



Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre

Background info – Who we are, why we are here

The Young Carers Program has been set up by the Australian Government to deliver respite services to support young carers at risk of prematurely leaving secondary education or the vocational education equivalent. The measure aims to help them to better manage and balance their education while continuing their caring responsibilities.

The program will benefit school aged young carers, mainly 18 years and under, with respite services. Information, referral and advice services are available for all young carers up to and including age 25 years.

For purposes of the Young Carers Program, a young carer is defined as a person up to and including 25 years of age who is a major provider of care and support for a parent, partner, child, relative or friend, who has a disability, is frail aged, or who has a severe mental or physical condition, or alcohol or other substance dependence

The program is currently being run out of the Central Coast Commonwealth Respite & Carelink centre in Wyoming, but we service both Wyong and Gosford LGA's, so an opportunity exists to help many young people.

What we can do:

- provide young carers with an identifiable and accessible single point of contact for information and advice on the full range of respite care services and other assistance available in the central coast area;
- purchase, organise or manage the delivery of respite care assistance that is tailored to the individual needs of the young carer and their care recipients, utilizing both direct respite (in-home and out of home support) and indirect respite (domestic assistance, tutoring, transport, social and material support) services for support;

Why we do it:

It is hoped that the YC Program can achieve the following for young carers:

- reduced disruptive school attendance;
- improved educational opportunities and outcomes;
- Improved employment skills and opportunities; and

- increased family stability.

Indications that a young carer is at risk of leaving school include:

- Frequently missing school;
- having no time to complete homework;
- feeling very distracted when they are at school and experience limited connectedness with their school community; or
- considering leaving secondary school or equivalent education prematurely

Ask about their experiences with young carers:

What you can do:

Young carers have indicated the benefits of discussing their care situations with a teacher or other staff members when those teachers or staff members:

- were considerate of their situations
- comforted them in difficult times
- supported them
- gave appropriate advice, information and referral.

Some practical strategies you can adopt when dealing with Young Carers:

- providing catch-up time for lesson notes and flexibility with homework for young carers who miss school or are having difficulty keeping up with their workload
- providing private access to a telephone, or allowing young carers to have mobile phones on during class to keep in contact with the person they care for
- providing access to computers and the Internet
- reducing the young carer's workload (e.g., informing young carers that they can study for their Higher School Certificate (Years 11 and 12) over three years instead of two)
- providing curriculum using online technology

- modifying timetables for the young carer

- providing information about applying for special consideration, whereby teachers take into account the student's caring responsibilities when marking assessments. (Special consideration for carers is available in some states and territories. Check with your education department for the details and the forms to be completed.)

Follow up?

- a. Possibility of Young Carers Project having a short article in the school newsletter?

- b. Young Carers Project could come and discuss Young carers with the Faculty and/or student groups. For Young student groups we use a story time approach and read a story book that involves a young carer in the story.

- c. YC Support Policy: Young Carers policy to be included in the overall welfare policy.

- d. Questions/more info can be emailed/ Posted or phoned in at a later date

- e. Thanks for your time, hopefully we can sort something out soon