriate behaviors. This involves helping your child set goals and generating solutions to reach those goals - SCH Emotion coaching - “a parenting tool that can help prevent and lower your child’s strong negative emotions and reactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen thoughtfully and let your child know you understand and accept (validate) their feelings - Label emotions in words your child can understand - Help your child find better ways to solve a problem or deal with
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	<p>an upsetting situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SCH Emotion coaching steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Label and validate your child's feelings. Labeling the feeling ("you seem really frustrated right now") shows that you empathize with what your child is feeling, and may help them better recognize their own feelings. Then, validate their emotional experience ("it makes sense that you are frustrated") - Deal with the problem behavior. If your child becomes very upset (escalated), have them take a brief time-out/chill-out to calm down first. Help your child see that that it is okay to have the emotion but that they are still responsible for their behavior. For example, "It is okay to feel angry and frustrated, but you still have to be safe with others" - Problem solve. Find out what triggered your child to be upset. For example, "Did something happen today at school to make you upset." Then, empathize and validate your child's feelings. It is important not to tell your child that they should feel a different way but to help them understand what they are feeling—whether the emotions are positive or negative or some of both. Work with your child to come up with solutions to deal with or prevent problems next time - when parents accept children's displays of emotionality and help children to understand them and to use the information of those emotions to behave in positive and efficient ways, a group of parental practices that has been termed emotional coaching, children show a higher ability to regulate their emotions
Emotions	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0-5 year olds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proud, jealous, embarrassed, and nervous - harder to comprehend - Younger kids - happy, sad, mad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You could try scared, but even that's kind of hard - Tired - Mad is easiest to express - Happy is easy - Sad comes a little bit later - need to tease out the difference between sad and mad - Late elementary school is when kid would understand jealousy, etc. - Frustrated - important to distinguish between mad and frustrated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of kids who will need BoBo might be frustrated - Excited - hard to tease out b/t happy and excited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I think excited would be a good one"

	<p>Sally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Step curriculum: anger, frustration, disappointment, fear - Frustration, anger, and sadness - happy and excited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When they're happy they are smiling, running around, and comfortable - When they're excited they get really loud - Frustration and disappointment are the hardest to communicate - A lot of the disappointment comes from wanting things immediately and having to wait for it. <p>Dennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common emotions: Sadness, shame, anger, fear, joy, delight - Can have intense feelings of intense feelings of sadness, anxiety, rejection - Children can feel rejection, depression <p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - angry, sad, frustrated
Market considerations	<p>Angela</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More schools are starting to incorporate emotional teaching - Work HuskyADAPT to make toys accessible? - Cost - how expensive will he be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could insurance pay for it? - Could be cool to have BoBo at WIC centers (Women, Infants, and Children) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategically placing him around populations who need him <p>Secondary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - most apps parents find under the “educational” category in app stores have no such evidence of efficacy - Recommends industry to “work with developmental psychologists and educators to create design interfaces that are appropriate to child developmental abilities, that are not distracting, and that promote shared parent–child media use and application of skills to the real world - make high-quality products accessible and affordable to low income families and in multiple languages