

Features and Benefits

- Lightweight
- Durable
- Visually Stimulating
- Wide Age Range
- Open-Ended
- Can Be Used Independently or w/ Others
- Provides Visual Cues
- Hands-On Approach to Learning
- Includes Activity Guide to Expand Play
- Pretend Play Opportunities
- Easy to Grasp/Hold
- Inviting/Whimsical Characters
- Clearly Written Instructions
- Fosters Imagination/Promotes Creativity

Developmental Processes Promoted

- Language Development
- Word Recognition
- Hand and Finger Grasp
- Spatial Relationships
- Reaching/Arm Extension
- Life Skills
- Social Interaction
- Imagination/Pretend Play
- Finger and Hand Control
- Dexterity
- Two-Handed Play-Midline Focus and Transferring
- Self-Esteem
- Creativity

**Kimochis Educator’s Tool Kit
Plushy Feely Corp**

Kimochis characters and feelings pillows provide a fun way to help kids express their feelings and promote the development of positive social skills. Kimochi means “feeling” in Japanese. Each Kimochi character box sets include a 13 inch character, 3 feelings pillows, and a *Feel Guide*. There are 5 characters to choose from including Huggtopus®, Lovey Dove®, Cat, Cloud® and Bug.

“My daughter immediately took to the Kimochis Huggtopus! She loved putting the different pillows inside of its pocket and mimicking the faces on the pillows.” –Mother, Chicago, IL

DISABILITY CATEGORY	RATING (1-5)
Communicative	★★★★★
Physical	★★★★
Cognitive	★★★★
Sensory	★★★

www.ableplay.org

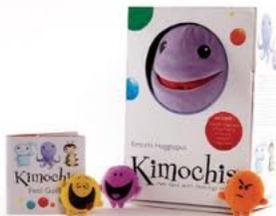
Play products for children with special needs
Independent evaluation by National Lekotek Center

Kimochis™
toys with feelings inside



Lekotek

A Network of National Affiliates



AblePlay is an online resource at www.ableplay.org that provides comprehensive research, ratings, and reviews on toys and products that are a good fit for children of all abilities. AblePlay is a division of the National Lekotek Center, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing children who have disabilities access to the benefits of play experiences. Lekotek believes that toys and play can help children with special needs learn, develop and thrive in a world that presents them with many unique and complex challenges.

Physical

Description

- Kimochis characters are relatively easy to grasp/hold.
- Kimochis pillows are small, light and soft. They can be held between fingers or in the palm of a hand.
- The Kimochis pillows are portable and small enough to place in a child's backpack or wheelchair bag allowing a child to use them wherever she may go.
- The Kimochis characters are durable to withstand play.
- The Kimochis characters can be positioned to sit on their own and be placed on a table or wheelchair tray for play.

Skills

- Fine motor skills are necessary when picking up the Kimochis pillows to select feelings.
- Finger and hand control and dexterity are necessary when placing Kimochis pillows in the Kimochis characters' pockets.
- Hand and finger grasp are used when the Kimochis pillows are being held.
- Children can work on using their hands cooperatively to pick up a Kimochis pillow and place it in a character's pocket. This can help children bring their hands to midline.
- Hand transferring can take place by having a child move a Kimochis pillow from one hand to the other to see the other side.
- Children can work on whole hand grasp to hold a Kimochis pillow.
- A caregiver can carefully select a Kimochis pillow for the child to use as a fidget toy with a word that he needs to be mindful of to help achieve that behavior throughout the day.

Play Ideas

- Put all of the Kimochis pillows on the floor or table and then have the child pick them up to encourage strengthening fingers and hands, and working on fine motor control and grasp.
- Hide the Kimochis characters and pillows and have the child search to find them. Place pillows up high, like on a table or dresser or down low, like under a table or on a foot stool, to encourage reaching and squatting.
- A caregiver and child can play toss using the Kimochis pillows. Each time they catch a pillow, they must imitate the expression on that pillow.
- Caregiver can set up the Kimochis characters on the ground. Have the child toss the Kimochis pillows in the vicinity the matching character. Note: Each character is sold separately unless purchasing the Educator's Tool Kit.



Communicative

Description

- The Kimochis pillows can help a child express his mood at that moment. This can give caregivers insight into how the child is feeling.
- Children can use the Kimochis characters and pillows as a starting point for verbal conversations and stories.
- Children can use Kimochis independently or with others to encourage communication and interaction among children, their peers and adults.
- Kimochis provide pretend play opportunities that encourage social interaction and attention span.
- Kimochis fosters imagination and creative play to not only help children recognize their own feelings, but begin to acknowledge the feelings of others around them.
- Each Kimochis character includes a *Feel Guide* that can expand play with a story and ideas on how to connect, communicate, create, and practice feelings using the Kimochis characters and pillows.
- The Kimochis pillows can help a child talk about feelings in a tangible way. Have him pick up a feeling and make his own facial expression for that mood.

Skills

- Language development opportunities arise when the child is talking about feelings, reading the *Feel Guide* or making up her own stories.
- Receptive and expressive language can be enhanced when a child talks about his feelings using the pillows, characters or when the child is asked a question such as, "What are you feeling?"
- Visual attention, which is important in appropriate conversation (e.g. making eye contact), is reinforced when selecting a pillow to express feelings and share them with others.
- Kimochis may teach children social awareness to help recognize and understand what others are feeling.
- Kimochis may teach children social management to help manage and express emotions in relationships.
- Children can practice their self-awareness using the Kimochis because they can help identify needs and feelings in the moment.
- A caregiver can carefully select a Kimochis pillow for the child to use as a fidget toy with a word that they need to be mindful of to help achieve that behavior throughout the day.

Play Ideas

- Have the child use the pillows to talk about his feelings that happened throughout the day as an evening activity. For example: In the morning-happy, at lunch-embarrassed, etc. Talk about why those feelings happened today.
- A caregiver can have pictures of family members to show a child. Have that child select a Kimochis pillow or Kimochis character that best describes each family member's personality.
- When a child is emotional and is having trouble expressing feelings, have him select a Kimochis pillow to share how he is feeling. A caregiver can countdown and use visual number cues (e.g. hands, number cards, etc) until he needs to be back on task. This gives him a specific amount of time to regulate feelings.
- Have a child pick up a Kimochis pillow of her choice and try to mimic that facial expression in the mirror.
- A caregiver can place a pillow in the child's lunch box or backpack to remind him to behave according to the feeling on the pillow. e.g. Happy, Brave, Kind
- Create a designated spot in your house for the Kimochis character or characters and feelings pillows. When the child is beginning to feel overwhelmed or needs a break, a caregiver can have her cool down and express feelings in this designated "safe place" using the Kimochis as tools.
- The child can keep a journal of his feelings by writing and/or drawing out the way he felt during the day. A caregiver can debrief with him after it is completed.

Cognitive

Description

- A hands-on approach to learning encourages attention span, and learning retention.
- Each Kimochis character includes a *Feel Guide* that can expand play with a story and ideas on how to connect, communicate, create, and practice feelings using the Kimochis characters and pillows.
- Kimochis fosters imagination and creative play to not only help children recognize their own feelings, but begin to acknowledge the feelings of others around them.
- Each set appeals to a wide age range, allowing children of varying ages and cognitive levels to use and learn from Kimochis.
- Children can use Kimochis independently or with others which encourages communication and interaction among children, their peers and adults.
- The Kimochis characters are inviting and visually stimulating for a child to play with.
- Detailed Kimochis pillows have facial expressions that are familiar to children and can be highlighted during play.
- The Kimochis pillows provide a visual display of feelings that children can refer to.
- There are 5 different Kimochis characters to choose from who may have similar personality traits to the child using them.

Skills

- Color recognition and identification opportunities are available with the colors of the Kimochis pillows and different colors on the Kimochis characters.
- The recognition of facial expressions, facial features, and word associations on the Kimochis pillows can assist with making abstract thoughts and feelings more concrete.
- Memory and recall are utilized when a child learns the stories and feelings of the Kimochis characters.
- Visual discrimination occurs when the child searches for the Kimochis pillows and discriminates between them to find a desired pillow.
- Self-esteem can be enhanced when a child is able to talk about feelings, play out a story, or create his own game with Kimochis.
- Children can use the Kimochis pillows to practice visual scanning. For instance, “Find the pillow that looks silly,” or “Find the word ‘friendly.’” This activity also incorporates receptive language skills.
- A caregiver can carefully select a Kimochis pillow for the child to use as a fidget toy with a word that they need to be mindful of to help achieve that behavior throughout the day.
- Children who are visually impaired may have delays in verbal communication because they cannot see how letters and words are formed. Use the Kimochis characters and pillows to promote and practice language development.
- Use the Kimochis to help a child who is blind or visually impaired encourage the development of imagination.
- Using communication along with the Kimochis character can help a child who is blind or visually impaired improve receptive and expressive language.
- Kimochis can help children develop symbolic play.
- Kimochis provides pretend play opportunities that can help encourage social interaction.

Play Ideas

- Have the child draw/write a new story for their Kimochis character that relates to the feelings on the pillows.
- Have one child write a story and another act it out with the Kimochis characters and pillows. This may utilize memory and recall skills.
- A caregiver can ask the child to pick out a pillow that fits his feelings and then have him make the same face as the pillow. Take a photo to compare. This will also help identify what a child is feeling when he is making specific expressions.
- A caregiver can make a facial expression and have a child pick out the pillow that represents that expression and compare.
- A caregiver can place a pillow in the child’s lunch box or backpack to remind them to behave according to the feeling on the pillow. e.g. Happy, Brave, Kind
- The child can keep a journal of his feelings by writing and/or drawing out the way he felt during the day. A caregiver can debrief with him after it is completed.

Sensory

Description

- The Kimochis characters are inviting and visually stimulating for a child to play with, use and enjoy.
- The Kimochis pillows are brightly colored with black details that provide a high color contrast making the descriptions and facial expressions easier to read and focus on.
- The Kimochis pillows are uniform in shape, but have all different facial expressions and descriptions.
- The Kimochis pillows are made of a soft plush material.
- The Kimochis characters are tactilely stimulating. The characters are a plush material that have beans and/or stuffing inside depending on the character.
- The Kimochis characters have some different textures to add sensory appeal to the character. For example, Kimochis Bug has crinkle wings.
- The Kimochis characters can be companions and provide comfort for a child when she is in novel or difficult situation, such as when she is going to a new school.

Skills

- Visual attention, which is important in appropriate conversation (e.g: eye contact), is often lacking when a child has a sensory processing issue. This can be reinforced when selecting Kimochis pillows to help him identify and express his feelings.
- Children can use the Kimochis pillows to practice visual scanning. For instance, “Find the pillow that looks silly,” or “Find the word ‘friendly.’”
- Visual discrimination occurs when the child searches for specific Kimochis pillows and discriminates between them to find the one he wants or is looking for.
- Visual processing occurs when a child watches and is able to recognize the Kimochis characters or pillows being asked for or wanted by a caregiver.
- Kimochis can help teach children social awareness to help recognize and understand what others are feeling.
- Kimochis may teach children social management to help manage and express emotions in relationships.
- Children can practice their self-awareness using the Kimochis to help identify needs and feelings in the moment.
- A caregiver can carefully select a Kimochis pillow for the child to use as a fidget toy with a word that he needs to be mindful of to help achieve that behavior throughout the day.

Play Ideas

- Have a child with a visual impairment count the Kimochis pillows one by one by pointing or moving them over.
- Have a child pick up a Kimochis pillow of her choice and try to imitate that facial expression in the mirror.
- A caregiver can place a pillow in the child’s lunch box or backpack to remind her to behave according to the feeling on the pillow. e.g. Happy, Brave, Kind
- Create a designated spot in your house for the Kimochis character and feelings pillows. When the child is beginning to feel overwhelmed or needs a break, a caregiver can have him cool down and express feelings in this designated “safe place.”
- Caregiver can hide the Kimochis pillows around a room and have the child try to find them.

Adaptation Ideas

- Add puffy paint to the outline of the descriptions and/or facial expressions on the Kimochis pillows to make them more pronounced to feel.



Social/Emotional

Description

- Kimochis provide a starting point to begin dialogue with children about differences in appearance, causes and awareness.
- Children who have disabilities may be able to identify with one of the 5 Kimochis characters. For example, Huggtopus only has 6 legs instead of 8 like other octopus friends.
- Kimochis can be a companion and provide comfort for a child when she is in novel or difficult situations.
- Kimochis characters and pillows can help children work through their emotions in the safety of play.
- This character may be an ideal option to give a sibling of a child who has a disability. The sibling can use the Kimochis to work through her own anger, fear and sadness she may be feeling toward her sister who has a disability.
- The Kimochis characters can be used to soothe a child who is angry or anxious.

Skills

- Kimochis can be used to model proper behavior with regards to personal space and appropriate touch especially through the Kimochis “So Much Love” YouTube video by Huggtopus.
- Kimochis can help children learn about social awareness and become conscious of other people and the individual issues they face.
- Kimochis can help children build skills to make responsible, independent choices.
- Kimochis can help children express their feelings and understand why they have the feelings they expressed.
- Through pretend play, children can become more self aware of how they act and react to different situations. Pretend play enables children to re-play the situation and learn different ways to handle themselves and different ways to respond.

Play Ideas

- Using the Kimochis pillows, act out scenarios and how children could respond. This helps children understand how their words and actions affect and influence others.
- Have the child create his own *Feel Guide* and think of new activities and stories to write about.
- Play “pass the pillow” to create a story at dinner. For example, the Kimochis pillow chosen is “mad”- I am mad because my mashed potatoes are gone. Then the next person says they are mad because they didn’t want mashed potatoes and so on until everyone has contributed to the story.
- A caregiver can assist the child in making her own Kimochis pillows using felt, stuffing and puffy paint or markers.
- A caregiver can guide a “compliments” game using the Kimochis pillows. Each child must select a positive Kimochis pillow to give to someone else and explain why they chose this pillow.
- A caregiver and the child can create a “feelings soup” by throwing all of the feelings of the day into the pot and stirring them up to release the stress of the day in a positive way.

