

AACY is the only organization in the U.S. dedicated solely to addressing Caregiving Youth issues.



American Association of
**Caregiving
Youth**



20
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TOP
10 CNN HEROES

WE CHAMPION, SUPPORT, AND CELEBRATE YOUTH WHO CARE FOR CHRONICALLY ILL, INJURED, ELDERLY, OR DISABLED FAMILY MEMBERS.

WHO ARE CAREGIVING YOUTH?

Caregiving Youth are young people ages 18 and under who provide significant assistance or care to a family member who has a chronic illness, disability, mental health condition, or frailty due to aging. (They are called Young Carers in the UK.)

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Caregiving for a loved one is among the most demanding, challenging, and rewarding human activities. Although children are commonly thought of as the recipients of care - rather than the givers - children all over the world participate actively in caregiving every day. The US does not yet have formal policies or support systems in place for these young people as we do for adult caregivers. Furthermore, schools do not typically identify or provide support for Caregiving Youth, which puts them at risk for academic, social, and emotional challenges. In the UK, the rights of "young carers" are recognized and upheld by national governments, caregiving advocacy groups, health care services, and schools. *The United States needs to do the same.*

AN INTERVENTION IN FLORIDA: AACY

- AACY is the only organization in the US dedicated solely to addressing all Caregiving Youth issues independent of the caregiving diagnosis or condition. It is pioneering advances toward understanding the needs of Caregiving Youth while facilitating identification, support, and advocacy initiatives.
- Thanks to the leadership and advocacy actions of AACY, Florida was the first to acknowledge Caregiving Youth in its 2019 Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) of public middle and high school students. Results indicated that 16.4% of high schoolers and 23.6% of middle schoolers, or more than 290,000 youth provide care.
- AACY has demonstrated that academic and personal success outcomes are improved when Caregiving Youth are recognized and supported. The AACY CYP boasts an 8-year average high school graduation rate of 97.9%; more than 90% of these students go on to post-secondary education, and many seek a career in health care, a needed labor force as the U.S. population ages. Our programs keep families together and have helped children's school performance, attendance, graduation rates, mental health, and well-being all improve with CYP support.
- AACY has an important role in the United States and has been a leader in Caregiving Youth issues in our nation for over 16 years. Its Caregiving Youth Institute (CYI) seeks to further raise awareness of the multi-system needs of all Caregiving Youth and provide national solutions and support through the multiple initiatives of Connection, Advocacy, Research, and Education (C.A.R.E.).

5.4M

There are over 5.4M Caregiving Youth in the United States

- More than 70% assist a parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent.
- Many care for disabled siblings or other family members.
- 34% help more than one person in the household.

Importance of supporting Caregiving Youth in the United States

Improved well-being:

Caregiving can be stressful and demanding, especially for young people still developing physically and emotionally. Providing support helps alleviate their stress and improve their overall well-being.

Academic success:

The stresses of caregiving affect a young person's academic performance and school attendance. Providing support and accommodations helps ensure they are able to attend school, learn, and thrive. No child should have to drop out of school or life because of family caregiving.

Reduced isolation:

Caregiving Youth may feel socially isolated. Providing support can help connect them with other caregivers, give them opportunities for fun, and to make friends with kids in similar situations.

Economic benefits:

Caregiving Youth assist with care that would otherwise need to be provided by paid caregivers. Supporting this population reduces the economic burden on the healthcare system and society. \$8.5 billion was the 2012 estimated economic value of unpaid labor of Caregiving Youth in the US; today, the monetary value is much higher.

Future caregivers:

Supporting Caregiving Youth can also help prepare them for future responsibilities and develop their life skills; many Caregiving Youth choose healthcare careers for their futures.