

Inflation hurts children, too

# Kids' expenses soaring

**United Press International**  
Every month the U.S. Department of Labor releases the news that everyone already knows: "The cost of living has gone up."  
Adults bemoan the cost of owning a home, driving a car or buying the family groceries.  
Another segment of the population — the kids — may not know how and why, but they do know something's up — the prices.  
Take Danny Hammerman, a Dubuque, Iowa, fifth grader.

Danny found what a Catch-22 dealing with inflation can be.  
"Each time I save up for an album, all of a sudden it'll go up more," the 11-year-old said.  
"Then I have to save some more or sometimes I go half with my sister."  
Danny said he's never discussed a raise in his \$1 allowance because it's already set by his parents.  
To kids, inflation is more than just a term in science class meaning how a bicycle tire is filled

with air. To them, it's a matter of being able to afford the bicycle.  
The concern adults show for the increasing prices of consumer goods is shared by their children. A small random sampling indicates kids today really do worry about the cost of such items as soda pop, candy and movies.  
If parents wonder about the real value of their next paycheck, their children wonder how much of an allowance they'll get out of that paycheck. Sometimes the negotiations take on the sound of labor-management talks.  
Jeremy Shaw, 11, another Dubuque fifth grader, said he now gets a \$2 a week allowance. He explained that it's a 100 percent increase from a few weeks ago because he took on the added responsibility of doing the dishes.  
"I agreed to do it because I thought I was getting older, and I could do more (around the house)," said Jeremy, whose father is laid off.  
But Jeremy's classmate Treva Leib, 11, said she was turned down when she asked for a \$1 increase in her \$1 allowance. She said her parents told her "things are going up too much, and the bills are going up."

Everyone knows the day of the nickel candy bar has gone the way of the soda jerk and the 10-cent popcorn, which was eaten regularly through those Saturday matinees. A look at some of the statistics reveals inflation does have its hold over kids.  
The U.S. Labor Department reports that since December, 1977, the cost of carbonated soft drinks has jumped an average 42.4 percent; candy and chewing gum 46.8 percent; toys, hobbies and music equipment 29.4 percent; and keeping a pet 37.2 percent. Entertainment, such as movies, rock concerts and ball games, has increased 28 percent.  
About the smallest increase in prices of items affecting children is in the clothing department. Cost of boys' clothing has increased 16.4 percent, compared to a modest 9.7 percent increase in girls' clothing in the last four years.  
However, for Debbie Greifenkamp, 15, of Villa Park, Ill., that pair of \$40 designer jeans cost her 40 hours of babysitting.  
In fact, teenagers say it has become almost essential for them to hold a job so that they can make up for, or supplement, an allowance.  
Who's to blame and what's to be done about inflation?  
The answers of teens and their younger counterparts sound vaguely similar to their parents' answers: "Give us better quality for the prices," "Lower prices and we'll spend more," "Reduce spending on welfare and create more jobs," "Increase wages."  
Some blame the Reagan administration, saying it has fallen back on its word to balance government spending and curb inflation. Others support the president and say his programs need a chance to work.  
As to who's the hardest hit by inflation, there's just as wide a variety of answers: the elderly, the poor, the disabled, the jobless.

Mary Ellen Tretina, 15, also of Villa Park, views teens as the hardest hit by inflation.  
"I would say we are more affected than anyone else," Mary Ellen said, "since legally we're under age, we can't find very good paying jobs."

**United Press International**  
**NEW YORK** — Whenever the unemployment rate in the United States is rising, some suspect that excessive overtime is a cause.  
That is so because many of the overtime hours worked in American factories, offices and shops are regularly scheduled and conceivably could be turned into regular jobs.  
A recent Department of Labor study said factory workers averaged 3.4 hours of overtime a week, which if turned into full-time jobs, would increase total employment of production workers by 1.7 percent.

An AFL-CIO spokesman said that would mean one million more full-time jobs.  
Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, one of the states hardest hit by factory unemployment, has at various times introduced bills to curb the use of scheduled overtime by raising the premium pay for it.  
Two researchers, Ronald C. Ehrenberg of Cornell and Paul L. Schumann of the University of Minnesota, did a simulation test to determine how the Conyers proposals would work out if enacted and have published a book about it entitled "Longer Hours Or More Jobs?" (ILR

Publications, Cornell, N.Y.).  
They concluded that the premium pay for overtime would cut its usage by an average of 20 percent and raise full-time employment by 1.7 percent. But they do doubt that the Conyers would accomplish this, because of factors, such as recession, lighting by workers, the lack of matching skills, poor geographic distribution of working skills and compliance with the proposed constraints on the part of new jobs.  
Ehrenberg said he and Schumann investigated the employer and worker reaction to the proposals to curb overtime or make it more expensive. He had concluded it is not an idea because very little overtime work is done by low-income employees.  
They found families with come of less than \$4,000 a year on the average in overtime pay. Most goes to workers in the \$20,000 and-up wage brackets caused in part by scarcity of workers in high tech fields. Therefore, Ehrenberg and Schumann concluded creating premium pay for overtime might simply have the effect of increasing the wage between poor and well-to-do workers instead of increasing the number of fulltime workers.



photo by Jane Harris

## Not quite a living doll

Tom Ratliff, a junior biology major from Cedar Lane, gives mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to Reusa Annie, a doll used for practicing cardio-pulmonary

resuscitation techniques. Ratliff was one of 42 students certified at CPR certification classes held at G. Rollie Whiteiseum last Monday through Wednesday.

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