

Caper secures seed funding from LEGO Ventures and Founders Factory

Caper, an interactive adventure games app for families with kids aged 4-9 has seen huge traction during the lockdown period as families have spent increasing time together and sought new activities to keep little ones busy. The UK-based startup has announced a £300K seed investment round led by LEGO Ventures with participation from Founders Factory.

The Caper app offers parents original stories known as 'missions' designed to be played by the family together outdoors, with a number of missions suitable for inside the home. Over 4,000 families downloaded the beta version of Caper during the lockdown period, finding the app a welcome source of fun, creativity, and entertainment.

Caper's 'missions' keep screentime to a minimum and have a real-world focus interwoven into the narrative of each adventure, helping reconnect families to each other and the world around them through engaging characters and exciting activities. Caper uses the latest smartphone facial capture technology

to create fully-animated talking characters, disrupting the idea of game-play as a sedentary, screen-based activity that children play in isolation.

This funding round coincides with the release of Caper's initial series of eight 'missions' starring space adventurer, Captain Redtail, and his robot sidekick, TikTik. Additional new series with entirely new characters will be released in the coming months.

“Our vision is for Caper to become the home of original content that enables families to spend quality, active time together.” – Ben Geliher, CEO and Co-Founder of Caper

Even before COVID-19, the damaging effects of sedentary lifestyles and a lack of connection to nature on children were gaining public awareness. As lockdown eases, new research indicates that there is a resurgence of enthusiasm for nature alongside an understanding that a whole generation of children could suffer heightened mental health challenges as they process their experiences of the pandemic.

Many parents have been juggling their working lives with educating their children at home, and now, uncertainty around travel plans means that the summer of 2020 will, in many cases, be spent closer to home.

“Caper is a very exciting new startup – not only to inspire kids and families to play outdoors and new places, but also for them to engage socially and learn about their environment. LEGO Ventures are proud to be supporting them as they start on their journey to drive a new paradigm in the intersection between digital and physical play.” – Rob Lowe,

Head of Marketing and Value Creation at LEGO Ventures

“We know that screen time is an issue for many families. With so many apps out there designed to keep you scrolling and glued to the screen, I’m really excited by a product that empowers families to have rich meaningful experiences together. Beyond the social impact, the vision for this business is to be a platform that enables any creator to build their own interactive, shared experiences. This is a truly global market opportunity.” – Paul Egan, Chief Studio Officer, Founders Factory

Caper aims to be the world’s leading interactive entertainment company that brings parents and children closer to each other and the world around them. Founded in 2020 by CEO Ben Geliher (If You Can, Mind Candy), Creative Director Graham Denney, (If You Can, Nintendo, BBC) and CMO Sara Perkins (Pearson, Harper Collins, Mills & Boon, Disney).

Caper is currently available for free on iOS and Android. From late August 2020, the first episode of Captain Redtail will continue to be available for free, with the rest of the series (7 episodes and bonus extras) available for one-off bundle purchase at £4.99.

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Edtech: 18 platforms and resources transforming education in the UK

- During lockdown - and operating in stealth - the free app received 4000 downloads (majority London)
- We've got some fantastic images and a video of the Caper games that you can download here: <https://we.tl/t-YSRO04mwwn>
- Caper's immersive 'missions' encourage families to spend quality time together in nature
- Over 4,000 families downloaded the beta version of Caper during lockdown
- Founding team from Mind Candy, BBC, Nintendo, and Disney
- Caper has been developed within the Founders Factory startup studio in collaboration with Lego Ventures, who have now made a direct investment into the startup

[LONDON] **Under embargo 00.01 24 August 2020:**

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TikTok. Additional new series with entirely new characters will be released in the coming months.

Ben Geliher, CEO and Co-Founder of Caper, formerly Lead Producer at Mind Candy, said: “Our vision is for Caper to become the home of original content that enables families to spend quality, active time together. With our team’s extensive background in game design, and being parents ourselves, we make it easy for adults to have adventures with their kids out in nature or at home – which has proven popular during the recent lockdown. We also understand parents’ concerns over screen time and want to show that there is a positive way to use technology through shared experiences.

“This investment from Lego Ventures helps us on our journey to achieve that vision, thanks to their deep understanding of children’s play styles and creativity that will help inform our content. We are also delighted to have the continued support of Founders Factory, whose solid expertise in launching start-ups is invaluable. The investment will allow us to enable us to create more original Caper content, faster to families who keep coming back for more.”

Even before COVID-19, the damaging effects of sedentary lifestyles and a lack of connection to nature on children were gaining public awareness. As lockdown eases, new research indicates that there is a resurgence of enthusiasm for nature (1) alongside an understanding that a whole generation of children could suffer heightened mental health challenges as they process their experiences of the pandemic (2). Many parents have been juggling their working lives with educating their children at home, and now, uncertainty around travel plans means that the summer of 2020 will, in many cases, be spent closer to home.

Rob Lowe, Head of Marketing and Value Creation at LEGO Ventures said, “Caper is a very exciting new startup – not only to inspire kids and families to play outdoors and new places, but also for them to engage socially and learn about their environment. LEGO Ventures are proud to be supporting them as they start on their journey to drive a new paradigm in the intersection between digital and physical play.”

Paul Egan, Chief Studio Officer, Founders Factory, said: “We know that screen time is an issue for many families. With so many apps out there designed to keep you scrolling and glued to the screen, I’m really excited by a product that empowers families to have rich meaningful experiences together. Beyond the social impact, the vision for this business is to be a platform that enables any creator to build their own interactive, shared experiences. This is a truly global market opportunity.”

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Sources:

1. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/uk-values-nature-more-as-a-result-of-lockdown-according-to-summer-solstice-poll->

2. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2020-06-16-children-show-increase-mental-health-difficulties-over-covid-19-lockdown>

About Caper

www.caper.co

- Caper aims to be the world's leading interactive entertainment company that brings parents and children closer to each other and the world around them.
- Founded in 2020 by CEO Ben Geliher (If You Can, Mind Candy), Creative Director Graham Denney, (If You Can, Nintendo, BBC) and CMO Sara Perkins (Pearson, Harper Collins, Mills & Boon, Disney).
- Caper uses technology to provide interactive, story-driven, character-led experiences that help families everywhere, have healthy, active, creative fun together in the real world.

About LEGO Ventures

Founded in 2018, LEGO Ventures is the strategic investment arm of the LEGO Brand Group, focusing on the future of creativity, learning, and play. LEGO Ventures believes that play is critical to growth and development, stimulating children's imagination and creative expression. Our investment philosophy is centred around companies that are closely aligned with the core LEGO Idea of learning through play and developing systematic creativity.

About Founders Factory

Founders Factory powers founders to go further, faster. As the world's leading startup studio and accelerator program, the Founders Factory team validates ideas, builds founding teams, finds first customers, and invests directly in startups across multiple disciplines. Started by Brent Hoberman, Henry Lane Fox, and George Northcott. Founders Factory has received investment from leading corporates across four hubs in New York, London, Paris, and Johannesburg: Johnson & Johnson Innovation - JJDC, Inc. (New York); Marks & Spencer, L'Oréal, easyJet, Guardian Media Group, Aviva, Holtzbrinck, CSC and Reckitt Benckiser (London); Aviva France (Paris); and Standard Bank and Netcare (Johannesburg).

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Article by MADDYNESS