



PRESS RELEASE

New York, October 24, 2016

UNI_FORM – The First Digital Jacket That Evolves With a Child’s Brain

UNICEF and H&M Foundation today launched the UNI_FORM campaign, to highlight the importance of early childhood development. A digital and interactive jacket has been created as a symbol for every child’s right to get the best start in life and as a tool for parents to engage in early learning activities with their children.

The digital, interactive jacket, created by H&M Foundation and UNICEF as part of the UNI_FORM campaign, provides innovative, age-appropriate play ideas that can help stimulate brain development during early childhood. It also shows parents and caregivers the critical importance of nourishing a young child’s brain.

The jacket reveals different cognitive games that feed the brain, as it evolves with the child’s age. The games are tailored for each age based on UNICEF’s research on Early Childhood Development. On www.theuniform.org, adults and children can interact with the UNI_FORM and at the same time support the right for every child to get the best start in life.

"Early childhood presents a window of opportunity that define a child’s future. By using UNI_FORM as a symbol, we want to raise awareness around the fact that children who are stimulated in their early years learn more effectively at school, and as adults they can have a higher earning power and be of better health than children that don’t have these early opportunities," said Diana Amini, Global Manager at H&M Foundation.

“Children who experience love, proper nutrition and protection in a stimulating environment during early childhood become resilient, learn effectively and are able to help build strong, safe communities and economies when they reach adulthood,” said Pia Britto UNICEF Chief of Early Childhood Development. “We are proud to launch this interactive tool to help give children the enrichment they need in these critical early moments of life.”

Nearly 250 million children in low- and middle-income countries lack the nutrition, stimulation, nurturing and responsive care they need to develop healthy brain functions. Early deprivations rob children of a fair chance to pursue fulfilling futures, which also can trigger a cycle of inequality that can continue for generations.

During the earliest moments of life, children’s experiences have the power to shape the development of their brains as much as their DNA, as neural connections take place at a once-in-a-lifetime speed of up to 1,000 per second, forming their cognitive, social and emotional development.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the UNI_FORM campaign:

More information about the UNI_FORM, Early Childhood Development and the cognitive games can be found at www.theuniform.org.

The UNI_FORM features a range of games that highlight the critical milestones in a child’s development and the opportunities to stimulate and foster these skills. All these stages are highlighted through a game which is embedded in the UNI_FORM digital jacket:

Age One: Building blocks - focus on strengthening motor skills and eye-to-hand coordination that takes place in this phase of a child’s development.

Age Two: Fantasy building - games linked to children's creative development, like shape, colour and crayons.

Age Three: Imitating animals - focus on the urge to create and encourage children to use their imagination and express their feelings.

Age Four: Perception of time – playing with a magical clock sparks a conversation and develops the child’s sense of time.

Age Five: Identifying emotions - exploration of emotions through different expressions.

UNI_FORM is not part of a collection or for sale.

UNI_FORM is a follow up from last year when UNICEF and H&M Foundation introduced the UNI_COIN, the first currency dedicated to do good. Also then, the aim was to support the right for children to access learning opportunities from an early age.

About the Global Program for Education:

The UNI_FORM campaign is part of the Global Program for Education – a collaboration between H&M Foundation and UNICEF. In February 2014, the H&M Foundation announced a grant to UNICEF of USD 9.3 million over a three year period. This grant enables UNICEF to reach 73,600 children with Early Childhood Development programs as well as influence governments to place Early Childhood Development on the national agenda and commit budgetary resources to address these issues. Few donors or governments prioritize funding for Early Childhood Development, which is why the H&M Foundation wants to contribute to filling that gap by supporting UNICEF.

About the H&M Foundation

The H&M Foundation is a non-profit global foundation, privately funded by the Stefan Persson family, founders and main owners of the fashion company H&M. The mission of the Foundation is to create long lasting positive change and improve living conditions by investing in communities, people and innovative ideas. Through partnerships with prominent organizations around the globe, the Foundation drives change within four focus areas; Education, Clean water, Strengthening women and Protecting the planet. In addition, the H&M Foundation can also provide emergency relief. Since 2013, the Stefan Persson family has donated SEK 1.1 billion (USD 154 million/EUR 123 million) to the H&M Foundation. For further information, visit hm.com/hmfoundation.

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

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