

Early intervention and preventative work

"It is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later."¹

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School leads or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- "Feeder" primary schools, sixth forms and colleges
- Parent support advisers

This chapter will support schools to:

- identify, support and monitor young carers at the earliest opportunity.
- implement specific procedures for the early identification of young carers, including pupils who commence mid-term.
- establish ongoing procedures to facilitate the identification of young carers throughout their school career.
- develop crisis or emergency plans for pupils where appropriate.
- reduce or prevent negative impacts on a young carer's education.

Synopsis

Young carers can go unnoticed in school for years; under-achieving and failing to respond to support that does not tackle the root causes of their problems. Early identification, intervention and prevention are vital to avoid any negative impacts on their education and to ensure emotional and physical well-being.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) states that "preventing poor outcomes from arising in the first place benefits children, young people and families directly. In addition, failure to prevent problems, impacts not only on the family, but also society more widely".²

Why is early intervention necessary?

Juggling the responsibilities of a caring role, along with the pressures of education can be exhausting and burdensome for a young carer. Schools must develop systems of support before young carers' lives are negatively affected.



Education welfare officers, educational social workers, school nurses and other staff are in a position to identify a young carer through absence, but it is more desirable to identify a young carer before they are rooted in a caring role, before their attendance or behaviour drops or a negative relationship develops with the school. Failure to prepare support can impact upon a pupil, leading them to spiral towards further problems and disengagement.

Low level intervention

Some illnesses and disabilities are, by nature, extremely variable whilst others are degenerative, but all have differing impacts on a young carer's role. It is better to support pupils through early intervention rather than allowing them to struggle later on, if and when their circumstances become more difficult. Even when a young carer appears to be coping reasonably well and caring responsibilities seem limited, ensuring a support framework is in place and that the pupil is comfortable in accessing this framework (if they wish) is ideal.

Pupils who have already accessed low-level support are less likely to refuse further support should their caring role increase and their home situation worsens or becomes chaotic. Pupils who have met other young carers at peer support groups, for example, or those who have already talked with a member of staff, might feel more confident in seeking and accessing further support if and when their needs are greater. Moreover, preventative work, such as emotional literacy work and work around resilience, offered to young carers with low-level needs is valuable.

Identification

It is important that schools put in mechanisms that facilitate early identification. Please refer to Chapters 4 'Barriers to learning faced by young carers' and 27 'Crisis and emergency plans'.

Crisis or emergency plans

Drawing up an emergency plan for a young carer may help mitigate negative impacts. Please refer to Chapters 4 'Barriers to learning faced by young carers' and 27 'Crisis and emergency plans'.

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 18** Identification of young carers
- 24** Assessment and monitoring
- 27** Crisis and emergency plans

Key resources

→ Early Intervention: Securing good outcomes for all children and young people

This document draws together a wealth of research and good practice with the aim of supporting Children's Trust Boards and their constituent partners to bring greater consistency, rigor and impact to the way early intervention is organised and delivered locally.

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=viewallpublicationsbydate&PageMode=publications&Type=AllPubsByDate&DateRange=4&Phase=0&Topic=0&PublicationType=5&FreeText=&>



→ **Early identification, assessment of needs and intervention – The Common Assessment Framework for children and young people: A guide for practitioners**

Updated to reflect policy developments and include revisions identified in consultation with practitioners and managers across the children and young people's workforce.

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=IW91%2f0709&>

→ **Barnardo's ARCH Project (Achieving Resilience, Change and Hope)**

This project works with children and young people between 5 and 14 who have emerging emotional and behavioural difficulties. The project also works with their parents or carers.

www.barnardos.org.uk/arch.htm

→ **Aiming High for Children: Supporting Families**

HM Treasury and Dept. for Education and Skills

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/cyp_disabledchildren180507.pdf

¹DCSF: *The Children's Plan. Building brighter futures*: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/downloads/resources/Stakeholder_Presentation.ppt#326,11, *The Children's Plan sets out some ambitious goals for 2020*

²*Aiming High for Children: Supporting Families*, HM Treasury and Dept. for Education and Skills 2007: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/cyp_disabledchildren180507.pdf