

# Supporting Young Carers: A Quick Guide to a Review of Tailored Wellbeing Programmes

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*Let me speak!*

***Young Carers benefit from wellbeing programmes – but they need more support, earlier and input into their co-design.***

## Why does this research matter?

This research looked at the kinds of support for young carers in Australia, The United Kingdom, Denmark, France and Germany.

The study reviewed the outcomes of existing programmes to develop support for young carers, so they don't need to carry everything alone. The programmes involved a range of activities from a **peer buddy** system, a **peer group activity** program, **cinema program** and a **holiday programme** and **meet up groups**.

There is a need to be more proactive, and preventative, as young carers experience mental health challenges and decreased life opportunities due to their caregiving responsibilities. Programmes are needed so that young carers do not fall through the cracks. Understanding the effectiveness of different programmes will help to develop necessary support.

## For whom does the review have relevance?

There was a paucity of research on young carer community-based wellbeing programmes and minimal reporting of the outcomes. Interestingly, no programmes addressed physical health needs of carers, and the ongoing maintenance of programmes was limited. This is **a significant gap for translational research programmes** to address so that interventions and new programme models might be directed at this age range and become an area for future focus.

**Primary Topic:** Young Carers, Wellbeing Programmes and Preventative Models of Care.

**Main Audience:** Researchers, Service Planning and Support in community services, policy makers.



## What was the focus of the review and who participated?

<p>335 papers identified</p> <p>93 abstracts screened</p> <p>31 full-text articles checked for including or not</p> <p><b>10</b> studies met inclusion criteria</p>	<p><b>Four common outcome themes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improvement in emotional well being and quality of life</li> <li>2. Development of new skills and increased coping</li> <li>3. Respite from caring responsibilities</li> <li>4. Social connection and support</li> </ol>	<p>The review of papers was done by 2 academic researchers and 1 medical research student.</p> <p>Young carers ranged from 5 to 35 years they were children, caring for family members with physical or mental ill-health. Parents of young carers and staff were also included in some studies.</p>	<p><b>Programs Offered</b></p> <p>Buddy Program</p> <p>Respite Stays</p> <p>Cinema and Arts Meet Ups</p> <p>Ways to Access Services</p> <p>Resilience Camps</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Information Folder</p>
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## Whose perspectives were shared?

No programmes incorporated holistic approaches that brought together physical and mental wellbeing. A critical mechanism of action in the success of young carers wellbeing programmes is to be found in peer components. Participants in these programmes gave largely positive feedback, including a sense of respite from their usual heavy load of caring duties, improving emotional wellbeing and quality of life, forming social connections.



## Key findings, why they matter, what's next?

The key findings from the review highlight the importance of community-based programmes in supporting young carers' emotional well-being, developing new skills, providing respite, and fostering social connection and peer support.

These findings are crucial as there is a scarcity of research on such programmes, and understanding their impact is essential for designing effective interventions. The review emphasises the need for community-based support and the desire of young carers for such programmes. Next steps involve gathering input from young carers to understand their specific needs and preferences for peer support and community-based programmes. This information can be used to develop and implement effective interventions that are youth-led, practical, and accessible.

## What matters for us as co-designers with lived-experience and carer, family and kinship group members

It matters that when young carers speak, we listen.

It matters that young carers get the opportunity to co-design the programmes intended for them with limited adult input.

It matters that we conduct more research with young carers to learn more about enablers and barriers to accessing support.

It matters that young carers convene with peers in age and culturally appropriate settings of their choosing. Identifying enablers and barriers for young carers matters, as well as recognising their interests.