


SEND Bulletin NO.15



Young Carers

Young carers are children or young people under 18 who provide care and support for a family member who is disabled or ill. This may be on a temporary or permanent basis. Young carers take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate for their age and level of development and often have to offer both personal and emotional support. Surveys have shown that as many as one in ten young people may be acting as a young carer.

Every year there is an awareness day. The purpose of the day is to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by young people because of their caring role, and to campaign for greater support for young carers and their needs.

 Being a young carer is a risk factor for the mental health of children and young people.

Key characteristics

A young carer may:

- have frequent absences from school
- be tired and anxious when at school
- have difficulty concentrating
- be unable to complete learning tasks and homework
- have physical health problems
- have mental health problems
- be fearful of sharing problems with adults because of possible results (e.g. being put into care)
- feel isolated and unable to make friends
- have limited opportunities for leisure activities
- be fearful for the future.

Support strategies

You may need to:

- ensure that a pupil is identified as a young carer without making this public
- encourage the pupil to seek support for the family when appropriate (young carers and their families often fear interference from outside agencies)
- provide information about projects and services available, particularly respite care, activities and outings
- liaise regularly with those services involved with the pupil
- be sensitive to cultural issues
- be prepared to listen to the young carer's concerns and anxieties and give appropriate support where possible
- provide key worker support if necessary
- allow for flexibility within the school day (some young carers may need to go home at certain times during the day)
- provide support with homework
- ensure that the young carer is not over-burdened with school work (set short manageable targets that can be successfully completed).

Support agencies

- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers: www.youngcarers.net
- My Time: <https://www.mytime4youngcarers.org/>
- Action for Children: www.actionforchildren.org.uk
- NHS.UK: www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/who-can-help-young-carers
- Carers Trust: <https://carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers>
- Carers Trust: <https://carers.org/young-carers-awareness-day-2019-resources>
- CHICKS: <https://chicks.org.uk/>

If you have any particular items you would like information on or any interesting information or resources which you would like to share with your colleagues via this fortnightly bulletin please e-mail them to me:

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Many thanks

Anne