

Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work

“When doing an assessment it is important to understand how the condition or illness affects the whole family and how families’ needs and individual’s needs may differ but also affect each other.”

Who is this chapter for?

- All staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Education welfare service
- Home school liaison officer
- Parent support adviser
- Other professionals working in the school
- Outside agencies

This chapter will support schools to:

- signpost and refer young carers and families to other appropriate services, such as your local young carers’ service or a counselling service.
- identify and address inappropriate caring roles by working in partnership with other agencies.
- signpost or refer parents to services that will be able to support their parenting needs.
- work in partnership with outside agencies, such as the youth service, local young carers’ service, social care or health services.

Synopsis

For young carers, better support for the whole family and the person they care for is their top priority.

In order for a young carer to achieve their potential within school, they may not only need extra support for themselves but also for their family. By ensuring that the person with the disability or illness has their care needs met adequately by other service providers means that young carers will be protected from inappropriate caring roles and may be more able to take part in learning and school opportunities successfully.



Schools are in a good position to recognise when a young person's development and well-being is being affected, but are often not able to offer practical support to the whole family. Signposting or referring families to other services can make a huge difference and working with other agencies, including health and adult's services, can prevent a pupil's caring role from impacting upon their own well-being.

Parents with disabilities

Parents with disabilities have the same human and civil rights as non-disabled parents. Parents with ill-health or disabilities should be supported in their parenting role as well as with their health care needs.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Disabled Parents Network and The Children's Society have adopted a broad and inclusive definition of 'disabled' to include anybody with an actual or perceived physical, sensory, emotional or learning impairment, long-term illness, blood-borne viruses, including HIV and AIDS, drug or alcohol dependence or a person with a mental ill-health, victims of war and torture. It is recognised that not all people included in this definition would define themselves as disabled.

Providing support

Referring young carers and their families to other organisations for additional support can provide the pupil with more time to complete homework, attend school and overcome some of the barriers to their learning. Schools should consider how they will link with adult's and children's services, health services, the voluntary sector, such as a local young carers' service, and other organisations who are working with the family. Links to children's disability teams might be useful, where a young carer is helping to care for a sibling.

Completing a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) or attending a TAC (Team around the Child) meeting can be highly beneficial when working in partnership with other agencies or planning appropriate whole-family support. At this stage issues around caring and ill-health and disability and how this can impact on the pupil's well-being and their education should be made clear.

Services provided to parents enabling them to fulfil their parenting responsibilities, as well as supporting their care needs, should also be made available. Services that assist disabled adults with parenting may be provided either as part of a service to disabled adults or a service to support children, or both. Refer to the Disabled Parents Network (DPN), a national organisation of and for disabled people who are parents or who hope to become parents, and their families, friends and supporters.¹

Differences of opinion

It is important to remember that "...there may be differences of opinion between the children and parents about what are appropriate levels of care for the child to carry out. Such differences may be out in the open or concealed. The resolution of such tensions will require good quality joint work between adult and children's social services, as well as co-operation from schools and health care workers. This work should include direct work with the young carer to understand his or her perspective and opinions" as well as consultation with the parent by adult services.²



See the Whole Family Pathway for more information about partnership working and who could be involved in supporting young carers and their families at www.youngcarer.com

Other chapters within this resource to help you understand this topic

- 4** Barriers to learning faced by young carers
- 15** Who else can help?
- 16** Working with young carers: a model
- 24** Assessment and monitoring
- 25** Safeguarding
- 29** Access, support and involving parents with disabilities
- 30** Working in partnership with young carer' services

Key resources

→ Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/caf/cafframework/>

→ Team around the Child (TAC)

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=IW92%2F0709>

→ Find your local young carers project

www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=projects.htm

→ Disabled Parents Network

National organisation of and for disabled people who are parents or who hope to become parents, and their families, friends and supporters.

www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/site/site.cgi

→ Keeping the Family in Mind

Resource pack developed by Barnardo's.

www.barnardos.org.uk/resources/research_and_publications.htm

→ Whole Family Pathway

<http://www.youngcarer.com/pdfs/Whole%20Family%20Pathway.pdf>

¹Disabled Parents Network: www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/site/site.cgi

²*Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*. (2000). Department of Health: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4003256