

With various school expenses and the impacts of Covid-19, are children's rights being protected? What do children themselves feel and think?



＼We asked 600 junior and senior high school students／ Covid-19 x Child's Right and Cost to Learn Hearing Report (Summary)

[When] April 2, 2021 - July 8, 2021

[How] Questionnaire (online and written, total 6 questions) /
Interview (online and face-to-face, about 1 hour)

[Who] 615 children of junior and senior high school age (Grade 7-12)

* Including those in 4th year of high school, March 2021 graduates, and those not attending school. Questionnaire 606 people, interview 9 people.

[Living where] 9 prefectures (Iwate, Miyagi, Nagano, Saitama, Tokyo, Chiba, Kanagawa, Gifu, Okayama)

[Language] Japanese (including easy Japanese), Spanish, Chinese, English

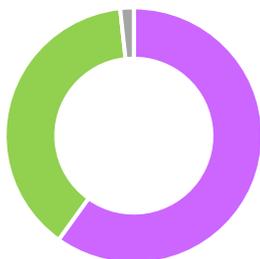
Question 1

Every child has the right to learn. But, there are young people whose education, school life, and future prospects are affected or hindered because of financial difficulties, especially under the Covid-19 pandemic. Do you feel that you or people around you are negatively affected by the cost of school education? (Single answer, respondents = 606)



No response
1.7%

No
38.4%



Yes
59.9%

Children's Voices

Because it costs money, I sometimes give up even if I want to do something. (Tokyo, Grade 11)

Because I feel bad, it's hard for me to participate in "things I can live without" like school trips and going out with friends. (Chiba, Grade 10)

My mother's job was cut back because of Covid, and she had to pay for my sister's first semester of junior college. Since we can't waste money, she usually buys half price off-season clothes, but even if they were cheap she wouldn't this year. (Kanagawa, Grade 10)

My mother was in an accident, and lost her job. She had no money, so borrowed on her credit card, but it was stopped, and the ward wouldn't give her a loan, because she has debt. So we used a food pantry, but it's not enough. We don't have money to pay school fees, and when I can't bring my own lunch, I ask someone else to share. (Tokyo, Grade 11)

About 6 in 10 said they **sometimes feel someone is having trouble paying for school.**

* The "Children's Voices" section introduces comments from open questions in the questionnaire and parts of interviews. We have edited some phrases for clarity. The text has been made bold by Save the Children. In brackets is where they lived and the grade at the time of the questionnaire/interview.

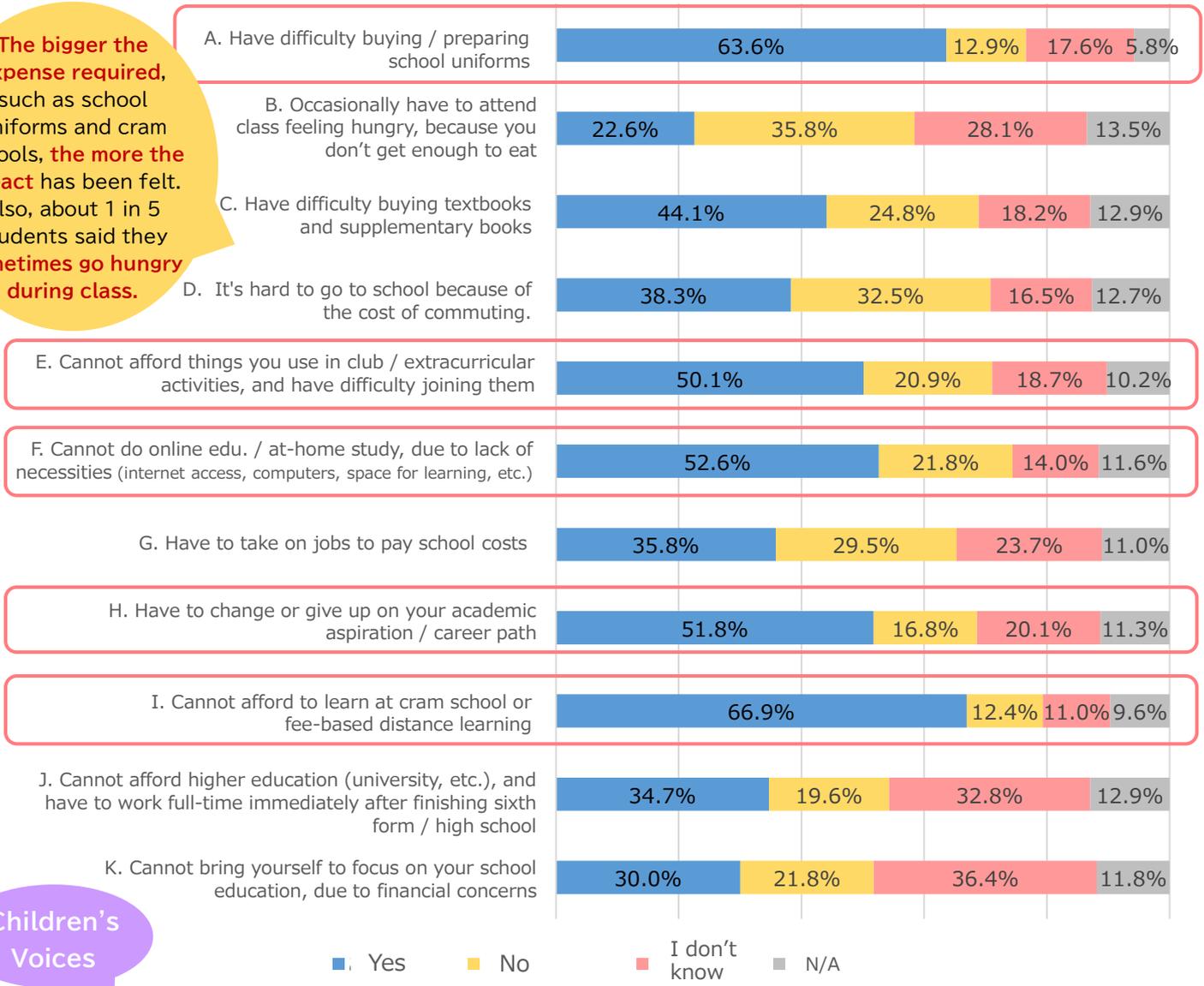
Question 2



If you answered “Yes” in [Question 1], in which aspects do you feel the impact of financial difficulty? (Multiple answers, respondents = 363)

The bigger the expense required, such as school uniforms and cram schools, the more the impact has been felt. Also, about 1 in 5 students said they sometimes go hungry during class.

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%



Children's Voices

Especially at my high school, even the coats we wear over winter uniforms are specified by the school, all of it. We have to buy the ones they say, and its 30,000 yen...expensive. I don't get it.

(Tokyo, Grade 12)

Textbooks etc should be shared around if possible.

(Iwate, Grade 12)

Sometimes we have to buy textbooks we don't use... it's a bit much. For world history, I think it depends on the teacher, but I haven't used the textbook in class since Grade 10. That's how it's done, but for me, it's really a waste that we only use them a bit in world history and social studies.

(Kanagawa, Grade 12)

Strengthen support for those not attending school (free of charge).

(Gifu, Grade 12)

I can't keep up with just school so I want to go to cram school, but can't. There is a free one run by the city, but the students in the classroom are noisy so it's hard to concentrate. Transportation costs are also hard.

(Tokyo, Grade 10)

I suffer from orthostatic intolerance and irritable bowel syndrome, and it's hard to attend school. I feel pretty behind in my studies, but since cram schools and correspondence courses are expensive, I feel the limits of independent study. So my options for high school feel desperate.

(Tokyo, Grade 8)

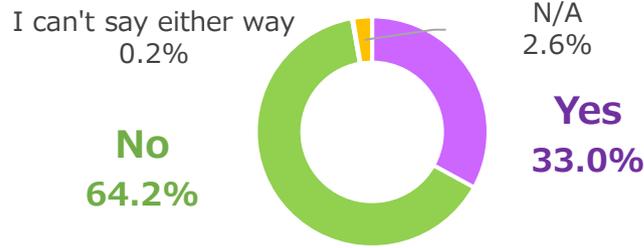
I want them to explain in a way we can understand without having to go to cram school.

(Gifu, Grade 9)

Question 4



In comparison to before the Covid-19 pandemic (before February 2020), do you find it more difficult to understand what you are learning at school (including free schools and at-home learning), due to financial reasons? (Single answer, respondents = 606)

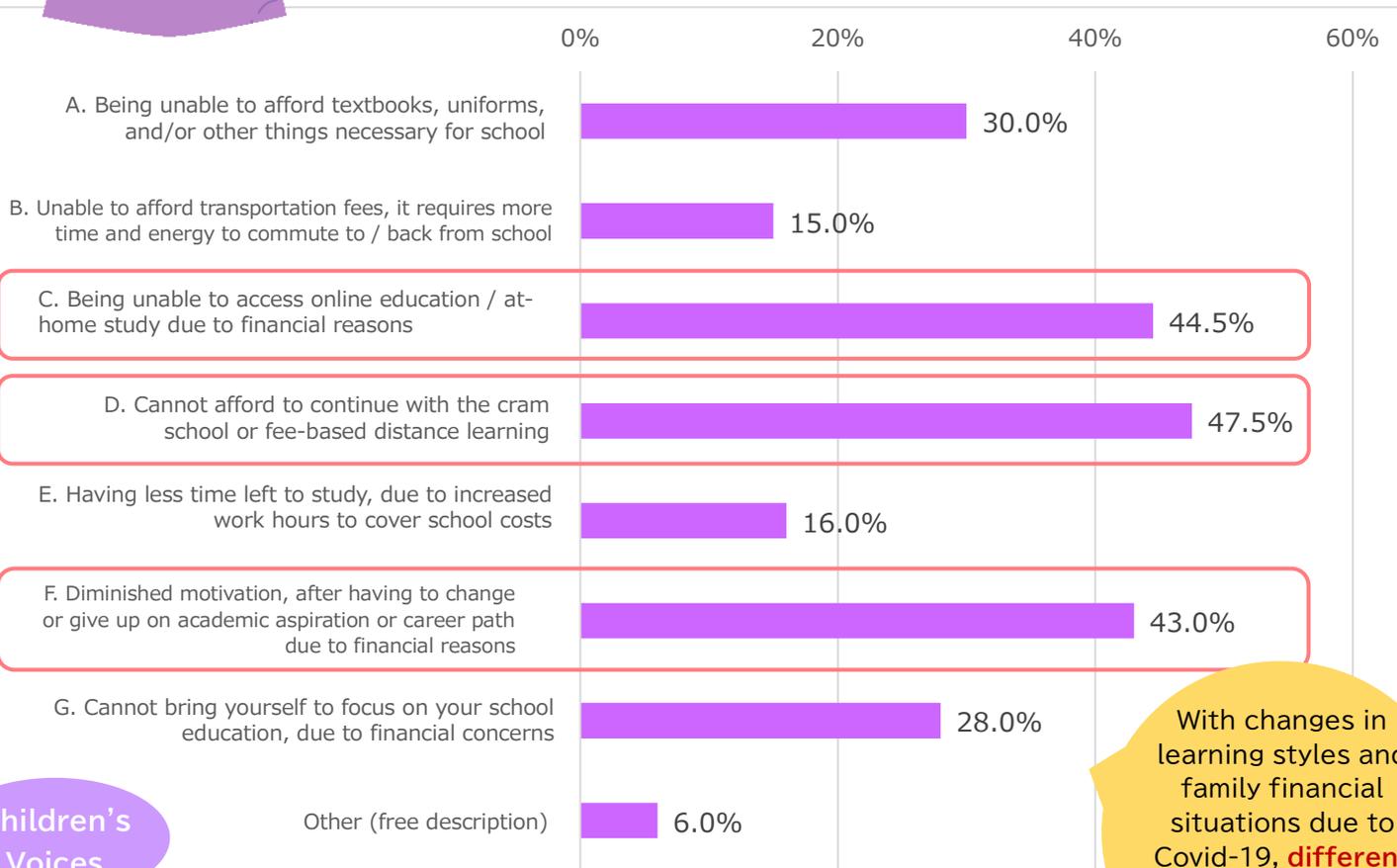


About 1 in 3 said they feel **more difficulty understanding or learning due to financial reasons.**

Question 5



If you answered "Yes" in [Question 4], which financial reasons do you think are affecting your learning? (Multiple answers, respondents = 200)



With changes in learning styles and family financial situations due to Covid-19, **different ways of learning should be supported.**

Children's Voices

"Make sure it doesn't cost anything to go to school".

There's a high school I want to go to, the same one as my friends. But my mother says it's too far away, and so it costs too much. **If they make it you don't have to pay to commute by school, the government could give a transport pass or something for that.**

(Kanagawa, Grade 9)

I wish there was the same level of support for high school students as compulsory education. Even though it's hard to find a job without at least graduating from high school, since it is not compulsory education high school tends to be left out.

(Chiba, Grade 10)

[Asking for PC rental at school]

Definitely there are some people that don't really want to talk about their financial situation, and maybe skip school that day, and just not go to the online classes to avoid talking about it. Or maybe resorting to a friend and telling them, "Can I go to your house and do the online class there."

(Kanagawa, Grade 11)

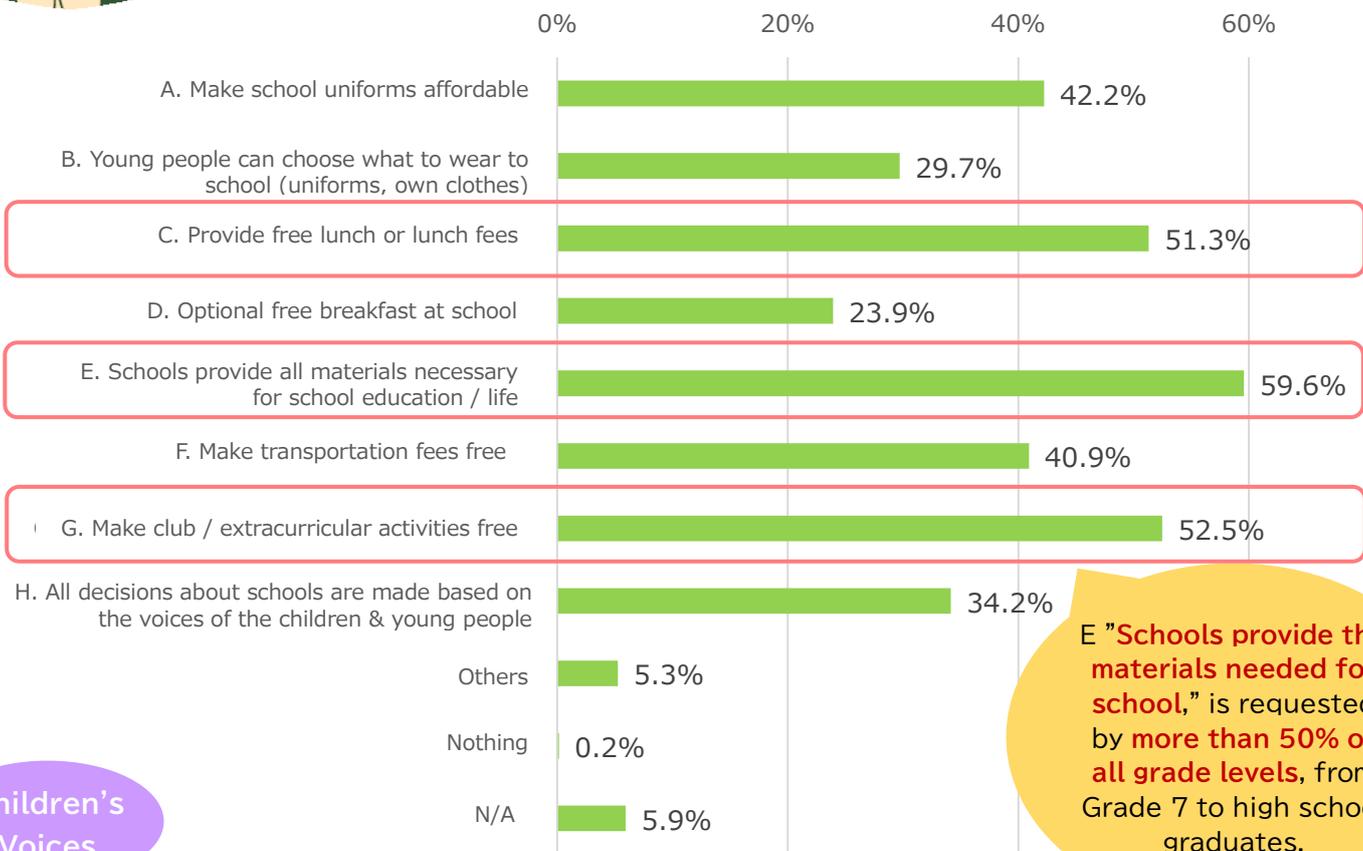
Club activities. It takes money, baseball and all that. **We don't have much money. So, I can't join the club activities I want to. Even if I want to join, I don't because of the costs.**

(Kanagawa, Grade 10)

Question 6



What changes would you like to see happen to make it possible for all children to learn without worrying about money or financial impact due to Covid-19? Do you have things you would like to propose or to say to the adults or the government? (Multiple responses, respondents = 606)



E "Schools provide the materials needed for school," is requested by more than 50% of all grade levels, from Grade 7 to high school graduates.

Children's Voices

I wanted to go to a public school but failed the entrance exam and had to go to a private school. The tuition is so high that even with support it's nowhere near enough. I don't know if I can continue for 3 years. I'm so worried about the financial aspect and the really high possibility I might have to quit partway through...

It's not just tuition and facility maintenance fees that are really expensive, but also other costs, so I wish there was more support for those too. I wish high school was included within compulsory education.

(Saitama, Grade 10)

I appreciate that the national and prefectural governments have tuition waiver programs, but it's a big burden when you have to pay the school first and get it back a few months later.

Even if you get a scholarship, you have to pay the school first. For universities and vocational schools, you have to pay for the whole year in advance. It's a huge burden. It would be much easier if there was a system where you don't have to pay this first.

(Saitama, March 2021 graduate)

Fees to get into university like cram school and university tuition is a burden on my parents, so I can't say anything.

(Tokyo, Grade 11)

I would like to go far away to the Kanto area for higher education or work, but I feel I can't when I think about my family or about money.

I want to get a job in the Kanto area, but thinking about money and things... I feel uncertain and think I might have no choice but to stay closer.

(Iwate, Grade 12)

[About going to the government or parliamentarians to deliver opinions] Well, I might be nervous, but even for kids, the world doesn't work if we don't share our opinions, right?

(Kanagawa, Grade 7)



For more about this report...

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