

SBI Investment Invests US\$8 Million in Swiss AI Startup SCEPTICS, Maker of Magnetic Learning Companion Sparkie

Zurich-based SCEPTICS will use the funds to expand its Swiss engineering team, complete safety and privacy certifications, and launch Sparkie in Europe and North America.

SCEPTICS · SPARKIE

The magnetic AI learning companion

Ask one more why

Sticks anywhere

One-tap TV cast

Kid-safe by design

sceptics.com

+ Designed & engineered in Switzerland



Zurich, Switzerland Oct 31, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - SBI Investment, the venture capital arm of Japan's SBI Group, has invested US\$8 million in SCEPTICS (<https://sceptics.com>), a Swiss startup developing Sparkie, a magnetic, screen-free AI learning companion for children. The deal marks a fresh bet by the Japanese investor on AI hardware aimed at early education.

Sparkie attaches magnetically to everyday surfaces and objects, turning a child's surroundings into an interactive learning environment. Powered by conversational AI, the device answers questions, tells stories, and guides hands-on activities — an approach the company says encourages children to question and explore rather than passively consume content on screens. The company's name reflects that philosophy: it wants to raise healthy sceptics.

"Children learn best through conversation and play, not through more screen time," said Peter Meier, spokesperson for SCEPTICS. "This funding lets us combine Swiss engineering precision with the latest AI to give every child a companion that is safe, private, and genuinely curious alongside them."

The Zurich-based company plans to use the funds to expand its AI and hardware engineering team in Switzerland, complete safety and privacy certifications, and launch Sparkie in Europe and North America. According to the company, all child interactions are handled under privacy-by-design principles aligned with Swiss and European data-protection standards — a stance likely to matter to

parents increasingly wary of connected toys.

The investment comes amid growing investor interest in screen-free AI companions for children, a category that has drawn attention as families look for alternatives to tablets and smartphones. For SBI Investment, the deal adds a European consumer-hardware play to its AI portfolio.

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