

Two young boys interacting with Jerry the Bear

JERRY THE BEAR

2014 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2014

A STUFFED TOY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES

By Sproutel Inc

Project URL: jerrythebear.com

Project Twitter: [@DiabetesBear](https://twitter.com/DiabetesBear)

Organisation URL: sproutel.com

Organisation Twitter: [@sproutel](https://twitter.com/sproutel)

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Jerry the Bear is an interactive teddy bear designed to educate children with type one diabetes about their condition, helping them acclimatise to a new diagnosis and establish good habits around self-care to stay healthy.

75,000 children have type one diabetes in the US: many of them are the first in their families to have the condition.

Jerry, designed by Hannah Chung and Aaron Horowitz for children between three and seven years old, was built to ease the uncertainty around a new diagnosis. By helping Jerry manage his 'diabetes', they learn to manage their own, practising their treatment plan on him first, so they don't themselves suffer the consequences of getting it wrong.

Jerry comes with a backpack, a collection of food discs and insulin tools. His mouth detects food discs' colours, and his blood sugar computer and display reacts accordingly, teaching children about carb counting as they play. Detectors on each leg, buttock and arm, meanwhile, let kids administer 'insulin' and learn about rotating injection sites. Sensors on his fingers let them check his blood sugar.

As well as learning how to respond to hypoglycaemic events and identify symptoms there are also rewards for successfully completed tasks – such as checking Jerry's blood glucose five times a day, for example.

Horowitz explains, 'Jerry focuses on helping kids to know how to make good choices in the daily context of being a kid. What do you do if they get tired in class? Should they have cake at birthday parties... It's about feeling empowered to take ownership, and making it less scary, especially for younger kids.'

Jerry's RRP is \$300, but Horowitz and Chung are in the process of re-designing the technology to be far more affordable. The team aims to expand the Jerry the Bear brand to make interactive toys for kids with other chronic conditions such as food allergies.

Image courtesy of Sproutel Inc

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