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Honeycomb: A digital family calendar designed for families with young kids

BY

Jiahua Li

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

School of Design
College of Art and Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, NY
July 22, 2021

Committee Approval

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Associate Advisor

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School of Design, College of Art and Design

Abstract

Calendar is important to families with young kids because it helps young kids build confidence and independence and establishes healthy habits. However, the traditional calendar is not designed for young kids and it is not easy to understand for them. To solve the problem, I designed an interactive digital calendar— Honeycomb family calendar, to helps families with young kids on creating a calendar and reading a calendar. This project is presented in an interactive mockup showing how it works. The goal is to makes the daily events on the calendar easy to comprehend by young kids and provides a fun and easy-to-use calendar creating experience for parents as well as young kids.

Keywords
UI/UX design, Digital calendar, family, home, young kids

Context

Problem and solution

“You should clean your room in the afternoon.” This is how young kids know what to do next - being told what needs to be done by other people. Many parents haven't awarded the importance of a calendar to young kids. Calendars are important to young kids, young kids begin to understand what's important and look forward to future events when they know what’s will happen and what family activities on the calendar and this help strengthen shared values and bond the family together. And they will learn to take charge of their own activities and build and independence. However, the traditional calendar is not designed for families with young kids, it is not easy to understand by young kids and young kids can not participate in the planning of the schedule. To better define where the problem is, I have interviewed families with young kids to understand the current usage of the family calendar. The result shows that while digital calendars are relatively common among many families, most parents just put events related to their kids on the calendar to remind themselves, the digital calendar is not readable for their kids and not easy to accessed by young kids (Appendix A, page 11). As for paper calendar (Appendix A, page 12), some families mention that they use paper calendars designed for young kids but it is difficult to pick the exact event card from a bunch of cards, and sometimes the event card gets lost, so it is hard to continue using those paper calendars. And Some families try to visualize the traditional paper calendar by drawing or image stickers to make it easier to understand for young kids but it wastes too much time.

To solve the problem, I designed an interactive digital calendar to help families with young kids on creating a calendar and reading a calendar. This project is presented in an interactive mockup showing how it works. The goal is to makes the daily events on the calendar easy to comprehend by young kids and provides a fun and easy-to-use calendar creating experience for parents as well as young kids. The target audiences are families with young kids, whose parents want to help their kids follow schedules, demonstrate emerging independence by creating a calendar for their kids. They also wanna encourage their kids to participate in the planning of the schedular. The first step is to add events on the day view. On the edit mode of the day view, there will be an empty block in three rows -- morning, afternoon, and evening. Users can select an empty block to add an event. After they select an empty block(Appendix A, page 11), they will see some suggested events, they can pick from those events or search for the event they want. Each event was designed to be a 3D environment block with labels to help users understand what it is. And user can customize the block color to define the type of events. After choosing an event, the event will show up on the calendar day view. As for edit the existing events on the calendar day view, users are free to drag and drop the event to the other time period of the day. And they can also edit an existing event by selecting the "more" button on the event to edit the color of the block, highlight the event and remove it (Appendix A, page 20). Highlight the event will make the event shows on the blocks of week view or month view (Appendix A, page 20), on the week view and month view, users can switch to the previous or next period and zoom in or zoom out to view the calendar block. For users that want to view the calendar without a device, this product also offers users to print out the calendar. Users can click the print button on the day,

week, and month view to print out the calendar to a beautiful paper calendar(Appendix A, page 23-24).

Design process and details

In the problem discovery phase, the following process was followed. To get a better idea of the existing system and problem, I started my discovery phase with secondary research. My key finding is that calendar is important to young kids, it helps kids build confidence and independence, establishes healthy habits, and bonds families together. However, while digital calendars are wildly used among families, they are not designed for young kids. And there are some existing paper calendars that are customized for young kids. Next, I sought to find out more about the usage and problem of family calendars through user interviews with focus groups-- families with young kids. And the key problem I discovered is that not many families have calendars for young kids, most parents just put events related to their kids on the calendar to remind themselves rather than their kids. And digital calendars are not easy to understand and access by young kids. And paper calendars customized for young kids have limitations so it is hard for families to persist in using that. So my main focus is to make the daily events easy to comprehend by young kids, make the scheduler planning flow easier and fun to encourage kids to participate, and make the calendar easy to access by everyone in the family. To solve the first point, I did some research and I found out visual supports, such as photos, drawings, objects, gestures, and print and environmental cues can help young kids understand and learn and they are sometimes paired with verbal explanations. So I using elements that come from young kid's daily life as inspirations and making them into 3D rooms to help kids understand what the event is. And each room is labeled with the event name to help young kids learn. As for creating the simple and fun flow to add and edit events, I got inspiration from stacking games and honeycomb, the events will stack together and the calendar looks like a honeycomb, users are free to drag and drop the event blocks like playing games. And when adding events, some suggested events will display to help users quickly add an event into the calendar. For the last point, during the research, I realized that most parents would prefer their kids to spend less time on the digital device, so the product also offers an option for users to print out the calendar, and it will generate the paper calendar design for users to print out.

Conclusion

Calendar is important to families with young kids because it helps young kids build confidence and independence and establishes healthy habits. However, the traditional calendar is not designed for young kids and it is not easy to understand for them. Honeycomb family calendar provides an interactive tool that visualizes the daily events to provide a fun and easy-to-understand experience for families with young kids. The challenge of this project is the complexity of visualizing the event to make every kid understand, because kids may have different experiences, so they may have a different understanding of the event. In the future, I will keep exploring the event visualization and make it more personalized for every family.

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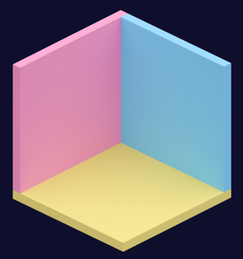
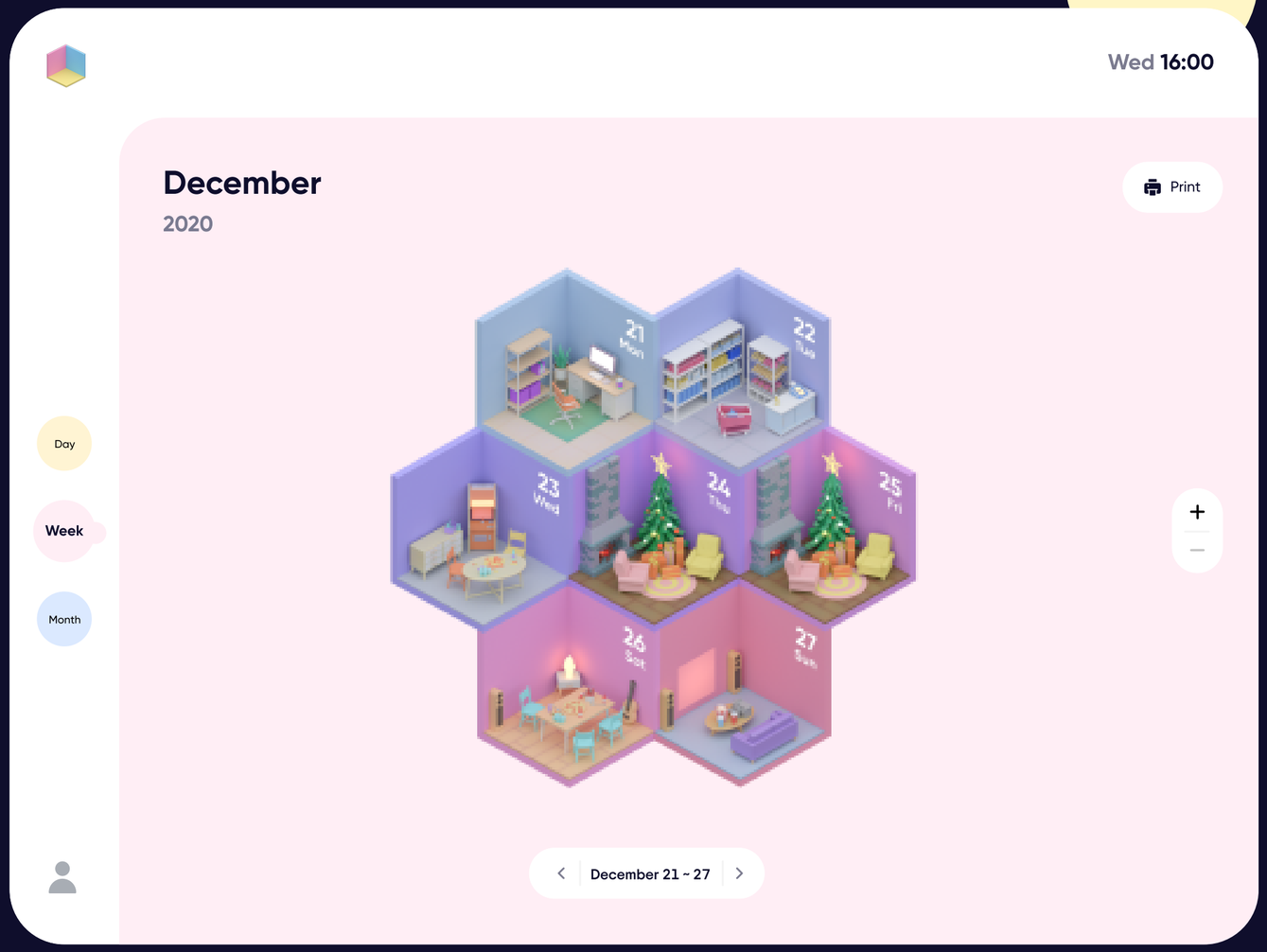
Appendix B



Honeycomb

Family Calendar



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01

Overview

THE PROBLEM

How might we make the family calendar *easier to understand and use* by young kids?

Traditional digital calendar is not designed for young kids.
It is not easy to understand for young kids and young kids can not participant in the planning of the schedular.

THE SOLUTION

An interactive digital experience to visualize the daily events on the calendar

Easy to understand

Using elements that come from young kid's daily life as inspirations and making them into designs to create an easy to understand and fun experience.

Fun and easy to use

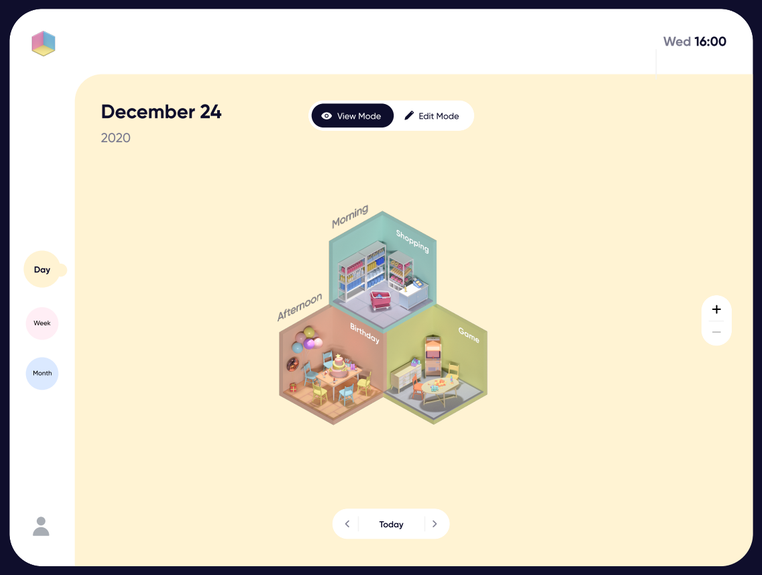
The calendar creating experience is fun and easy to encourage young kids to partner with their families on the scheduler planning.

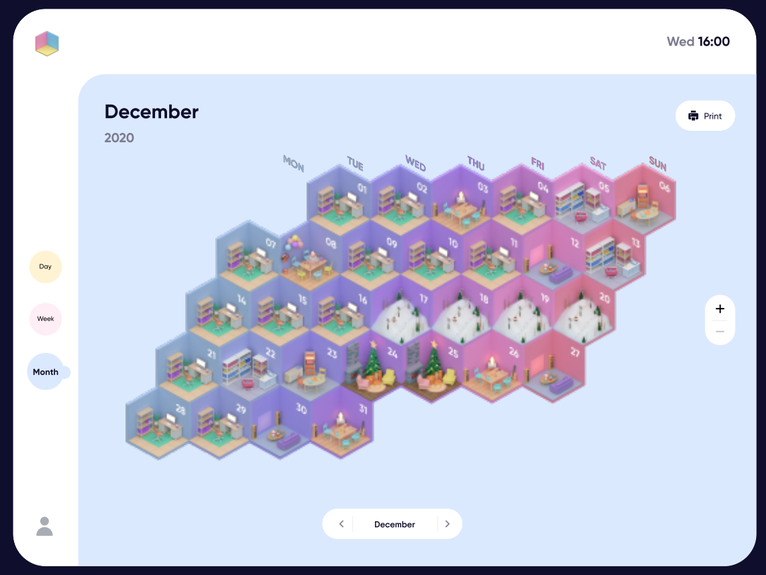
Digital and paper versions

Provide various views of the calendar, and allow users to view it on the device or print it out to serve users' different needs.

THE SOLUTION

Honeycomb Family Calendar





PROCESS

Here is how it’s done

DISCOVERY PHASE

- Secondary research
- User research

IDEATION AND DESIGN

- Concept mapping
- User flow
- Design Details

CONCLUSION

- Conclusion
- Future Scope

02

Discovery Phase

DISCOVERY PHASE

Why do young kids need a calendar?

Bonds the family together

Young kids begin to understand what's important and look forward to future events when they knows what’s will happen and what family activities on the calendar and this helps strengthens shared values and bond the family together.

Build confidence and independence

With a calendar, young kids will learn to take charge of their own activities and instead of being told to what needs to be done. And this help make them build confidence and independence.

Establishes healthy habits

Calendars help young kids remember important things and establish healthy habits. As they age, they’ll have more self-discipline in terms of healthy habits.

DISCOVERY PHASE

User Interview

Key Findings:

Not many family have calendar for young kids

Most parents just put events related to their kids on the calendar to remind themselves, because they use digital calendar provides at work and they are not readable and easy to access for their kids.

Hard to persist in using paper calendar designed for kids

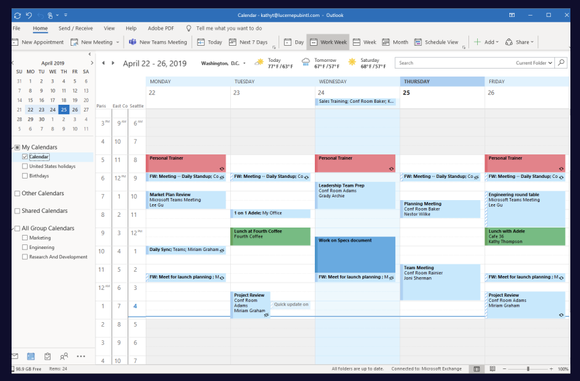
Some families use paper calendars designed for young kids but there are some limitations using those so it is hard to persist in using that.

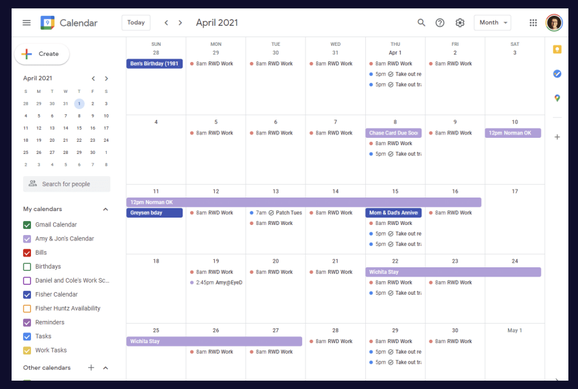
Not easy to DIY calendar for young kids

Some families try to visualize the traditional paper calendar by drawing or putting some image stickers to make it easier to understand for young kids but it wastes too much time.

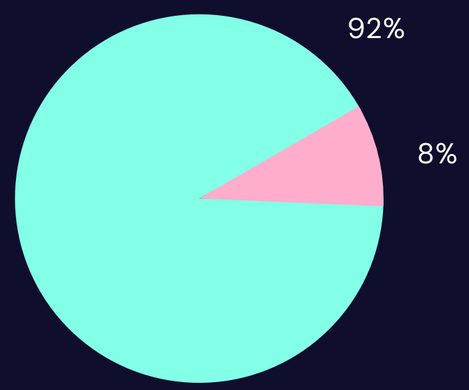
DISCOVERY PHASE

Current solution - Digital calendar





Type of Digital Calendar used



Digital calendar provides at work place

Others

Advantages/ Disadvantages

👍

- Access calendar from multiple locations
- Having all scheduling information in one place

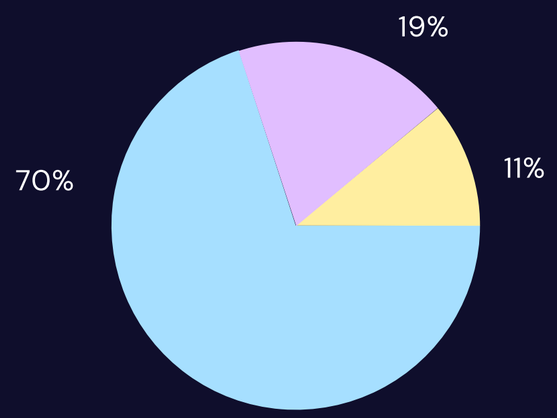
👎

- The traditional digital calendar is hard to understand by young kids
- Not easy to be accessed by young kids
- Forget to write things on the calendar

DISCOVERY PHASE

Current solution - Paper calendar

Type of Paper Calendar used



- Wall calendar
- Desk calendar
- Pocket calendar

Advantages/ Disadvantages

👍

- Easy to use
- Accessible in a central location

👎

- Difficult to pick the exact event card from a bunch of cards
- Difficult to visualize traditional paper calendar for young kids
- Difficult to access the calendar from other locations
- Difficult to moving or change events
- Difficult to share calendar

DISCOVERY PHASE

Users

The target users are families with young kids, whose parents want to help their kids follow schedules, demonstrate emerging independence by creating a calendar for their kids. The young kid can also help in the planning of the schedular.

Sophie

Mom

Core needs

- Easy to use calendar
- Encourage kids to help on the planning
- To guide the kids on what to do and remember important things

Emma

Daughter

Core needs

- Easily understand the events on the calendar
- Have fun helping parents plan the schedule

RESEARCH

Visual supports help children understand

Visual supports, such as photos, drawings, objects, gestures, and print and environmental cues, can help young kids understand and learn. They are sometimes paired with verbal explanations. They help children know what to do and feel included.

02

Ideation and Design

IDEATION AND DESIGN

Areas of Focus

Visualized the daily events

Using elements that come from young kid's daily life as inspirations to visualize the daily event to help young kids understand.

Add and edit events flow

Make the experience seamless, easy and enjoyable for the users to add and edit daily events on the calendar.

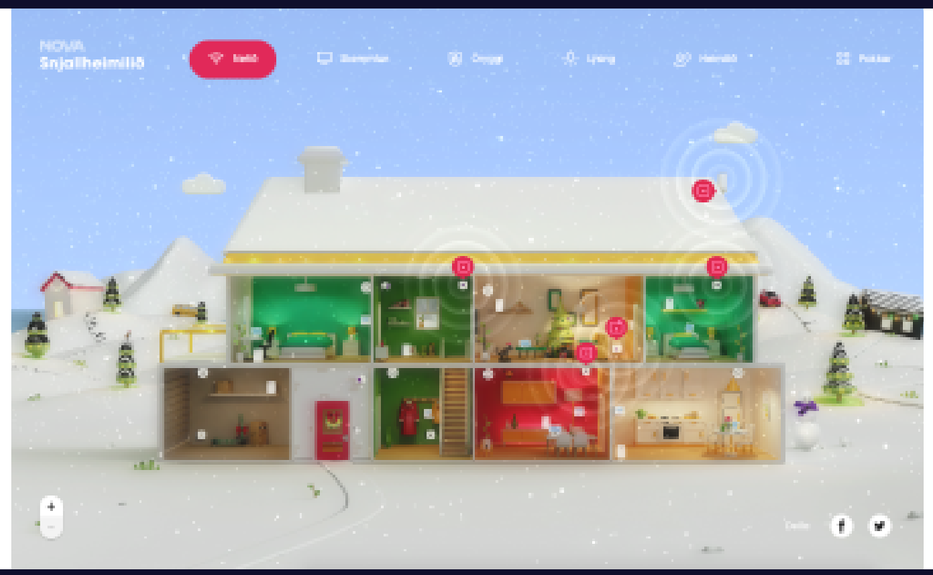
Day, week and month views

To better serve users' needs, provide various views of the calendar, and allow users to view it on the device or print it out.

IDEATION AND DESIGN

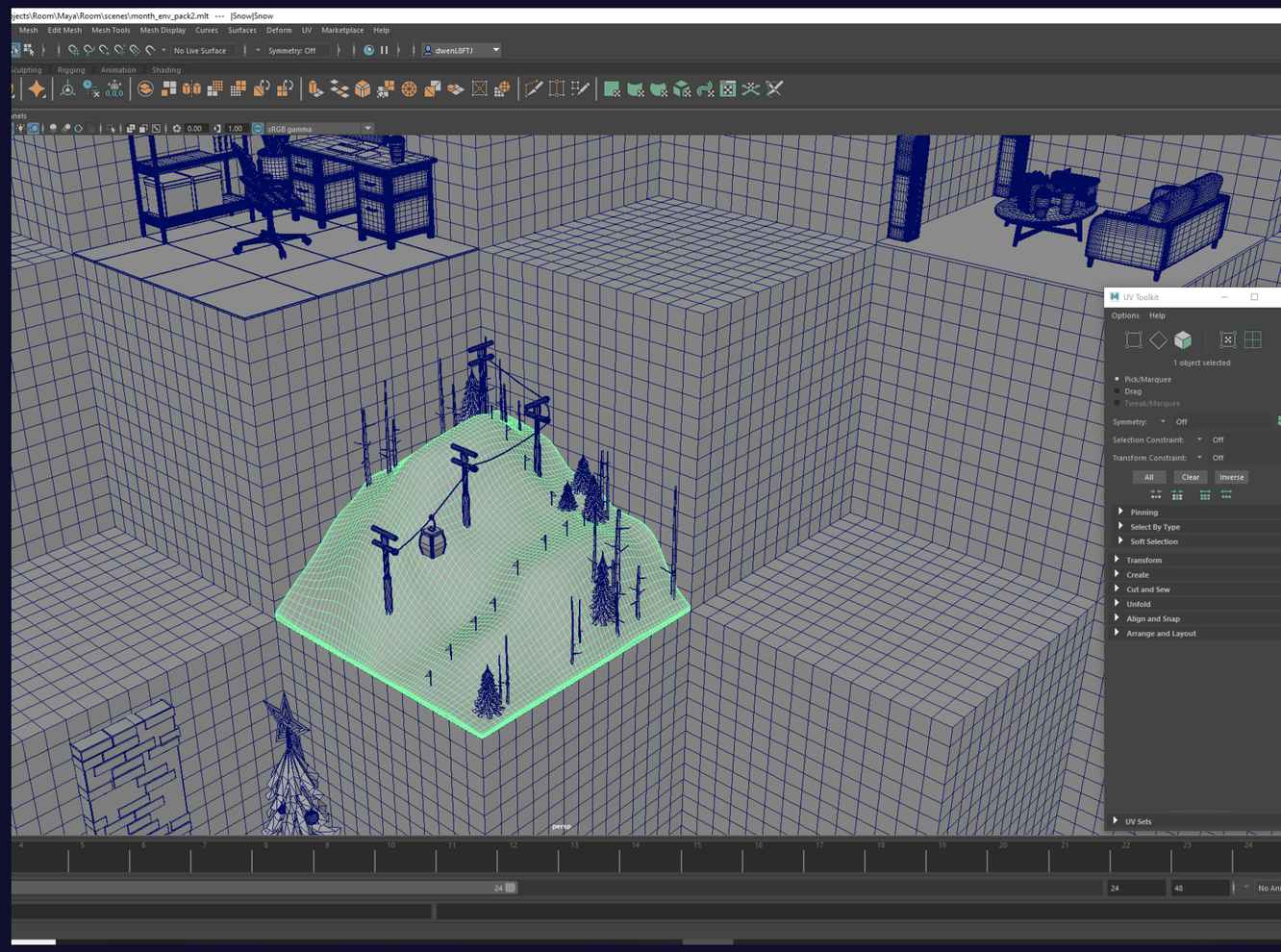
Moodboard and inspiration

Using elements that come from young kid's daily life as inspirations and making them into designs to create an easy to understand and fun experience.



IDEATION AND DESIGN

Event blocks

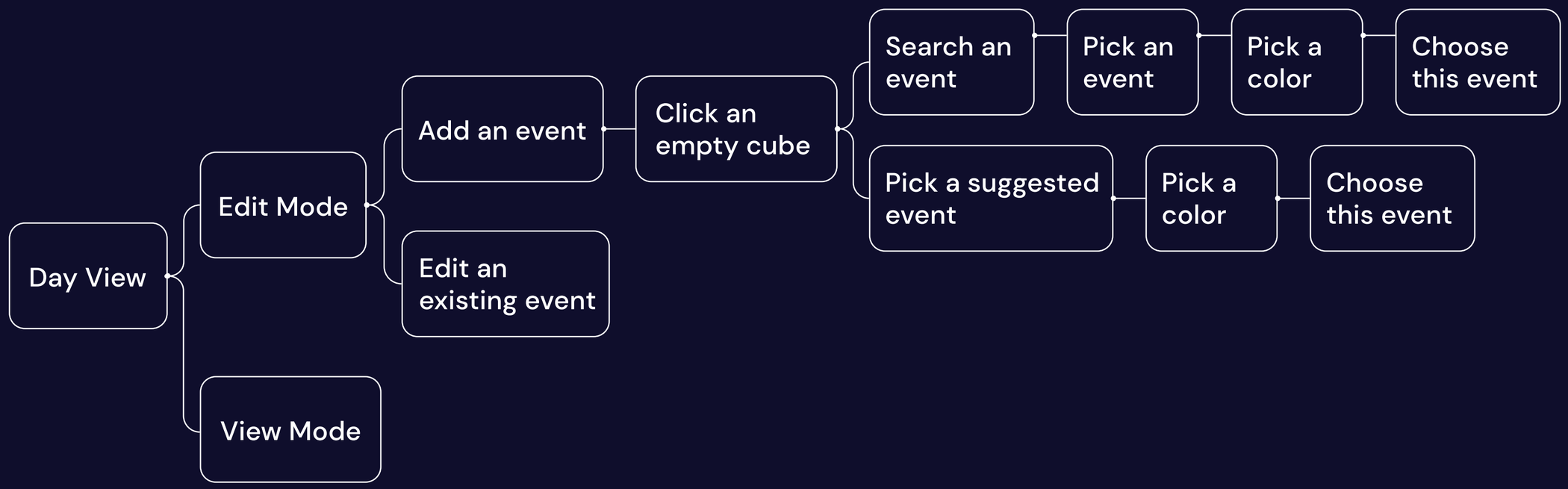


IDEATION AND DESIGN

Add events

User case

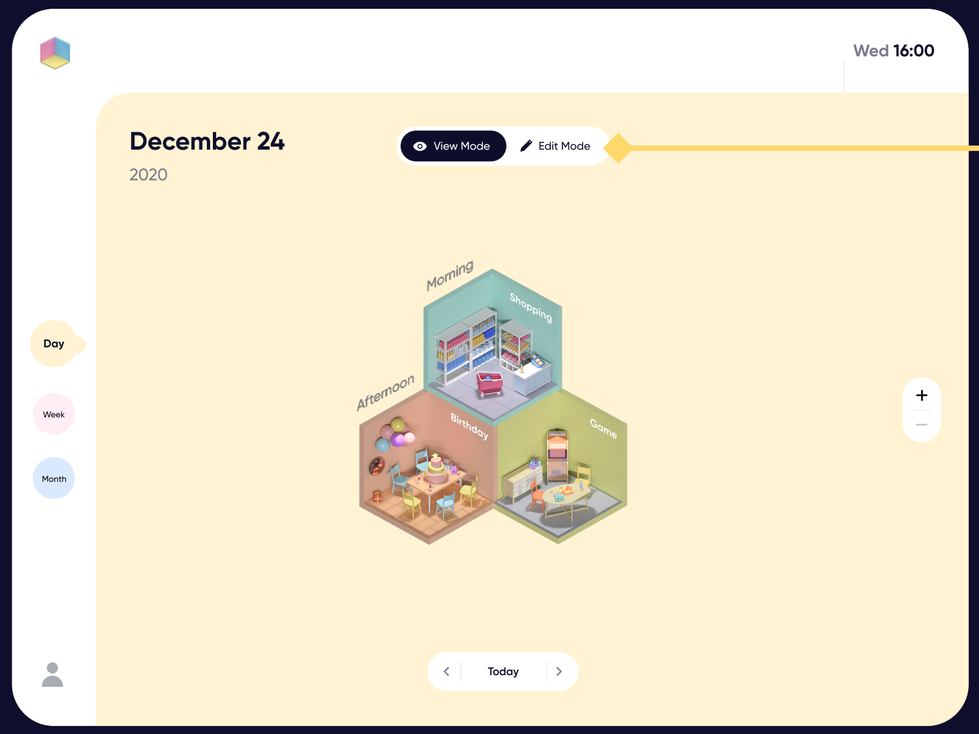
Sophie wanna encourage her daughter Emma to partner with her to create a schedule for Emma together. The add an event process should be easy to use and understand for them.



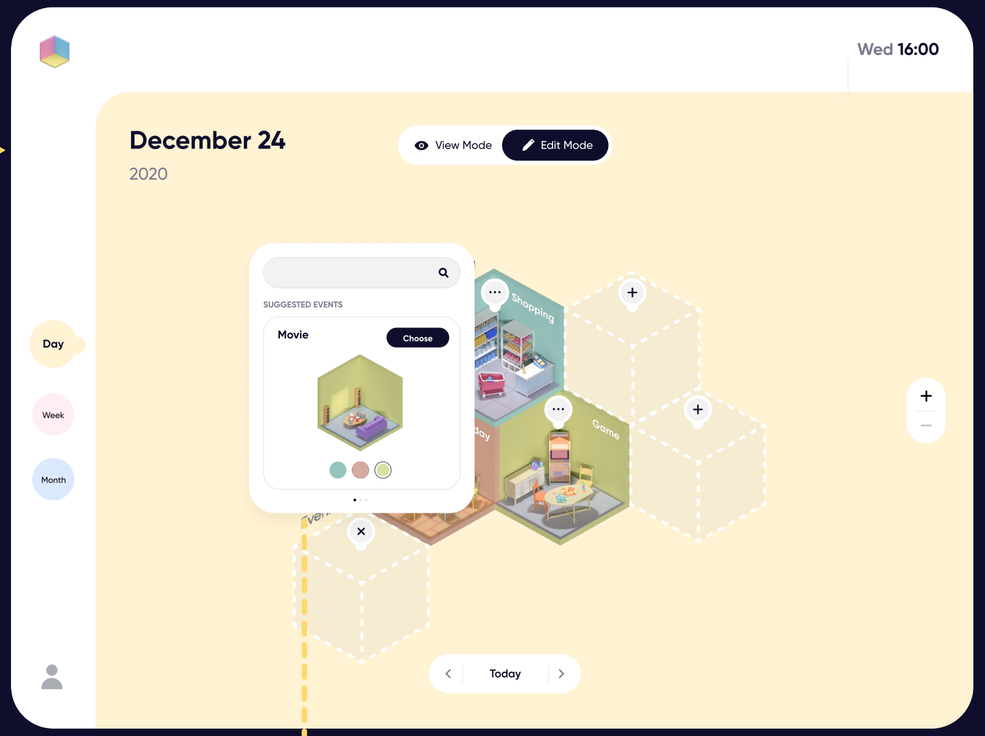
IDEATION AND DESIGN

Add events

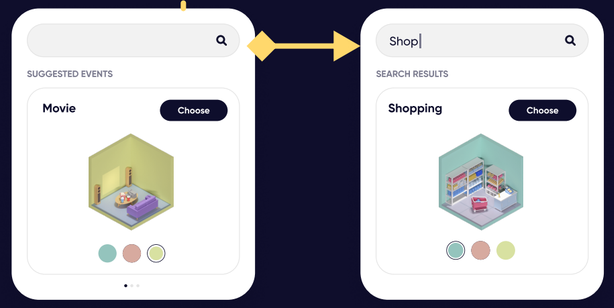
Day view - View Mode



Day view - Edit Mode



Some suggested events will show up here for users to quickly add events into the calendar



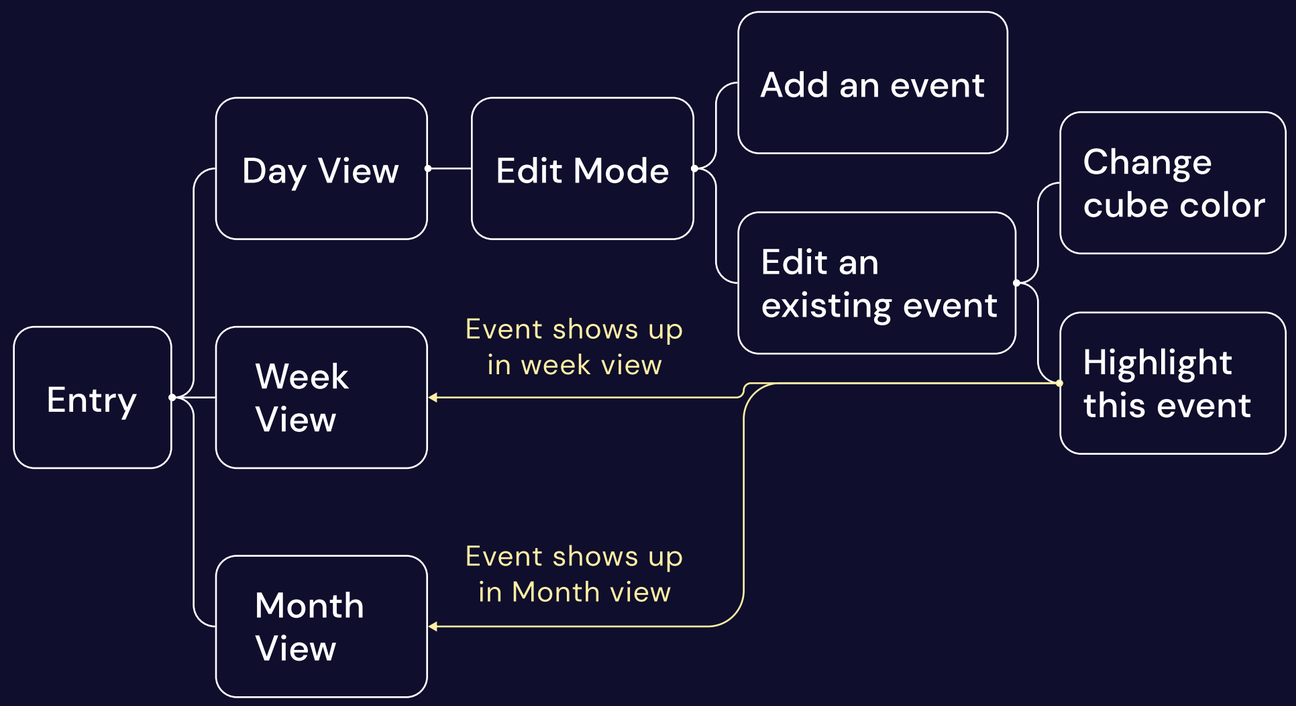
Users can also search for events and customized the block color

IDEATION AND DESIGN

Show the event on week and month view

User case

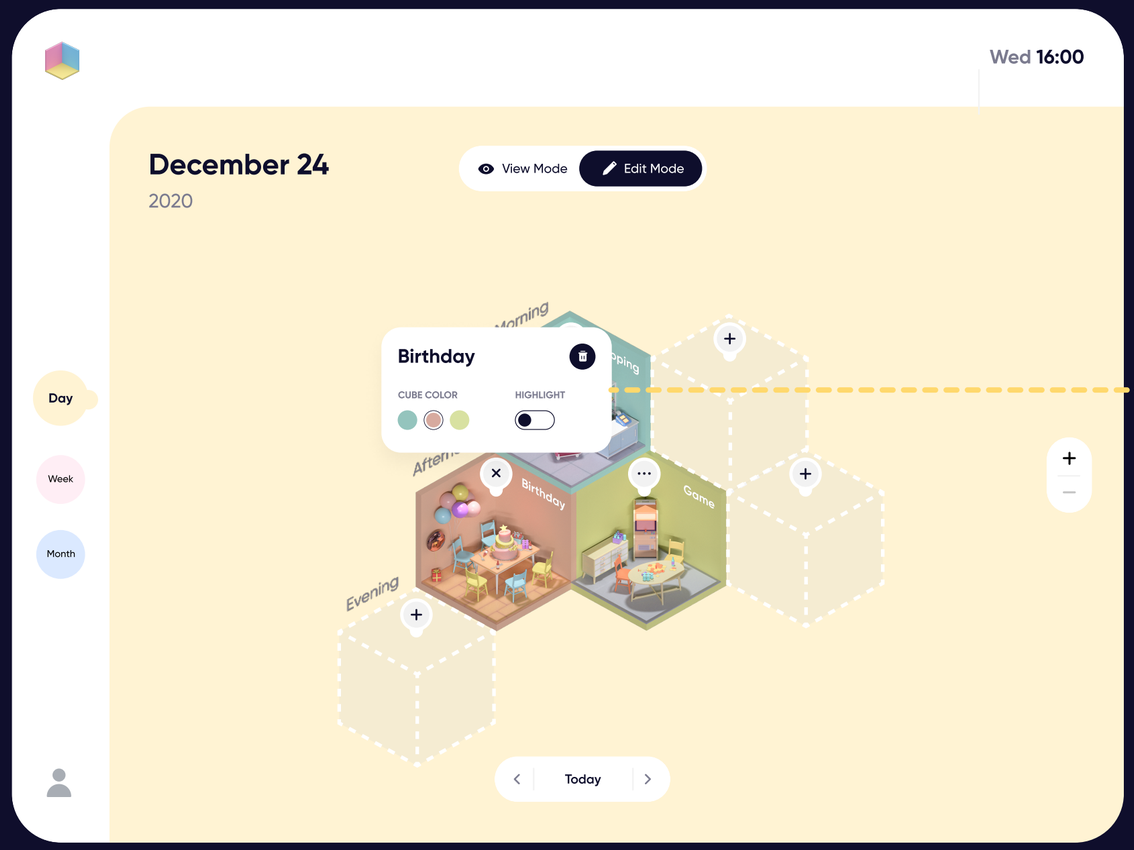
Sophie and Emma wanna also create a week view and month view of the calendar for the families to quickly see what's the important events in a week/month.

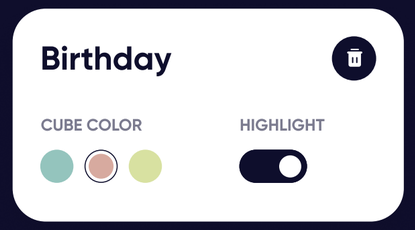


IDEATION AND DESIGN

Show the event on week and month view

Day View - Edit Mode





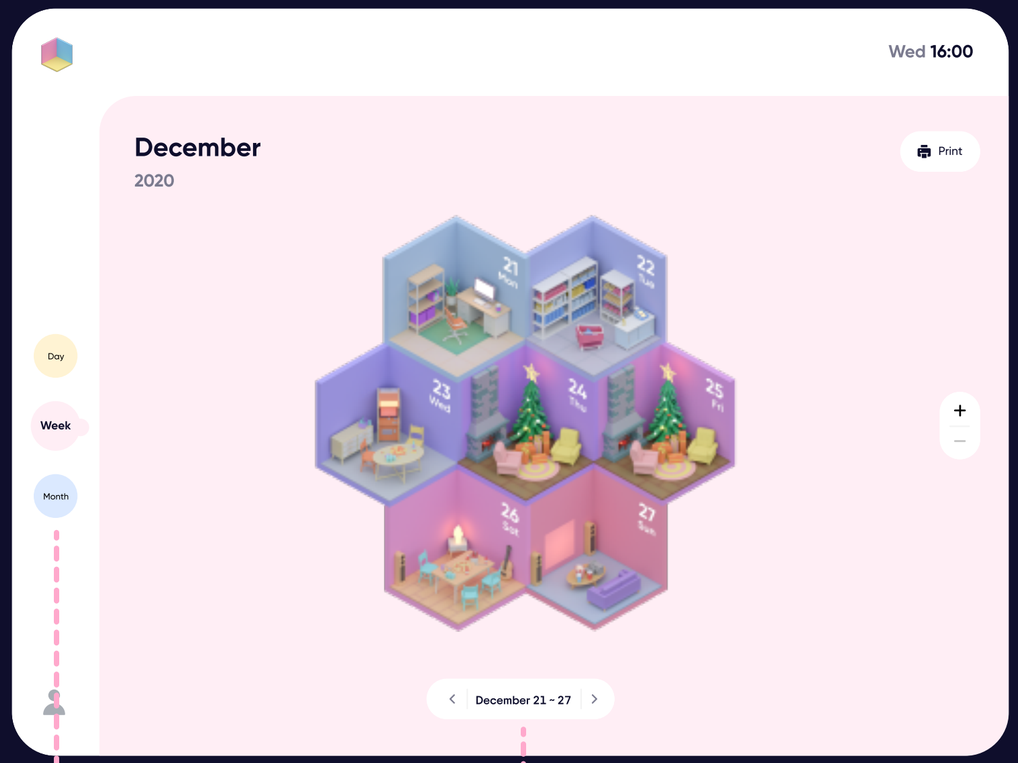
Highlight

To show the most important event of that date to quickly remind users in the week/month view, users can turn on the highlight switch in the edit panel of the block.

IDEATION AND DESIGN

Show the event on week and month view

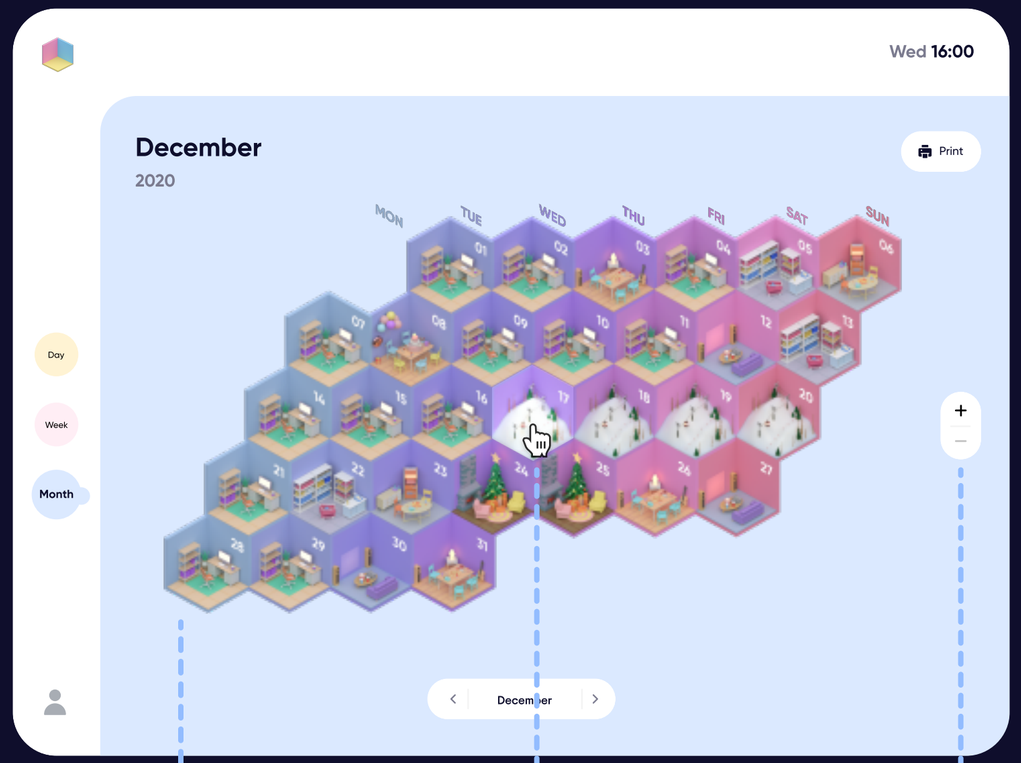
Week View



Switch to the day, week or month view

Switch to previous or next period

Month View



Different colors to represent Monday to Sunday

The light of the block will turn on when hovering on this block

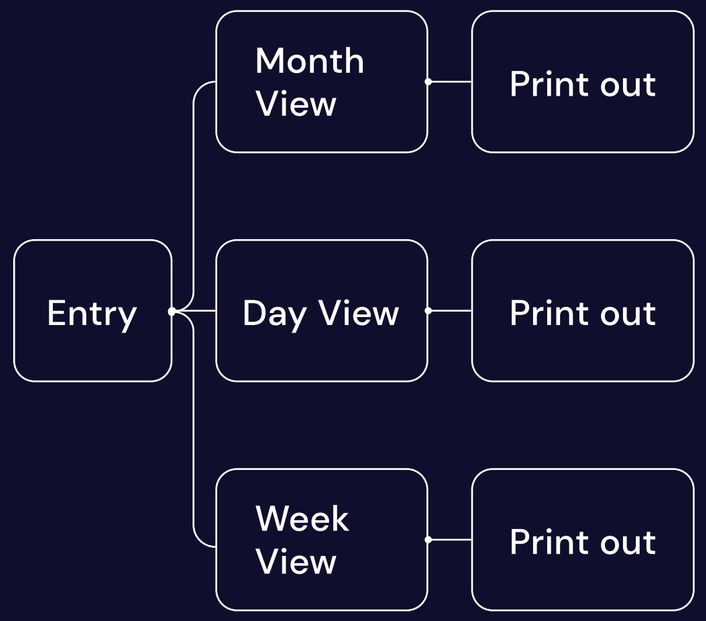
Free to zoom in or out to view the calendar blocks

IDEATION AND DESIGN

Print out the calendar

User case

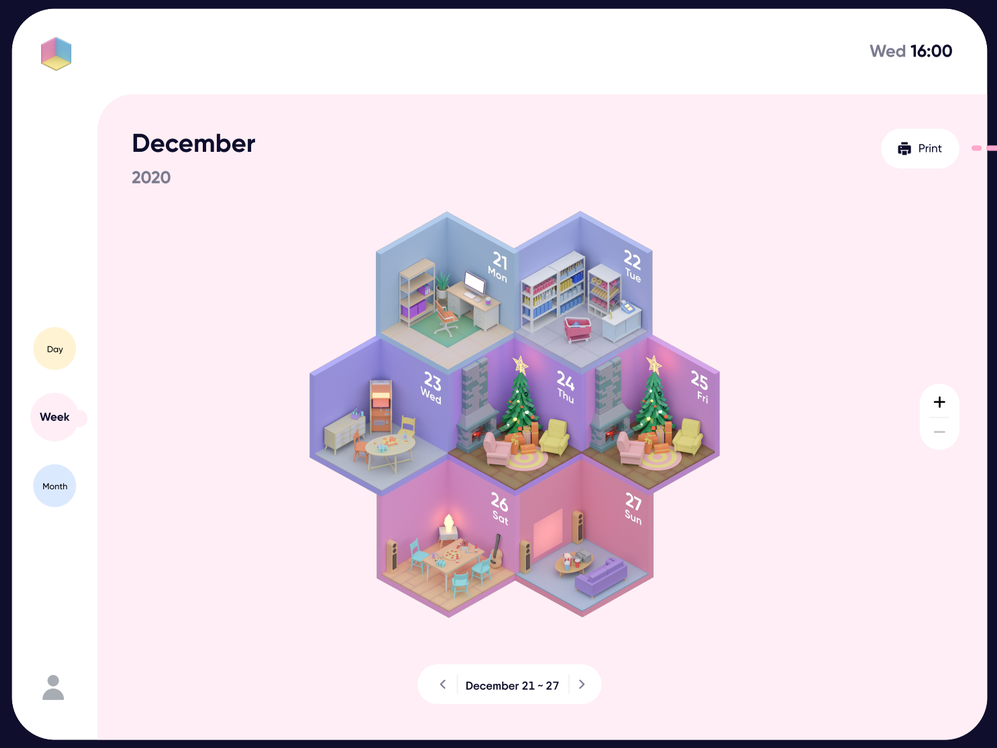
Sophie and Emma wanna have a paper version of the calendar that the families can view in the center location of the house.



IDEATION AND DESIGN

Print out the calendar

Week View



Print

Click the print button to print out the calendar so everyone in the family can view it without a device.

Printed Weekly Calendar

Printed Monthly Calendar

DEC

IDEATION AND DESIGN

Design to be intriguing and easy to read

I chose Gilroy for its geometric appearance with modern proportions to complete the wide variety of content and ensure readability. I use a lot of bright color here becasue young kids are attracted to warm, bright colors.

FONT

Gilroy

Medium

Bold

COLOR

#FFEEF5

#E5E5E5

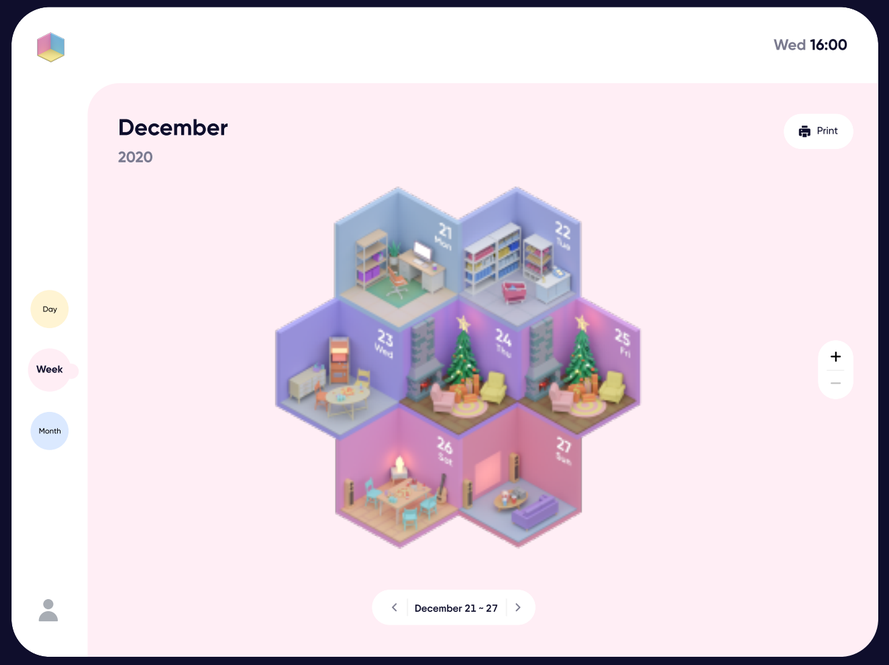
#FFF3D3

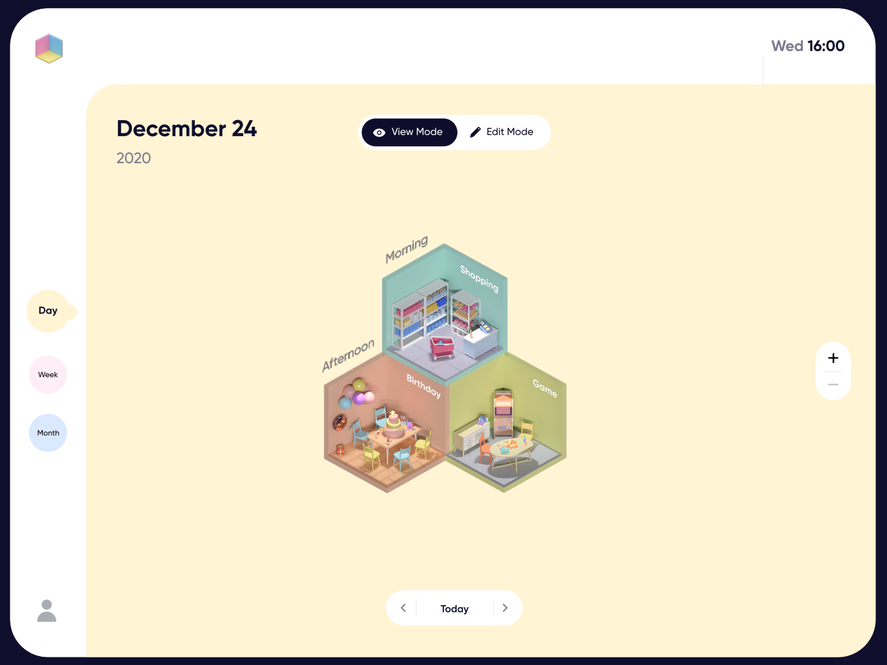
#7B7B8F

#DBE9FF

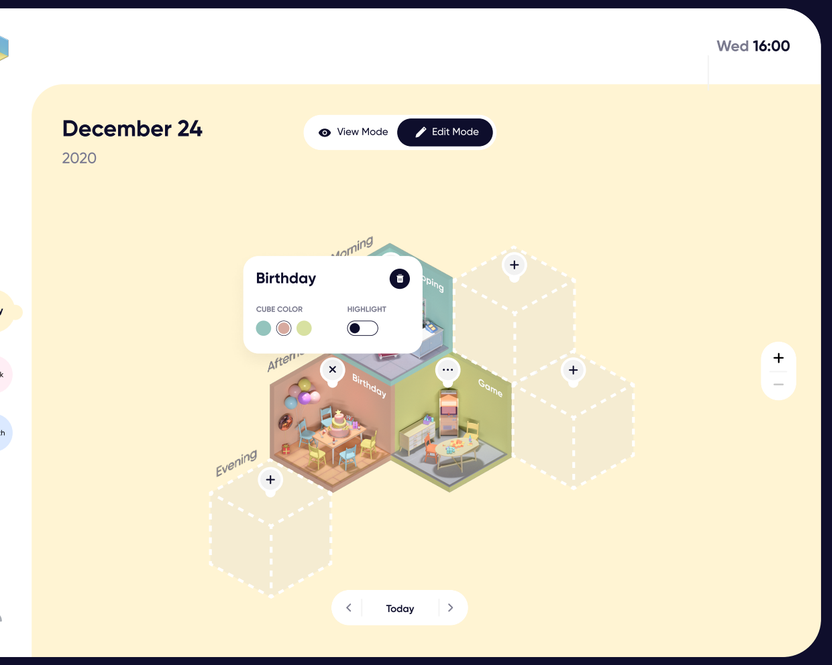
#0E0E2C

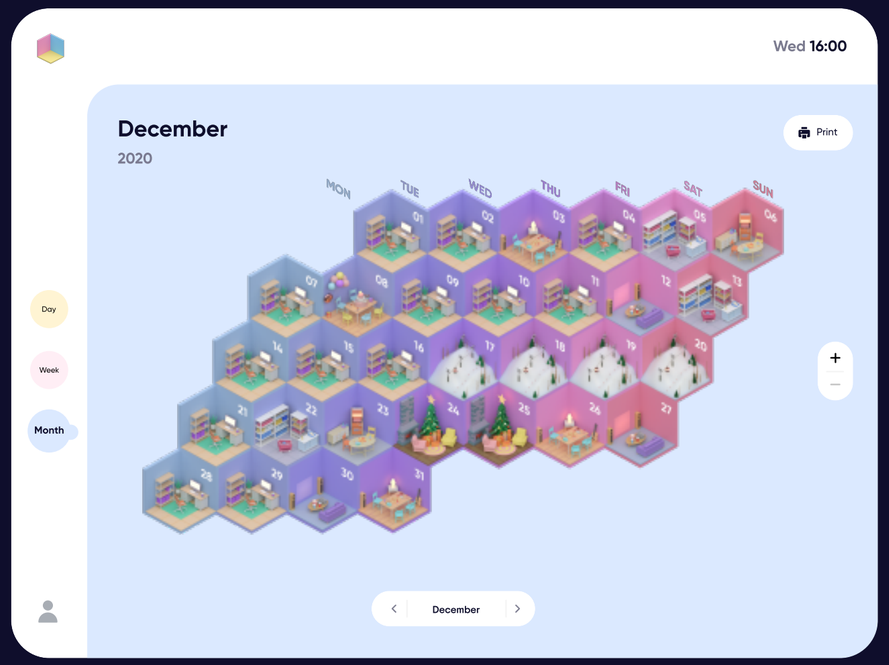
DEC
2 0 2 0
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN


Wed 16:00
December
2020
Print
Day
Week
Month
December 21 – 27


Wed 16:00
December 24
2020
View Mode
Edit Mode
Day
Week
Month
Morning
Shopping
Afternoon
Birthday
Game
Today

DEC
2 0 2 0


Wed 16:00
December 24
2020
View Mode
Edit Mode
Birthday
CUBE COLOR
HIGHLIGHT
Birthday
Game
Evening
Today


Wed 16:00
December
2020
Print
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
Day
Week
Month
December

December 24
2020
View Mode
Edit Mode
SUGGESTED EVENTS
Movie
Choose
Shopping
Game
Day
Week
Month
Today

02

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Calendar is important to families with young kids because it helps young kids build confidence and independence and establishes healthy habits. However, the traditional calendar is not designed for young kids and it is not easy to understand for them. Honeycomb family calendar provides an interactive tool that visualizes the daily events to provide a fun and easy-to-understand experience for families with young kids.

CONCLUSION

Future Scope

The challenge of this project is the complexity of visualizing the event to make every kid understand, because kids may have different experiences, so they may have a different understanding of the event. In the future, I will keep exploring the event visualization and make it more personalized for every family.

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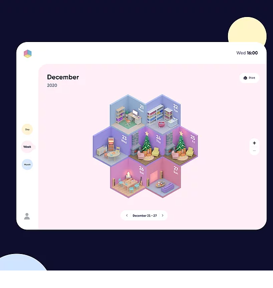
Thank you!

Appendix C: Webpage https://www.carval.in/honeycomb



Honeycomb
Family Calendar

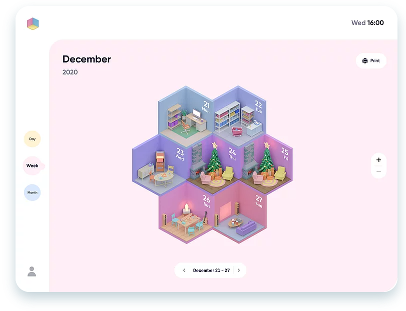
Project Name	Designer	Committee
Honeycomb Family Calendar	Jiahua Li	Adam Smith, Mike Strobert

Rethink the family calendar to better serve families with young kids

Visualize the daily events for young kids

Using elements that come from young kid's daily life as inspirations to visualize the daily event to help young kids understand.

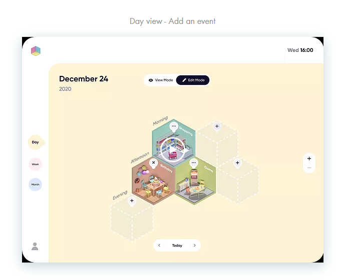
Week view



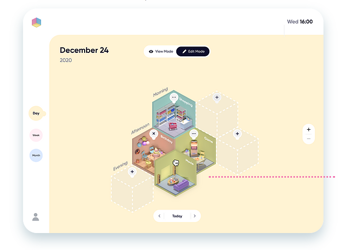
A simple and enjoyable experience to add and edit events

Make the experience seamless, easy and enjoyable for the users to add and edit daily events on the calendar.

Day view - Add an event



Day view - Edit events

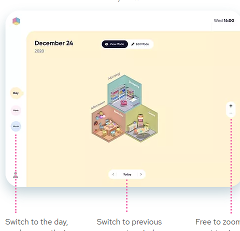


Users are free to drag and drop the event to the other time period of the day.

Various views of the calendar

To better serve users' different needs, provide various views of the calendar, and allow users to view it on the device or print it out.

Day view

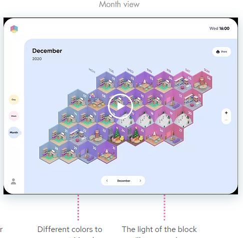


Switch to the day, week or month view

Switch to previous or next period

Free to zoom in or out to view the calendar blocks

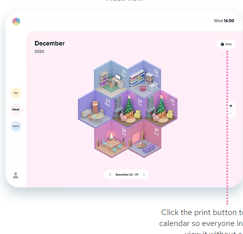
Month view



Different colors to represent Monday to Sunday

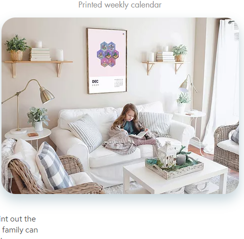
The light of the block will turn on when hovering on this block

Week view



Click the print button to print out the calendar so everyone in the family can view it without a device.

Printed weekly calendar



Design Process

Why do young kids need a calendar?

Bonds the family together

Young kids begin to understand what's important and look forward to future events when they know what's will happen and what family activities on the calendar and this helps strengthens shared values and bond the family together.

Build confidence and independence

With a calendar, young kids will learn to take charge of their own activities and instead of being told to what need to be done. And this help make them build confidence and independence.

Establishes healthy habits

Calendars help young kids remember important things and establish healthy habits. As they age, they'll have more self-discipline in terms of healthy habits.

Learning from the user

To get a better idea of the existing system and problem, I started my discovery phase with user interview.

Key findings:

Not many family have calendar for young kids

Most parents just put events related to their kids on the calendar to remind themselves. Because they use digital calendar provides all work and they are not readable and easy to access for their kids.

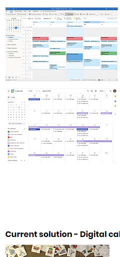
Hard to persist in using paper calendars designed for young kids

Some families use paper calendars designed for young kids but there are some limitations using those so it is hard to persist in using that.

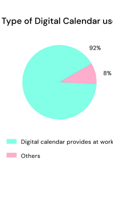
Not easy to DIY calendar for young kids

Some families try to visualize the traditional paper calendar by drawing or image stickers to make it easier to understand for young kids but it wastes too much time.

Current solution - Paper calendar



Type of Digital Calendar used



Advantages/ Disadvantages

- Access calendar from multiple locations
- Having all scheduling information in one place

- The traditional digital calendar is hard to understand by young kids
- Not easy to be accessed by young kids
- Forget to write things on the calendar

Current solution - Digital calendar

Type of Paper Calendar used

Advantages/ Disadvantages

- Easy to use
- Accessible in a central location

- Difficult to pick the exact event card from a bunch of cards
- Difficult to visualize traditional paper calendar for young kids
- Difficult to access the calendar from other locations
- Difficult to moving or change events
- Difficult to share calendar

The target users are families with young kids, whose parents want to help their kids follow schedules, demonstrate emerging independence by creating a calendar for their kids. The young kid can also help in the planning of the schedular.

Sophie, Mom

Core needs:

- Encourage kids to help on the planning
- Easy-to-used calendar
- To guide the kids on which to do and remember important things

Emma, Daughter

Core needs:

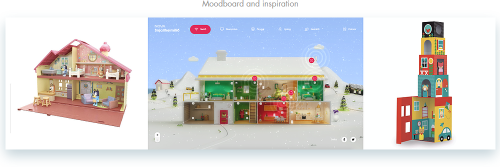
- Easily understand the events on the calendar
- More fun helping parents plan the schedule

Taking it to the next level

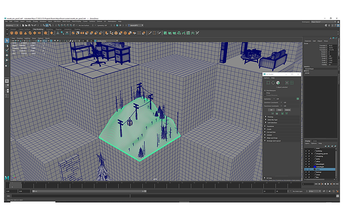
01
Visualized the daily events

Using elements that come from young kid's daily life as inspirations and making them into designs to create an easy to understand and fun experience.

Moodboard and inspiration



Event blocks Design



02
Add and edit events flow

Make the experience seamless, easy and enjoyable for the users to add and edit daily events on the calendar.

User case

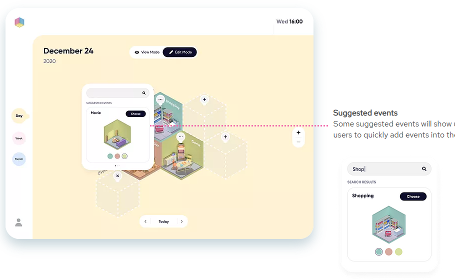
Sophie wanna encourage her daughter Emma to partner with her to create a schedule for Emma. The add an event process should be easy to use and understand for them.

Day View → Edit Mode → Add an event → Click an empty cube → Search an event / Pick a suggested event → Pick an event → Pick a color → Choose this event

Day View → Edit Mode → Edit an existing event

Day View → View Mode

Day view - Add a block



Suggested events
Some suggested events will show up here for users to quickly add events into the calendar

Search for an event
Users can also search for events and customized the block color

User case

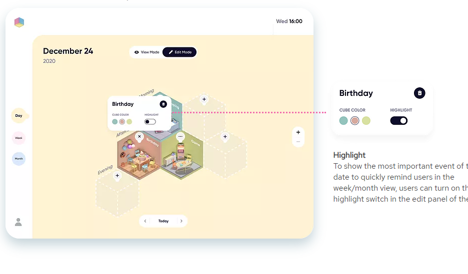
Sophie and Emma wanna also create a week view and month view of the calendar for the families to quickly see what's the important events in a week/month.

Entry → Day View → Edit Mode → Add an event / Edit an existing event → Change cube color / Highlight this event

Entry → Week View (Event shows up in week view)

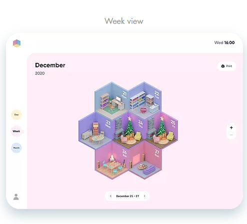
Entry → Month View (Event shows up in Month view)

Day view - Edit the block

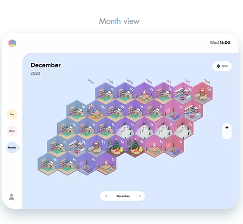


Highlight
To show the most important event of that date to quickly remind users in the week/month view, users can turn on the highlight switch in the edit panel of the block.

Week view



Month view



03
Print out the calendar

Allow users to print out the calendar so that everyone in their family can view it without the device.

User case

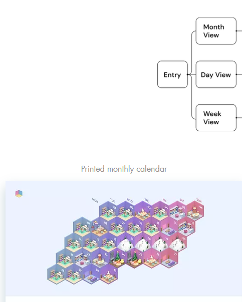
Sophie and Emma wanna have a paper version of the calendar that the families can view in the center location of the house.

Entry → Month View → Print out

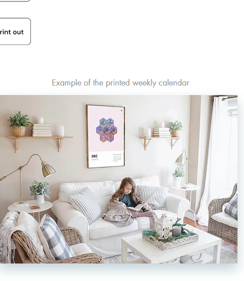
Entry → Day View → Print out

Entry → Week View → Print out

Printed monthly calendar



Example of the printed weekly calendar



Visual Identity

Design to be intriguing and easy to read

I chose Gilroy for its geometric appearance with modern proportions to complete the wide variety of content and ensure readability. I use a lot of bright color here because young kids are attracted to warm, bright colors.

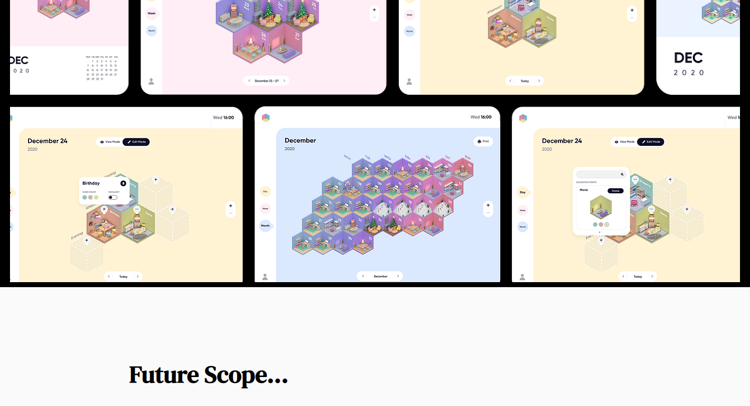
Font

Gilroy

Regular
Medium
Bold

Color

#FFEEF5 #E5E5E5
#FFF3D3 #7B7B8F
#DBE9FF #0E0E2C



Future Scope...

Honeycomb family calendar provides an interactive tool that visualizes the daily events to provide a fun and easy-to-understand experience for families with young kids. The challenge of this project is the complexity of visualizing the event to make every kid understand, because kids may have different experiences, so they may have a different understanding of the event. In the future, I will keep exploring the event visualization and make it more personalized for every family.

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