

THE HOME HELPER - SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS

If you have been looking after your mum or dad, or even a brother or sister, you may feel like you are dealing with a lot. You should know that you are doing a great job, but it is important that you have support too. Fortunately, there is plenty of help out there for people just like you; whether it's talking to professionals for advice, or chatting to other young people who are also carers.

HERE'S SOME GREAT PLACES FOR YOU TO FIND SUPPORT.

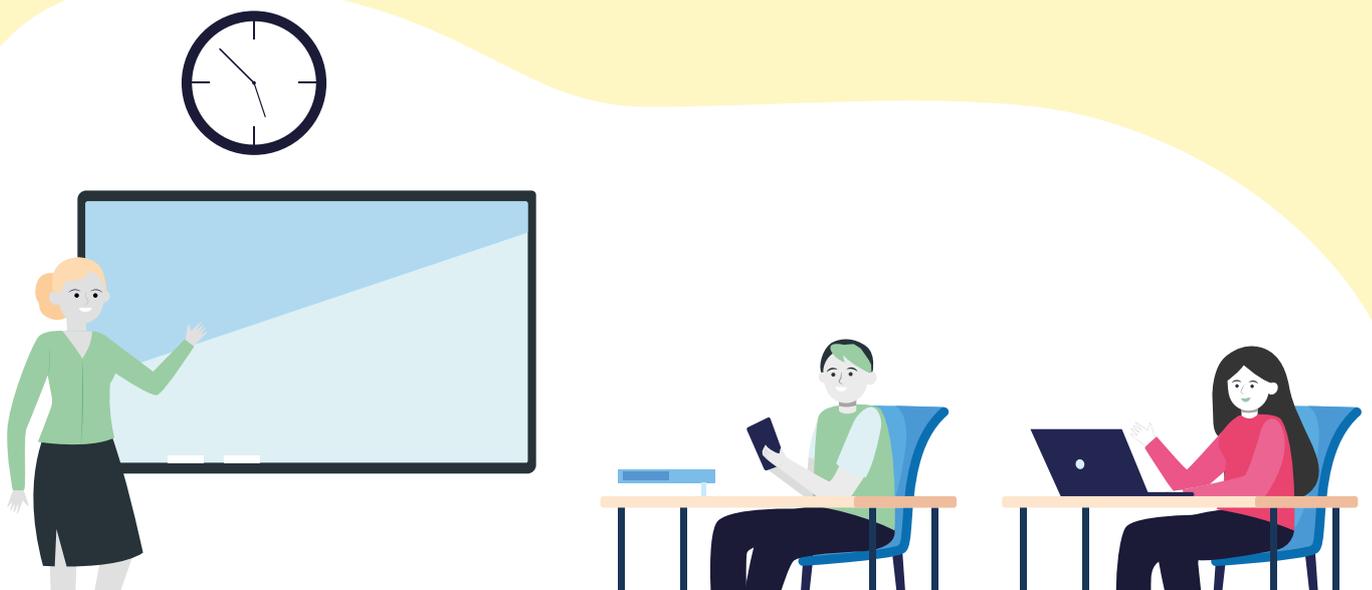
TOP TIPS

- Tell your teacher what is going on at home – a problem shared is a problem halved!
- Suggest a lunchtime group or homework group (if your school doesn't already have one)
- If there is a homework group – join in!
- Ask your teachers for extensions on your homework or extra tuition time in class

HELP AT SCHOOL

Your teachers will want you to get the most out of your time in school, and they can be great people to talk to in confidence about any problems you may have. If you are missing lessons to look after someone at home, or struggling to meet homework deadlines, just explain things to a teacher and they will be able to come up with ways to help.

As a young carer, you might find that during school hours you can feel “normal” while you're away from the responsibilities you have at home. But it might be that you feel under extra pressure because you think the people around you don't understand what you are dealing with at home. There is a lot to deal with when you're a young carer and have the demands of school work, teachers and friends, but people want to help.



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You might not want people at school to know you're caring for someone at home. But if they don't know, they will be unable to help you. If you don't want to speak to a teacher, maybe ask someone to write to the school for you. Some schools run lunchtime groups for young carers to get together. If your school doesn't have a group like this, then why not be the one to suggest it?

School should be a happy place for you and the teachers will definitely want it to be. If they know that you are a carer then they will be able to put things in place to support you at school.

Talking things through with a teacher you trust, or your friends and family, can be really helpful. But, if you find it hard to talk to others, have a go at writing your thoughts down, whether it's in a diary, writing a letter, or maybe journaling as we discussed above. Writing it down can help make sense of your thoughts and how you feel.



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FRIENDS AND YOUR SOCIAL LIFE

With everything going on at home, you might be missing out on opportunities to spend time with your friends. This can feel frustrating and unfair. You might also find that you don't get included in certain activities or social events. It's important to get help so that you have time to do the things you enjoy and spend time with your friends.



TOP TIPS

- Work out a rota so that other people in your family can share the responsibility for being the carer.
- Ask a friend you trust to spend some time with you at your home or in your garden, so that you can socialise while still being close to those who need you.
- Join Whatsapp or social media groups with friends that you trust and enjoy talking to. This will help you to keep in touch and feel connected, even when your days are very busy.

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SUPPORT IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED

Bullying comes in different forms and can include being deliberately left out of activities and groups, as well as being called names or hit, kicked, punched or threatened with any of these things. Young carers are sometimes bullied because the person they care for is ill or disabled, or because they cannot always do the things that other young people are able to.

If you need someone to speak to, contact www.bullying.co.uk or www.childline.org.uk.

Childline is a free and confidential telephone helpline for children on **0800 11 11**.



MEET OTHER PEOPLE LIKE YOU

Meeting up with other young carers is a great way to make new friends and chat to people in similar situations.

The Children's Society - www.childrenssociety.org.uk - runs the Young Carers Festival, a festival held every summer for young people with a caring responsibility at home.

KIDS - www.kids.org.uk - is an organisation for carers under the age of 18. It runs clubs where you can meet other young carers. It also offers support, advice and information.

Action for Children - **Action for Children** can put you in touch with other young carers. It has free places available for young carers at its residential activity camps.