

What Can Parents Do to Help Their Young Carer?

Caregiving is a family event because each member of the family is affected when one person needs assistance with daily living. Providing care can be very challenging, and often, much of a family's time, energy, and attention are focused on the person with illness/disability. Children often adapt by providing care—we call these children “Young Carers”, and they provide all kinds of assistance. They may act as the memory for someone with a brain injury or dementia, cook dinner when mom is feeling under the weather, or act as a translator for a parent who can't hear or speak English.

What Can Parents Do?

- ⦿ Keep in mind-“children first, Young Carers second”
- ⦿ Talk, talk, talk! Keep communication honest and open
- ⦿ Listen! Encourage Young Carers to share their thoughts and feelings
- ⦿ Acknowledge the importance of the caring your Young Carers provide for their family
- ⦿ Make sure all tasks are appropriate for age and ability
- ⦿ If you have more than one child, try to share the caring responsibilities evenly
- ⦿ Try to give your Young Carers time just to “be kids”
- ⦿ Have family meetings—a time to share thoughts, worries, and dreams
- ⦿ Don't feel guilty! Young Carers who are well supported by their families turn out to be extra special adults!