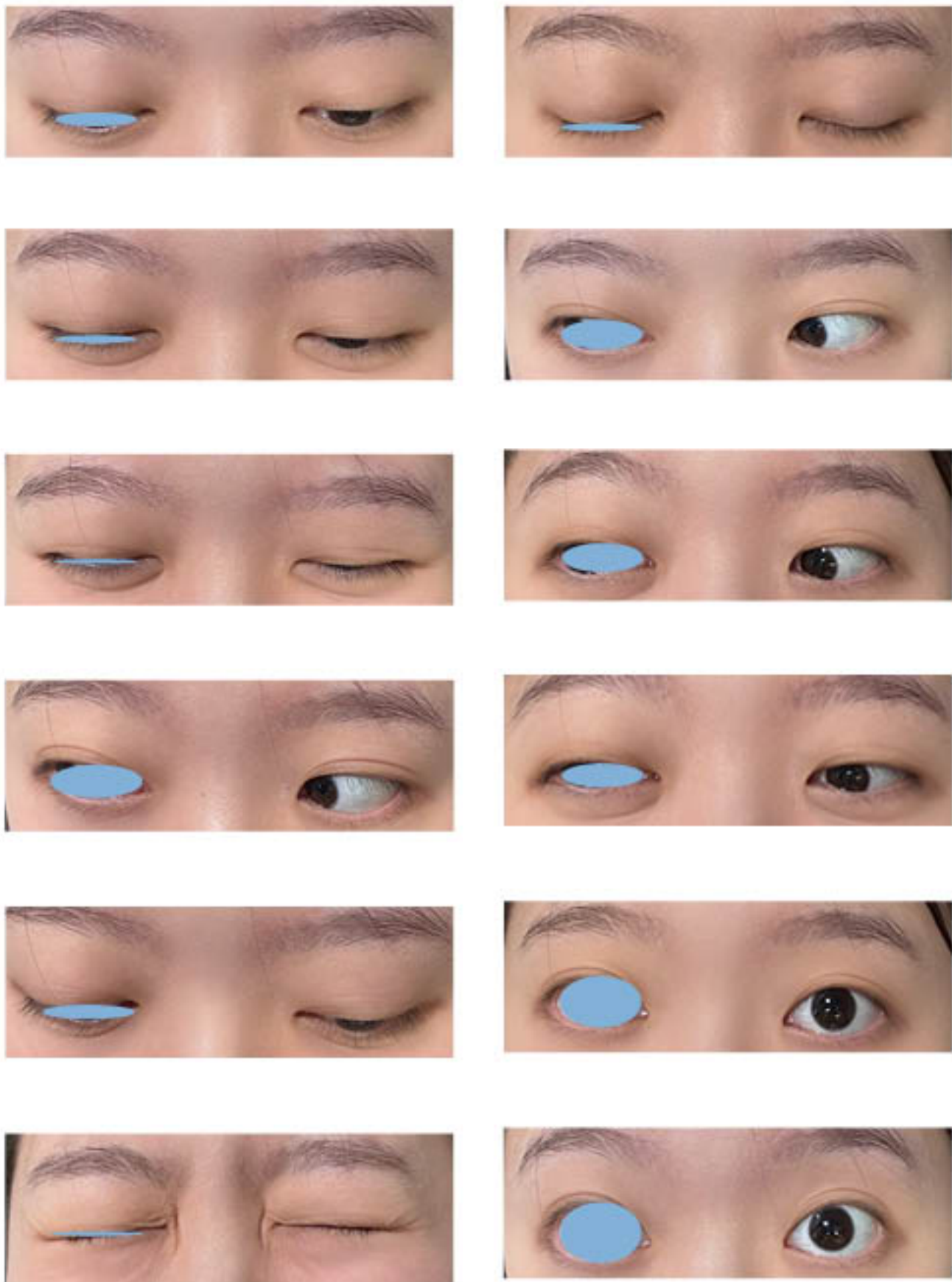


Facial expressions

Emotional journey of eating crisps



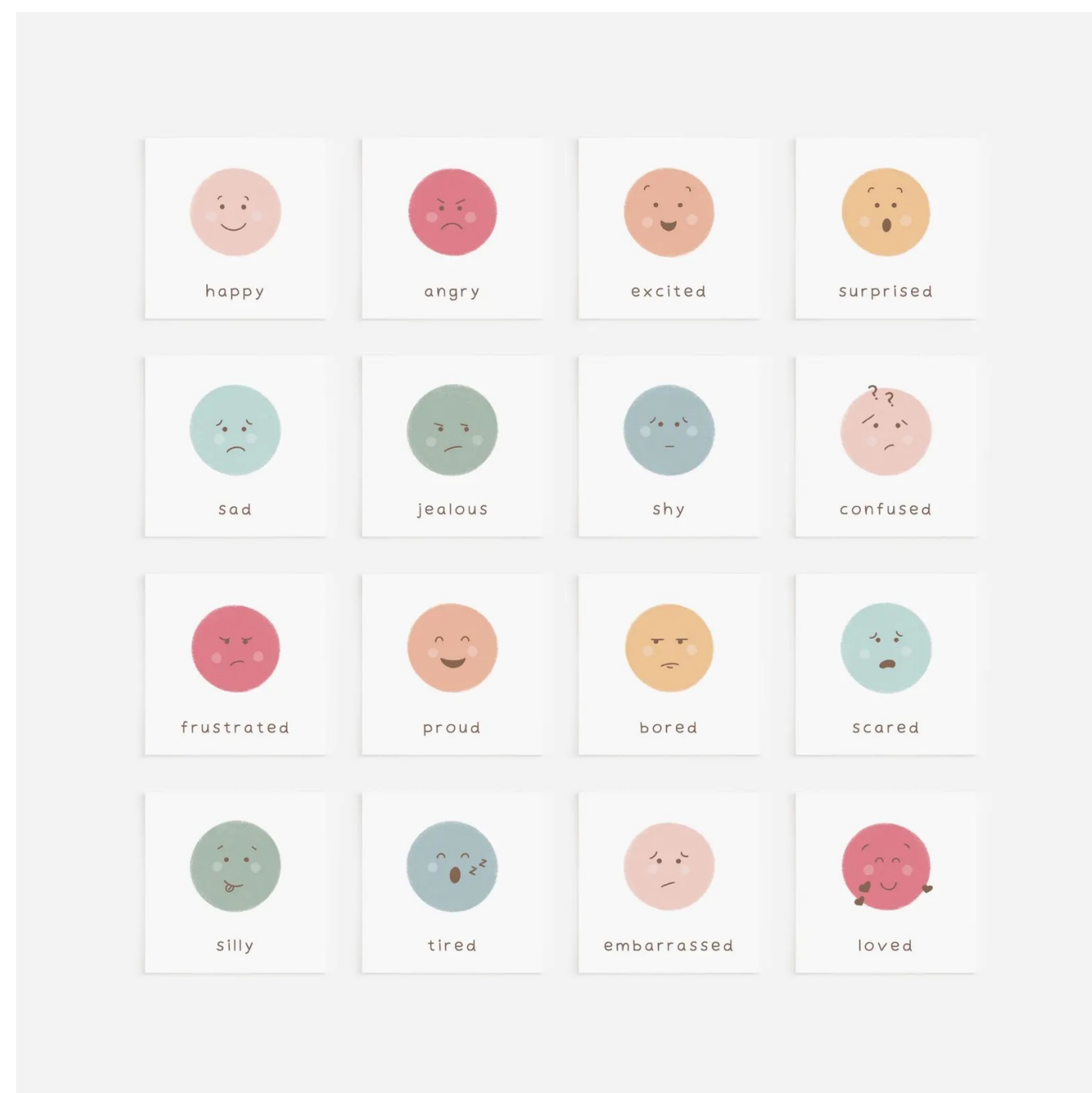
Facial expressions while eating crisp



Why



- From my own facial expressions while eating crisps
- Then I found out that kids often learn about emotions through taste and sensory play
- But autistic kids don't always pick up on facial expressions the same way
- Critical question: How can design help teach taste + emotion through visuals?
- So now I'm exploring how design can support autistic emotional learning through simple, clear visuals



Feelings Flash Cards

Purpose:

Designed to help young children recognize, understand, and name a range of emotions.

Functions as a visual support tool for emotional learning, particularly for children with limited verbal communication.

Audience:

Targeted at children aged 2–7 years.

Particularly beneficial for:

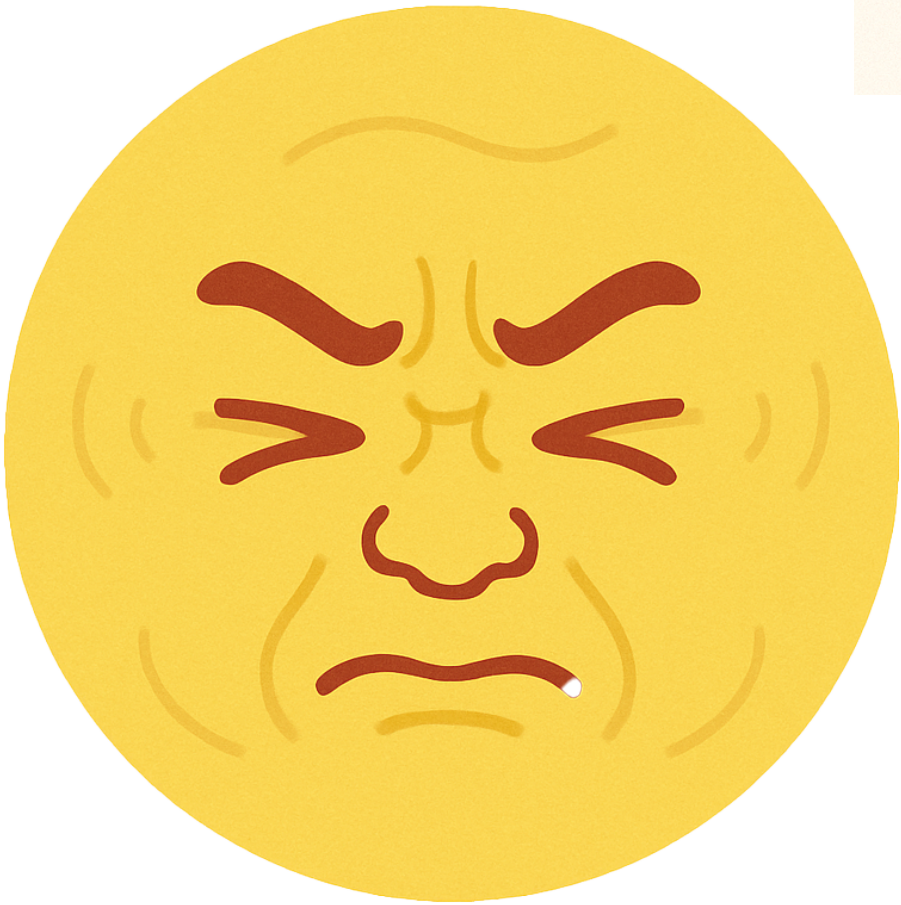
- Autistic children or those with emotional regulation challenges.
- Non-verbal or pre-verbal learners.
- Children in inclusive or sensory-sensitive educational settings.



Key Design Features

- Minimal Facial Structure
- Emotion-Color Association
- Image–Text Pairing
- Consistent Format and Flexible Use
- Universally Accessible Visual Style

Illustration style tries





Spicy



Sweet



Bitter



Salty



Sour

Visual Design Requirements for Autistic Audiences

- Prefer clear, structured visuals with consistent layout
- Sensitive to color and shape—use a sensory-friendly design with soft tones and simple, distinct forms.
- Think concretely and may struggle with metaphor—abstract images need clear visual support
- Struggle with facial expressions — use bold, easy-to-read faces













Future Development













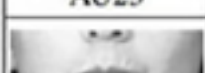
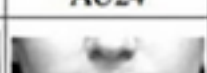



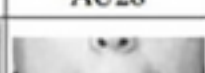
- Sweet, sour, salty, bitter, spicy affect facial expressions (Basic Tastes)
- Graphic form + Typical facial expression
- Facial Feature Guide Icons

Facial Action Coding System

FACS helps me turn taste reactions into clear, simple facial parts that kids can easily see and learn from.

A

Upper Face Action Units					
AU1	AU2	AU4	AU5	AU6	AU7
					
Inner Brow Raiser	Outer Brow Raiser	Brow Lowerer	Upper Lid Raiser	Cheek Raiser	Lid Tightener
*AU41	*AU42	*AU43	AU44	AU45	AU46
					
Lip Droop	Slit	Eyes Closed	Squint	Blink	Wink

Lower Face Action Units					
AU9	AU10	AU11	AU12	AU13	AU14
					
Nose Wrinkler	Upper Lip Raiser	Nasolabial Deepener	Lip Corner Puller	Cheek Puffer	Dimpler
AU15	AU16	AU17	AU18	AU20	AU22
					
Lip Corner Depressor	Lower Lip Depressor	Chin Raiser	Lip Puckerer	Lip Stretcher	Lip Funneler
AU23	AU24	*AU25	*AU26	*AU27	AU28
					
Lip Tightener	Lip Pressor	Lips Parts	Jaw Drop	Mouth Stretch	Lip Suck



Bibliography

Designing for autistic people: Overview of existing research – UX Collective: Visual design principles for autistic users, focusing on clarity, consistency, and low sensory load. It helps ensure my design is accessible, structured, and autism-friendly.

Thinking in Pictures by Temple Grandin: A personal account of how autistic people may think primarily in images rather than words. This supports my use of visual tools to communicate taste and emotion without relying on language.

Unmasking the Face: A Guide to Recognizing Emotions from Facial Expressions: A foundational guide to reading emotions through facial micro-expressions. It informs my design of facial expressions linked to different tastes by breaking down facial features clearly.

Explaining Crossmodal Correspondences Between Colours and Tastes: A review of how people associate specific colors with basic tastes like sweet, sour, and bitter. It supports my use of color in visually representing taste, helping make the emotional experience of flavor more intuitive.

I am building a **modular visual tool** that explores how **autistic children** experience and express **taste-based sensory** input, by mapping diverse **facial responses** through illustration.