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Children cost 50 dollars a day

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Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

THE ARTICLE

The cost of raising a child in the UK is soaring and set to almost double again in the next decade. Parents can expect to fork out around \$365,000 on raising a child from birth to the age of 21. This is according to a report by the UK insurance company LV=. The insurer reckons a child now costs \$50 a day, with university being the most expensive years, followed by the early childhood period between two and five. LV= spokesman Nigel Snell said the statistics are quite sobering for both would-be and current parents. "The figures are quite staggering and it's unrealistic to expect people's income levels to increase in line with this rising level of expenditure. This means parents will need to be switched on about their family finances more than ever," he said.

Spending on childcare and education accounts for over half of the expenditure at \$200,000. On top of that, it costs \$32,000 to feed a child, \$24,000 to clothe him or her, and a mind-blowing \$50,000 to keep them amused with toys, holidays, hobbies and presents. Pocket money, however, decreased by \$100 a year in 2007. Mr Snell said he has sympathy for parents over the rocketing expenses they face: "As a parent of three, I know from experience that sacrifices have to be made in the early years, and many parents will have had to put some plans on hold to manage the costs associated with raising a family. Of course, every parent will tell you that it is all worth it, but making even small provisions and doing a little extra planning now could help new parents see their way more easily through the next 21 years."

WARM-UPS

1. COST OF KIDS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about children and how much they cost. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

child-raising costs / birth / insurance / early childhood / being switched on / childcare / education / presents / pocket money / sympathy / sacrifices

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. TWO-MINUTE KIDS DEBATES: Have the following fun 2-minute debates. Students A strongly believe in the first argument, students B the second. Change pairs often.

- a. People should have much fewer children. Vs. What a ridiculous idea.
- b. Children should work earlier to repay their parents. Vs. A crazy idea.
- c. Governments should pay for all education. Vs. Too expensive.
- d. Parents should make instead of buy toys. Vs. Parents have no time.
- e. There is a limit to how much a child is worth. Vs. Never. Kids are priceless.
- f. Living together in communities will cut costs. Vs. No one wants to do that.

4. COST-CUTTING: With your partner(s), rank which of these items are most important for parents to spend money on their children. Discuss how parents can cut costs on these items:

- ___ pocket money / allowance
- ___ food
- ___ birthday and other presents
- ___ higher education
- ___ clothes
- ___ babysitting
- ___ education
- ___ hobbies

5. CHILDCARE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'childcare'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. QUICK ROLE PLAY: Student A believes the cost of raising children is not worth it; Student B believes that any costs involved in having children makes it worth it. Change partners often. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A secret market in buying and selling kids has started in the UK. | T / F |
| b. The early childhood years are the most expensive for parents. | T / F |
| c. A report said income levels will rise for parents to raise their kids. | T / F |
| d. The report said parents must be more aware about childcare costs. | T / F |
| e. Spending on education is higher than the cost of feeding kids. | T / F |
| f. Children received less pocket money than usual in 2007. | T / F |
| g. An insurance spokesman suggested sacrificing a few children. | T / F |
| h. The spokesman said putting money aside now was a good idea. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. soaring | a. alert |
| 2. fork out | b. preparations |
| 3. would-be | c. makes up |
| 4. staggering | d. potential |
| 5. switched on | e. pity |
| 6. accounts for | f. spend |
| 7. amused | g. related to |
| 8. associated with | h. rising |
| 9. sympathy | i. amazing |
| 10. provisions | j. entertained |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. ...soaring and set to almost | a. their family finances |
| 2. Parents can expect to fork | b. early years |
| 3. would-be and | c. amused with toys |
| 4. it's unrealistic to expect people's income | d. out around \$365,000 |
| 5. parents will need to be switched on about | e. rocketing expenses |
| 6. education accounts for over | f. levels to increase |
| 7. a mind-blowing \$50,000 to keep them | g. double again |
| 8. he has sympathy for parents over the | h. it is all worth it |
| 9. sacrifices have to be made in the | i. current parents |
| 10. every parent will tell you that | j. half of the expenditure |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The cost of _____ a child in the UK is soaring and set to almost double again in the next decade. Parents can _____ to fork out around \$365,000 on raising a child from birth to the age of 21. This is according to a report by the UK insurance company LV=. The insurer _____ a child now costs \$50 a day, with university being the most expensive years, _____ by the early childhood period between two and five. LV= spokesman Nigel Snell said the statistics are quite _____ for both would-be and current parents. "The figures are quite staggering and it's unrealistic to _____ people's income levels to increase in _____ with this rising level of expenditure. This means parents will need to be switched on about their family finances more than _____," he said.

line
sobering
expect
expect
followed
raising
ever
reckons

Spending on childcare and education _____ for over half of the expenditure at \$200,000. On _____ of that, it costs \$32,000 to feed a child, \$24,000 to _____ him or her, and a mind-blowing \$50,000 to keep them amused with toys, holidays, hobbies and presents. Pocket money, however, _____ by \$100 a year in 2007. Mr Snell said he has sympathy for parents over the rocketing expenses they face: "As a parent of three, I know from experience that _____ have to be made in the early years, and many parents will have had to put some plans on _____ to manage the costs associated with raising a family. Of course, every parent will tell you that it is all _____ it, but making even small provisions and doing a little extra planning now could help new parents see their way more _____ through the next 21 years."

worth
top
sacrifices
clothe
easily
accounts
decreased
hold

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The cost of raising a child in the UK _____ almost double again in the next decade. Parents can _____ \$365,000 on raising a child from birth to the age of 21. This is according to a report by the UK insurance company LV=. The insurer _____ \$50 a day, with university being the most expensive years, followed by the early _____ and five. LV= spokesman Nigel Snell said the statistics are quite sobering for _____ parents. "The figures are quite staggering and it's unrealistic to expect people's income levels _____ this rising level of expenditure. This means parents will need to be switched on about their family finances more than ever," he said.

Spending on childcare and education _____ of the expenditure at \$200,000. On top of that, it costs \$32,000 to feed a child, \$24,000 _____, and a mind-blowing \$50,000 to keep them amused with toys, holidays, hobbies and presents. Pocket money, however, decreased _____ 2007. Mr Snell said he has sympathy for parents over the rocketing expenses they face: "As a parent of three, I know from experience _____ made in the early years, and many parents will have had to put some plans on hold to manage _____ raising a family. Of course, every parent will tell you that _____, but making even small provisions and doing a little extra planning now could help new parents _____ through the next 21 years."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'child' and 'care'.

child	care
--------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soaring • fork • reckons • statistics • unrealistic • switched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accounts • amused • sympathy • sacrifices • worth • easily
---	---

STUDENT CHILDREN SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about children in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
 - b) Do you think children really cost 50 dollars a day?
 - c) Are children expensive to raise in your country?
 - d) Does your government give any help to parents?
 - e) Why do you think childcare costs in the UK will double in the next decade?
 - f) Do you think this report is a scare tactic by the insurance company LV= to get people to take out insurance?
 - g) What is so expensive about the ages two to five?
 - h) Were you an expensive child?
 - i) Do you think more couples will think about not having children if they read the LV= report?
-

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think couples have a better life with or without children?
- c) How do you think parents could reduce the costs of raising children?
- d) Do you think only rich people should have lots of children?
- e) How much pocket money do you think children should get?
- f) Do you think parents spend too much on presents for their children?
- g) What sacrifices (financial and social) do parents have to make when they have children?
- h) Why do you think parents would say having children is worth it?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

The cost of (1) _____ a child in the UK is soaring and set to almost double again in the next decade. Parents can expect to fork (2) _____ around \$365,000 on raising a child from birth to the age of 21. This is according to a report by the UK insurance company LV=. The insurer reckons a child now costs \$50 a day, (3) _____ university being the most expensive years, followed by the early childhood period between two and five. LV= spokesman Nigel Snell said the (4) _____ are quite sobering for both would-be and current parents. "The figures are quite staggering and it's unrealistic to expect people's income levels to increase in (5) _____ with this rising level of expenditure. This means parents will need to be switched on about their family finances more than (6) _____," he said.

Spending on childcare and education accounts (7) _____ over half of the expenditure at \$200,000. On top of that, it costs \$32,000 to feed a child, \$24,000 to (8) _____ him or her, and a mind-blowing \$50,000 to keep them amused with toys, holidays, hobbies and presents. Pocket (9) _____, however, decreased by \$100 a year in 2007. Mr Snell said he has sympathy for parents over the rocketing expenses they (10) _____: "As a parent of three, I know from experience that sacrifices have to be made in the early years, and many parents will have had to put some plans on (11) _____ to manage the costs associated with raising a family. Of course, every parent will tell you that it is all worth it, but making even small provisions and doing a little extra planning now could help new parents see their way more (12) _____ through the next 21 years."

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | (a) inflating | (b) increasing | (c) rising | (d) raising |
| 2. | (a) away | (b) in | (c) out | (d) across |
| 3. | (a) with | (b) by | (c) and | (d) is |
| 4. | (a) stat | (b) statistics | (c) statisticians | (d) statistically |
| 5. | (a) line | (b) par | (c) level | (d) equal |
| 6. | (a) still | (b) never | (c) even | (d) ever |
| 7. | (a) with | (b) for | (c) to | (d) at |
| 8. | (a) clothing | (b) clothes | (c) cloth | (d) clothe |
| 9. | (a) wealth | (b) cash | (c) finance | (d) money |
| 10. | (a) face | (b) faces | (c) facing | (d) facet |
| 11. | (a) touch | (b) grab | (c) hold | (d) squeeze |
| 12. | (a) easy | (b) easily | (c) easier | (d) easiest |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about the costs of toys and games. Which are the best value? Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. CHILDCARE: Make a poster about costs of childcare around the world. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all include similar things?

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about what would happen if children became too expensive to have. Include imaginary interviews with a would-be parent and a population expert.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

5. LETTER: Write a letter to your government leaders. Give them three suggestions on what they should do to help poorer parents. Give them three reasons why they should help parents with childcare. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. F c. F d. T e. T f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. soaring | a. rising |
| 2. fork out | b. spend |
| 3. would-be | c. potential |
| 4. staggering | d. amazing |
| 5. switched on | e. alert |
| 6. accounts for | f. makes up |
| 7. amused | g. entertained |
| 8. sympathy | h. pity |
| 9. associated with | i. related to |
| 10. provisions | j. preparations |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. ...soaring and set to almost | a. double again |
| 2. Parents can expect to fork | b. out around \$365,000 |
| 3. would-be and | c. current parents |
| 4. it's unrealistic to expect people's income | d. levels to increase |
| 5. parents will need to be switched on about | e. their family finances |
| 6. education accounts for over | f. half of the expenditure |
| 7. a mind-blowing \$50,000 to keep them | g. amused with toys |
| 8. he has sympathy for parents over the | h. rocketing expenses |
| 9. sacrifices have to be made in the | i. early years |
| 10. every parent will tell you that | j. it is all worth it |

GAP FILL:

Children cost 50 dollars a day

The cost of **raising** a child in the UK is soaring and set to almost double again in the next decade. Parents can **expect** to fork out around \$365,000 on raising a child from birth to the age of 21. This is according to a report by the UK insurance company LV=. The insurer **reckons** a child now costs \$50 a day, with university being the most expensive years, **followed** by the early childhood period between two and five. LV= spokesman Nigel Snell said the statistics are quite **sobering** for both would-be and current parents. "The figures are quite staggering and it's unrealistic to **expect** people's income levels to increase in **line** with this rising level of expenditure. This means parents will need to be switched on about their family finances more than **ever**," he said.

Spending on childcare and education **accounts** for over half of the expenditure at \$200,000. On **top** of that, it costs \$32,000 to feed a child, \$24,000 to **clothe** him or her, and a mind-blowing \$50,000 to keep them amused with toys, holidays, hobbies and presents. Pocket money, however, **decreased** by \$100 a year in 2007. Mr Snell said he has sympathy for parents over the rocketing expenses they face: "As a parent of three, I know from experience that **sacrifices** have to be made in the early years, and many parents will have had to put some plans on **hold** to manage the costs associated with raising a family. Of course, every parent will tell you that it is all **worth** it, but making even small provisions and doing a little extra planning now could help new parents see their way more **easily** through the next 21 years."

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - c 3 - a 4 - b 5 - a 6 - c 7 - b 8 - d 9 - d 10 - a 11 - c 12 - b