

# TEXTILE + DESIGN LAB

**Case Study Number:** 04/2017

**Project Title:** Babybunk

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**Project Period:** July 2017 - November 2017

## **Project Description:**

*Babybunk* was created in response to a local need for experience based care and support for mothers and new born babies. The solution was to design a sleeping device that facilitated the bonding experience for both mother and child through co-sleeping. The focus was to create a product that could be used at the hospital and then taken home for extended care, in an attempt to minimise the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

The project involved and responded to Auckland Hospital's Level Nine maternity ward, where complicated births affect the relationship between mother and child. The needs of individuals within the specific environment were taken into consideration by the designer – accessibility, affordability and cultural requirements were all important factors in the design of the product. The Textile and Design Lab was approached to develop prototypes of the Babybunk, as it provided an opportunity for the designer to focus on experience based outcomes through seamless knitwear technology using natural fibres.

## **Background:**

This project was completed for the Design for Health and Wellbeing Lab at Auckland Hospital, during Chelsea's final year of her Product Design undergraduate degree. The designer grounds her work within both spatial and product design disciplines: the key focus being to create experience based design solutions. Digital knit technology is embraced by the designer as a versatile method of production throughout a wide variety of applications.

## **Process:**

The initial stages of the process involved an evaluation of existing products on the market. From this process, improvements were identified regarding the need for more comfort, stability for the baby and material options, which are influenced by the damp and humid New Zealand conditions. Prototyping through scale modelling produced a variety of improved possibilities for the shape and structure of the Babybunk. The Textile and Design Lab was involved in the next stage of prototyping, where seamless knit technology using merino wool yarn were used to develop and finalise the product with the technical expertise of Senior Technician, Gordon Fraser. Seamless knitting allowed the designer to create a structural shape with a reversible slip that was comfortable, encouraged co-sleeping and provided added stability for the baby. Merino wool was chosen as the optimum fibre as it promoted temperature regulation, comfort and can be worn next to the skin. The need for the product to be durable, facilitate bonding, be portable and grow with the child involved the incorporation of adequate packaging for storage, which included height and milestone charts.

## **Project Outcomes:**

Babybunk was exhibited at AD17, the Art and Design School's end of year festival, at which graduates

exhibit their respective projects. Further information regarding the project and the designer can be found online: see the website listed in publications below. There are no current plans to commercialise Babybunk at this stage, although the designer is confident that achievable changes can be made regarding costing to produce the product on a commercial scale.

**Publications:**

Website: <https://chelseapratt.com/#/babybunk-product-experience/>

**Images:**



