The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Preparing a Child for a School Year Gets Too Expensive For Russian Parents

By Anastasia Bazenkova

August 30, 2015



Those living in Russia's biggest cities are planning to spend 30,818 rubles on getting necessary school supplies.

As Russian children get ready to start a new school year this week, their parents have to cough up a record amount of money to equip them with everything they need, according to the latest study by a state-run pollster.

An average Russian family will spend almost 20,000 rubles ($300) to prepare a child for the new school year. School-related expenses have risen by 47 percent compared to last year and 225 percent compared to 2005, the survey by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) issued on Friday said.

Getting a child ready for the new school year is more expensive than ever, VTsIOM's sociologists said.

Dramatically increased expenses are a big challenge for the budgets of the Russian families.

"We had to save money for three months to buy all the necessary things for the new school year," said Yulia Yurova, mother of a Year-Two student. The family spent nearly twice more than last year preparing their daughter for school, Yurova said.

The residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg will spend more than an average Russian family. Those living in Russia's biggest cities are planning to spend or have already spent 30,818 rubles ($490) on getting all the necessary school supplies, according to the survey.

The biggest expense for parents of schoolchildren is traditionally a school uniform, sportswear and indoor shoes. However, this year the cost of these items, according to the parents, have risen to 7,191 rubles ($114), compared to 4,709 rubles last year.

Meanwhile the average Russian salary as of July is 33,980 rubles ($505).

All school-related costs have increased this year, apart from voluntary donations made by parents for the benefit of the school, according to the parents, the survey said.

School clothing is followed by textbooks and paper notebooks on the list of school-related costs. This year the parents of schoolchildren are planning to spend on average of 3,077 rubles ($47) on these items, 60 percent more than last year, the survey said.

A schoolbag ranked third among the most expensive school supplies. The average family is planning to spend 2,855 rubles ($45) this year, up from 1,940 ($31) last year.

The survey was conducted from Aug. 22-23, among 1600 respondents in 46 Russian regions.The margin error does not exceed 3.5 percent, according to VTsIOM.

Despite the fact that prices for school supplies have increased this year, Yurova said they had tried to avoid buying low-quality, cheap items.

If you buy the cheapest pencils, children just can't write with them properly, she said.

Therefore the costs of Yurova's family were considerably higher than the average budget of Moscow residents buying school supplies.

However, Yurova said they still tried to find ways to cut expenses wherever possible.

"For example, I found the uniform in a store and later bought it online because it was cheaper," she said.

According to Igor Berezin, president of the Guild of Marketing Specialists of Russia, it is too early to reach conclusions on how much parents will spend on school supplies this year, as most of the school shopping is being done now or in September.

The expenses of parents will definitely increase this year as the prices for school supplies have climbed by up to 20 percent over the year, he said.

However, the actual expenses of the parents may turn out to be lower than the survey suggests, according to Berezin.

There is a hysteria resulting from the rising prices, so parents might subconsciously prepare themselves to spend twice as much as last year, Berezin said.

Contact the author at a.bazenkova@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/08/30/preparing-a-child-for-a-school-year-gets-too-expensive-for-russian-parents-a49234