

RECOMMENDATIONS

Report on Caregiving Youth in the U.S.: Progress and Opportunity

This report describes the research, practices, and policies that are accelerating recognition and support of caregiving youth in the U.S. Progress relies on a dedicated, collaborative network of scholars who are training of researchers and experts; non-profit leaders who are advancing innovations; and government and education agencies and actors who have embraced novel researcher-practitioner collaborations to build evidence-based interventions.

Each section of this report makes targeted recommendations. In addition to those specific recommendations below, the authors identify three key actions that require national-level leadership and endorsement. Securing and accelerating existing progress will require a concerted and coordinated investment by the federal government to improve research, practice, and policy on behalf of caregiving youth and their families.

1. **Form a National Task Force on Caregiving Youth.** The distinctiveness of service provision relevant to caregiving youth as compared to adult caregivers demands a more focused and dedicated approach than is available under current structures. The formation of an expert task force would ensure that President Biden’s April 18, 2023, Executive Order on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers, which included explicit reference to “minor children” who are caregivers. A National Task Force on Caregiving Youth would provide strategic leadership to ensure that any additional federal action will advance, rather than reinvent, existing successes.
2. **Conduct a national-level prevalence study, followed by strategic investments in high-impact areas that are likely to have rapid and scalable impacts on health, education, and labor policies.** Federal research agencies, including but not limited to the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and the Institute of Education Sciences, could designate funding mechanisms or incorporate research on caregiving youth. Such a move would enhance access to the resources that will be necessary for rapid growth of empirical evidence related to caregiving impacts, experiences, and interventions.
3. **Support access to resources and adapt existing supports for caregiving youth that are proven successful in the U.S. context and internationally.** The current geographic patchwork of support for caregiving youth means that some young people are recognized as caregivers, while the vast majority remain unrecognized, unsupported, and misunderstood in their schools and communities. States, local governments, schools, non-profit and community-based organizations, and healthcare providers require resources and expertise to evaluate and enact policies for support. Existing best practices should be sustained and circulated as models for adoption and adaptation, with direct support from experts.