



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New HITN Collaborative Launches Research-Based Digital Education Resources for Preschoolers to Boost School Readiness and Early Learning

Pocoyo® PlaySet™ Uses Hand-Held and Tablet-Based Technology to Support Young Learners

Washington, DC — The Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network (HITN) Early Learning Collaborative (ELC) today announced two new tablet-based Pocoyo PlaySets, designed to provide fun and engaging experiences for young children as they develop English language, reading and math skills. The mission of this project is to provide preschoolers with experiences that will help close the achievement gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged children.

Featuring Pocoyo, the internationally recognized preschool character, the Pocoyo PlaySet applications were developed in partnership with Zinkia Entertainment, S. A., the creator of Pocoyo, and funded, in part, through a Ready to Learn research grant from the U. S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement. Currently available on tablets and mobile devices, the Pocoyo PlaySets are being developed with the support of ongoing formative research conducted by the Michael Cohen Group LLC (MCG) as well as large-scale summative studies, also conducted by MCG, to assess the educational efficacy of these digital products before their commercial release which is estimated for late 2013. The first two PlaySets, presented today, focus on supporting English language development and early literacy skills for three-to-five-year-old children whose primary language is Spanish.

“As a parent, grandparent, lifelong educator, member of the NY State Governor’s Commission on Education Reform, and the founder and head of a PBS-like station dedicated to educating as well as entertaining Latino populations, I fully understand and endorse quality early childhood education as a critical lever in promoting college and career readiness for all children, but particularly for children living in low income households and for those who are English learners,” said Jose Luis Rodriguez, CEO of the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network. “The Early Learning Collaborative helps extend the work of HITN by providing exciting and engaging ways for children to build the foundation they need for success through playful interaction with touchscreen media, readily available in most homes and preschool centers.”

“Young children are born wired to learn. Over the years, we have seen the impact Pocoyo and his friends have had on helping to support the academic, social and emotional development of young children,” said Jose María Castillejo, President and CEO of Zinkia Entertainment. “We are excited to be part of this important work and eager to promote such positive values in what we believe will be a ground-breaking project.”

The first two Pocoyo PlaySets, “At the Seashore” and “Things That Go,” are based on a set of research-based principles that support English language learning by engaging the children in playful ways to develop vocabulary and build comprehension skills. The content of these digital media resources is further enhanced by a suite of educational outreach materials and resources to help parents and teachers extend the learning provided through the Pocoyo PlaySets beyond the screen.

The ongoing development of the Pocoyo PlaySets will be guided by feedback from pilot sites in New York, Alabama, Maine, Florida and California, and through ongoing formative research and summative assessment feedback from the Michael Cohen Group.

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About HITN

Established in 1983, the Hispanic Information Telecommunications Network (HITN) is the first Latino non-commercial Spanish-language media company in the US. HITN currently reaches over 40 million households in the U. S, providing a wide range of quality programming – on TV, online, and in the community -- to address its mission of advancing the educational, socioeconomic and cultural aspirations of Latinos.

HITN can be viewed across the United States on DirectTV, DISH Network, AT&T U-verse TV, Verizon FiOS TV, and in designated markets on Time Warner Cable, Comcast Cable and Charter Communications. Additionally, HITN is the largest holder of Educational Broadband Spectrum in the U. S., enabling it to create new opportunities to deliver educational content and connect communities. www.hitn.org

About Zinkia Entertainment S.A.

Zinkia Entertainment specializes in the creation and management of entertainment properties for today's global marketplace. Zinkia's primary focus is the development and production of content for all media platforms to engage, entertain and educate children of all cultures. Zinkia is the exclusive worldwide licensor of global brand sensation POCOYO, which is licensed in over 150 countries and one of Spain's most successful animation productions.

Pocoyo, an award-winning animated series about a young boy's discovery of the world around him boasts more than 1.6 billion hits on You Tube, over 1.4 million Facebook fans and more than 30 million downloads from the official Pocoyo website. Founded in 2001, Zinkia is headquartered in Madrid, Spain and operates offices in China. www.zinkia.com

About The Michael Cohen Group LLC

The Michael Cohen Group LLC (MCG) is an applied research, scientific evaluation, and consulting firm headquartered in New York. With expertise in public policy, learning and education, youth and families, MCG conducts research on behalf of educational institutions in the private, public and non-profit sectors in the U.S. and abroad. Presently, MCG is the evaluation team for two of the awardees of the current cycle of the U.S. Department of Education Ready To Learn (RTL) Media Grant, Project UMIGO and the Early Learning Collaborative (ELC). The RTL initiative is focused on the use of media to engender children's early literacy and numeracy acquisition. MCG was also the evaluation team for one of the two projects awarded the RTL grant in 2005. www.mcgrc.org



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