EASYJET LAUNCHES NEW SUMMER FLIGHT SCHOOL FOR KIDS

News / Airlines

easyJet is launching a new Summer Flight School, to combat persistent gendered stereotypes of pilot and cabin crew jobs and inspire more young people to consider a career in aviation. As new research by the airline reveals around four in ten children (37%) still believe that a pilot is a job exclusively for men, easyJet is inviting children aged 7 – 12 to go behind the scenes at its training centre for hands on training experiences with real easyJet pilots and crew, to challenge these outdated stereotypes.The first-of-its-kind event by the airline will offer children the opportunity to take the controls of an Airbus A320 flight simulator, learn what it takes to provide the best inflight service to passengers and find out from easyJet pilots and cabin crew about their jobs and how they got there.

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easyJet has launched the initiative after a poll of 2,000 British parents and their children found that two thirds (66%) of British parents still believe there are misconceptions that being a pilot is a job for men rather than women and that most parents (86%) believe that gender stereotypes of jobs start at primary school age. Around three quarters (72%) of female adult respondents said that when they were a child, they believed only men could be pilots, while nearly two thirds of men (63%) said they never considered a role as cabin crew due to their gender.

Now, over two thirds (68%) of girls surveyed said that they believed both boys and girls could be a pilot, indicating a positive shift in attitudes compared to the previous generation.However, with over a quarter of boys (28%) still believing that cabin crew is exclusively a job for women and the same proportion of girls believing being a pilot a job for just boys, there is still clearly work to be done to course correct these perceptions.

Summer Flight School is the latest initiative from easyJet as part of the airline's ongoing work to drive greater diversity within areas in the industry that still face a significant gender imbalance, particularly for pilots and cabin crewWith still around only 6% of pilots worldwide being women, easyJet has been focused on tackling this industry-wide gender imbalance for a number of years and has nearly tripled the number of female pilots in its ranks since 2015.

Over half of children (51%) said they never seen a female pilot and so alongside recruitment campaigns to attract more women and people from diverse backgrounds to the career, the airline's Pilot School Visits programme has seen female and male pilots presenting to hundreds of schools up and down the country, to show it's a job for everyone.

By providing a unique and immersive free experience blending fun, education and hands-on activities, the airline hopes its Summer Flight School will not only inspire a new generation of aviators, but also help the 87% of parents who said they struggle find low cost or free experiences for children during the holidays.

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Over 92% parents believe ‘edutainment’ – activities that provide the opportunity for their kids to learn something new as well as being fun - is important when it comes to planning a family day out, with over half (54%) specifically wanting something that would spark a new interest for their children.

The majority of primary school aged children agreed that the chance fly a plane was the most exciting thing they could experience during the summer holidays (70%) whilst half (50%) admitted being a pilot or cabin crew when they were older would be a dream job.

Jane Storm, Chief People Officer for easyJet commented**:** “We’re delighted to be taking families behind the scenes with our new Summer Flight School, not only to offer a unique and exciting day out during the school holidays, but also one we hope will inspire the next generation of pilots and cabin crew, showing young people that their aspirations don’t have to be limited by outdated stereotypes and help broaden their horizons. Increasing diversity in all of its forms across our airline and creating an inclusive environment where people can be themselves at work is incredibly important to us and is a long-term focus for easyJet, so we will continue to lead the industry on this issue.”

easyJet Training Captain Kate West said: “At school I was told that being a pilot wasn’t a suitable career option for me, so I know from first-hand experience how important it is to challenge these misconceptions, which we know can start from a young age. Role models and awareness of our jobs as pilots and crew are such an important part of this and so I’m delighted that our Summer School will give children that opportunity this summer - even their first taste of flying an aircraft!”

easyJet’s Summer Flight School takes off from 21st August at easyJet’s London Gatwick training centre. Places are available to book for free from Monday 7th August at https://easyjet.eventbrite.com.

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