

About Young Carers

Young carers are children or young people up to 25 years of age, who helps care in families where someone has an illness, a disability, a mental health issue or who has an alcohol or other drug problem.

There are over 300,000 young carers in Australia¹ and at least 150,000 of those young carers are under the age of eighteen².

Young carers may have responsibilities to help care for a parent, grandparent, sibling or other relative.

A young carer may provide assistance with personal care, such as dressing, bathing, toileting or mobility, beyond what you would expect of someone of their age. They may also assist with purchasing and administering medication and undertaking household tasks which might not normally be expected of a person their age.

When young carers are supported, they often have greater feels of pride and worth, stronger family relationships; develop life and living skills and a greater sense of resilience and purpose.

When unsupported, many young carers experience:

- social isolation, with many missing out on time spent with friends and participating in social and recreational activities
- physical effects including fatigue, muscle strain and injuries sustained in caring
- stress and emotional issues including anxiety, depression, grief and loss
- financial hardship as families attempt to meet the rising costs of healthcare, respite and other medical expenses
- family tensions
- difficulty in engaging in education and employment due to their caring responsibilities.

It is important that young carers get help to balance their caring role in order to both complete their education and to be able to participate socially.

The Young Carer Information and Respite Service provides effective support for young carers and can be contacted on 1800 242 636. For more information about young carers go to www.youngcarers.net.au.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers*. Canberra, Australia.
² See www.abs.gov.au.