

Young carers share their tips to managing a caring role



Young Carers on our Young Carers Council have helped produce 10 tips about coping with a caring role. They hope the tips will be useful to other children and young people in a caring role.

Here are the tips!

1. **Be Proud.** You're a young carer and you probably do a lot more than other young people your age such as helping with cooking, shopping, housework, looking after siblings and more.
2. **Find someone to talk to.** Speaking to an adult, teacher, anyone, particularly if you regularly think about what's going on at home, can be helpful. If you find it hard to talk to others, try writing down your thoughts in a diary, poem or letter as this can help you make sense of how you feel and what you want to say.
3. **Make time for friends.** As a young carer you may miss opportunities to play or spend time with your friends or you may feel isolated from them as you are thinking about the person you look after. It's important to spend time with your friends. You could do an activity or hobby together or if it is hard to get away from home maybe you could invite a friend over, this could also help them understand your situation at home.
4. **Go to a Young Carers Group.** Is there a lunchtime Young Carers' Group in your school or the area where you live? If not can you help set one up?
5. **Bullying is not OK.** As a young carer you may have more responsibilities that other children your age and grow up quicker. You may be bullied too, this is not OK and is not your fault. Talk to a teacher and your parents if you're being bullied.
Schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.
6. **Find a Homework Club.** If you find it too stressful to do homework at home is there a homework club at school or could you go to your local library?
If you're missing lessons to help look after someone or finding it difficult to get your work in on time, talk to a teacher about what you do at home so that they can understand what is happening and give you more help.
7. **Make time for yourself.** Take some time doing something you enjoy or just to be on your own if necessary.

8. **Take part in an activity.** Have a break from your caring role. An activity doesn't have to cost as you could just go for a walk or there are free events run in libraries and by community groups and charities like Carers in Hertfordshire. Our Young Carers Team usually have activities in the school holidays, recent examples have included art and craft workshops, skiing lessons at the Snow Centre in Hemel Hempstead and a first aid workshop.
9. **Don't give up** – especially when times are tough.
10. **Get Ear Plugs.** If you are tired but it's too noisy to sleep, ear plugs may help. Other tips to help with sleep include stop using phones or other devices 30 minutes before bed, get in a comfortable position, close your eyes and picture yourself in your favourite place or take some deep breaths. Don't forget tip 1 was Be Proud!

Don't forget if you are a young carer or know a young carer there is support for you. You can call Carers in Hertfordshire on **01992 58 69 69** or email **young.carers@carersinherts.org.uk** or visit the **Young Carers Website** at **www.ycih.org**