

Japan to give children under 19 \$880 cash handout

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Japanese children may soon have smiles on their faces and money in their pockets. As part of a covid-19-related stimulus package, Japan's government is planning to give ¥100,000 (\$880) to all children under the age of 19. Around 20 million

children, from newborns to 18-year-olds, will receive the one-time payment. The initiative is part of an election pledge from Japan's newly-elected Prime Minister. During campaigning, he vowed to help "people in need," such as part-time workers and families with small children. Officials say the money will be given regardless of the financial status of a child's family. All children in any one family will receive the cash. The plan is expected to cost around ¥2 trillion (\$17.6 billion).

The stimulus package is not without its critics. Many people have reservations about splurging so much money when Japan is burdened with so much debt. The country's debt is currently more than twice the size of its economy. Government sources argue the cash is available for the pandemic stimulus because of a surplus of funds from fiscal 2020. Skeptics are questioning the plan's logic. They said most recipients would not be going out to purchase high-cost items, dine in upmarket restaurants or take domestic holidays. It is predicted that much of the money will end up in savings accounts. However, mother of three Yuki Ono welcomed the plan. She said her children would benefit because they will buy new computers.

Sources:
the-japan-news.com / japantimes.co.jp / kyodonews.net

Writing

All children need a sizeable cash handout. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

children / smiles / pockets / stimulus / newborns / payment / vow / part time / plan / critics / reservations / splurging / debt / pandemic / fiscal / dine / upmarket / benefit

True / False

- 1) The article says Japanese children are always smiling. T / F
- 2) Newborn babies will not get the cash handout. T / F
- 3) The cash handouts are part of the Prime Minister's election promises. T / F
- 4) The handouts will cost ¥17.6 billion. T / F
- 5) Everyone in Japan thinks the handouts are a great idea. T / F
- 6) Japan's debt is twice the size of its economy. T / F
- 7) Japan had a surplus of funds in the last fiscal year. T / F
- 8) A mother said her children would buy new computers. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. soon | a. notwithstanding |
| 2. give | b. amount |
| 3. payment | c. embraced |
| 4. pledge | d. detractors |
| 5. regardless | e. bestow |
| 6. critics | f. eat |
| 7. surplus | g. promise |
| 8. dine | h. speculated |
| 9. predicted | i. before long |
| 10. welcomed | j. excess |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Why might critics dislike the stimulus package?
- c) When was the last time you splurged on something?
- d) What do you know about your country's debt?
- e) What would you do with \$880?
- f) Do you purchase high-cost items and dine in expensive restaurants?
- g) What financial advice do you have for the children?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Japan's government?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Japanese children may soon have | a. of the financial status |
| 2. As part of a covid-19- | b. with so much debt |
| 3. from newborns | c. election pledge |
| 4. The initiative is part of an | d. high-cost items |
| 5. regardless | e. smiles on their faces |
| 6. The stimulus package is not | f. accounts |
| 7. Japan is burdened | g. without its critics |
| 8. a surplus of funds from | h. related stimulus package |
| 9. purchase | i. fiscal 2020 |
| 10. end up in savings | j. to 18-year-olds |

Discussion – Student B

- What puts a smile on your face?
- How often does money make you smile?
- Are you happy with the amount of money in your pocket?
- What do you think of having a covid stimulus package?
- How has your country's economy fared during covid-19?
- Do you think giving \$880 to children is a good idea?
- What do you think children would do with \$880?
- What do you think Japan's children will think of this plan?

Spelling

- a covid-19-related tluimssu package
- The niittveiaa is part of an election pledge
- During ainpnimagcg
- he woevd to help people in need
- lrseaedrgs of the financial status
- txecdpee to cost around ¥2 trillion
- people have satonieersrv
- ipsrlgugn so much money
- Japan is rdedeubn with so much debt
- because of a susrulp of funds
- most tecenrpsi would not be going out
- money will end up in savings otsnucca

Answers – Synonym Match

1. i	2. e	3. b	4. g	5. a
6. d	7. j	8. f	9. h	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Toys

You think toys are the best thing for children to spend their money on. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): music, candy or amusement parks.

Role B – Music

You think music is the best thing for children to spend their money on. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): toys, candy or amusement parks.

Role C – Candy

You think candy is the best thing for children to spend their money on. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): music, toys or amusement parks.

Role D – Amusement Parks

You think amusement parks are the best thing for children to spend their money on. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): music, candy or toys.

Speaking – Spending

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things for children to spend their money on at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------|-------------------|
| • Toys | • Sports gear |
| • Candy | • A computer |
| • Books | • A bicycle |
| • Music | • Amusement parks |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 F	5 F	6 T	7 T	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.