

What's the answer?

This activity is suited to secondary pupils and is generally more effective if classes are separated into smaller groups to allow for group discussion but if time is short the activity can be done with everyone in the class working together.

Each group should be given a copy of the questions and a piece of flip chart paper and a pen.

Pupils should read the questions carefully, discuss what they think are the correct answers and write them down.

The class should then discuss each groups responses. Emphasis should be given to the real responsibilities that young carers and how their own opportunities for friendship, leisure, extra curricular and even ordinary school work may be restricted by the tasks they do.

They should also be asked how they could help and support a person of their age who is a young carer.

The answers are given at the end of this appendix.

What's the answer?

Think carefully about the questions below and discuss with the group what you think the answer is. There may be more than one right answer so note down everything that you discuss.

1. Are young carers more likely to be girls or boys? Give some reasons
2. Do young carers want to stop caring? Explain your answer
3. Do schools know when someone is a young carer? Explain your answer
4. What is more important, getting an education or helping someone in your family who has a serious illness?
5. If someone is having problems at home, how might you be able to tell?
6. What should you do for your friend if you know they are caring for someone at home and finding it difficult?
7. Do young carers get bullied more than other young people? Explain your answer.
8. Should a young person lift their mum if she is a wheelchair user?
9. How old should you be to help your mum or dad take their medication?
10. Are people who have a disability as good at being parents as people who do not have a disability?
11. Do disabled parents need help with being parents? In what ways?
12. How do you think it feels to have a parent who drinks a lot?
13. How might it feel for someone who has a brother or sister who has difficulties in learning?
14. Are people who have a mental health problem as good parents as people who don't?
15. Are people who have a drink problem as good parents as those who haven't got a drink problem?
16. Is it OK for someone to miss school to look after a disabled parent?
17. What might stop young people from asking for help with problems they are having?
18. What help might a young carer need?
19. Who can help a young carer?
20. Who can get help from the Young Carers Service?

Answers.....

1. Girls are slightly more likely to be young carers than boys (56% to 44%). Why might this be? Is it fair?
2. Not usually as a lot of young carers tell us they feel proud about the help they give. But they do want to have fun, relax and have a childhood like anyone else so supporting them in achieving this without harming the level of care provided is a way forward.
3. Not always. Sometimes they may be told but often they will only find out in response to signs, often negative, that draw attention to an individual. This is why it's a good idea for a school to ask any pupils new to the school if they have a family member who needs care and for schools to have a member of staff who can be the first point of call for any young carer issue.
4. Both are important but getting an education is very important to someone growing up. That's why it's important to get all the help you can when something is getting in the way of school.
5. They may be late for school quite often. They may be anxious, worried about home, unusually quiet, angry or moody. However, some pupils will hide how they are feeling.
6. Be there for them. Tell them they can talk to you if they want to. Treat them as normally as possible.
7. Young carers often get bullied, sometimes more than other people. It may be because their peers see them or their families as different, or because they have to spend time caring rather than playing.
8. They may feel they have to because no one else is around to help, however there is a real risk of a young person developing a back problem and injuring themselves which is why additional support should be looked into.
9. No legal age exists. Does the class think it's safe for children to do this task?
10. Disabled people are all different, like anyone else. Many young carers tell us that their parents are brilliant, even though their disability may prevent them from being as actively involved in some things compared to able-bodied parents.
11. Some do, some don't. They may need more help to get to places where parents meet, such as Parents' Evenings at school, particularly if they have a mobility problem.
12. Children may often be frightened and worried about the health of the person who is drinking and about the safety of everyone in the family especially if the person who is drinking becomes violent and abusive. They may feel like they have to keep it a secret. Should they?

13. Some young carers tell us that they are very proud of their siblings and have lots of fun with them. Lots of siblings have a love-hate relationship and this is true of siblings who have difficulties in learning too. Some feel embarrassed that others might know if they think their own friends will be unsympathetic to them. This is why good friends who don't judge and are accepting of situations are helpful.
14. They may be, it depends on the level of mental health problem and how much support the individual is getting as to how able they are to cope with the demands of parenting.
15. They may be but again it depends on the behaviour of the parent when drinking; they may behave like anyone else, or their behaviour may be unsafe when they are drinking.
16. Whilst it may be unavoidable on odd occasions it is not a good solution for long periods, so the family needs to get help.
17. Embarrassment, fear of teasing, fear of people interfering, not being sure what rules adults in different jobs have to stick to when young people tell them things, fear of being removed from their family.
18. Lots, from a listening ear, practical support such as a negotiated and reasonable time for homework, (or detention!), friends, etc.
19. Friends, teachers, professional support services. Anyone else?
20. Anyone who is looking after someone at home can get in touch with the Young Carers Service to find out what is available.