

Starting a new job is exciting—but adding caregiving to the mix can be overwhelming. Here are some notes to help you navigate this new chapter of your life, ensuring that there is balance in your personal, professional, and caregiving responsibilities.

## **Build a realistic routine.**

One key thing to know before starting a new job is that your schedule will look different, especially if you're also a caregiver. It becomes important that you dedicate time for work and set consistent times in your day for caregiving tasks. Be sure to use any free time, like quiet evenings, commutes, or meals to plan ahead or recharge.

It will take time to adjust but maintaining a routine will help reduce stress and ensure that you stay organized. This might mean setting realistic expectations for yourself and boundaries for those around you. Maybe your workouts move to the morning, or social hangouts become quick check-ins. The goal is balance, not burnout.

With time and small adjustments, you will land on a routine that supports both your career and caregiving role!

## **Set clear boundaries.**

Without clear boundaries, work and caregiving can easily overlap, leaving you overwhelmed, which is why creating a separation between

the two is so important. Try to avoid bringing stress from work into your caregiving role and vice versa by designating specific times for each responsibility. If you work from home, set up a dedicated workspace (even if it's just a corner in a room) and stick to your scheduled hours. Outside of that time, shift your focus to caregiving. It's also okay to say no. Protect your time by communicating limits with coworkers and family.

## **Communicate your needs.**

Being a caregiver is now part of your reality. While you don't need to disclose every detail, having open conversations early on will help set mutual expectations and foster a supportive work environment.

*Here are some key points to consider:*

- Discuss flexible work arrangements or support programs.
- Set realistic expectations about your availability and potential time-off needs.
- Be proactive in managing workload to prevent feeling overwhelmed.

A simple conversation can go a long way in building trust.

## **Embrace your strengths.**

Your caregiving experience has prepared you more than you know. You've already mastered multitasking, empathy, decision-making, and resilience

Recognizing how your caregiving experience enhances your professional abilities can boost confidence and help navigate challenges. When challenges come up, remind yourself: you've already navigated through hard situations in your role as a caregiver.

## **Stop comparing yourself.**

Being a young caregiver while building a career puts you in a unique position. It's very easy to look around and feel like others around you are moving faster, networking more, climbing the ladder quicker, or handling fewer responsibilities.

However, you need to remember that your journey is unique. Every task you're managing, every day that you show up, is a step forward, building resilience and compassion.

Instead of comparing your progress to others, focus on your own growth, celebrate your own wins—big or small, and recognize all the incredible work you are doing. You are managing two significant roles, and that in itself is an accomplishment to be proud of.

It is also important to remember that not everything is as it seems. Someone who seem to "have it all together" might be facing challenges that they are not comfortable sharing. Everyone is carrying something. Just be proud of how you're carrying yours.

## **Know your rights.**

One of the most important tips for starting a new job while being a caregiver is knowing that support is always available. Whether it's through your employer or local government, there are many resources designed to support you.

Start by looking into your work benefits such as paid leave, mental health support, or flexible work arrangements. Outside of work, you can also research financial aid, grants, or government programs that may help ease the burden.

Ask the right questions and advocate for yourself and the person you are caring for.

## **Take care of yourself.**

Caring for others can be both physically and mentally draining, which is exactly why you need to prioritize self-care.

Simple habits to add onto your routine can help keep your grounded.

Try:

- Deep breathing exercises before bed
- Starting your day with a short walk
- Listening to music throughout different parts of your day
- Eating healthy meals (even if it's just one good meal a day)

Making time for the things that make you happy is essential to keep doing what you love, even when taking on additional responsibilities. Prioritizing your own well-being will ultimately help you be better in every area of your life!

## **Build a support network.**

As a young caregiver, you can feel isolated, making it even more important to establish a strong support system. Surround yourself with people you trust such as friends, family, coworkers, or elder care coaches who listen and support you.

You might also find comfort in joining caregiver groups online or in your area to connect with others in similar situations. Resources like caregiver.org and usa.gov can help point you toward available programs in your state. You are not alone.

Starting a new job while caregiving isn't easy, but with the right mindset and support, you can thrive. Keep showing up, ask for help, and be proud of your journey. Your Bright Horizons benefits include senior care support. Visit your Senior Care page for more details.

If you're a young carer, friends and relatives are often the first people to turn to for help with problems. Talking things through with them can be really helpful.

If you find it hard to talk to others, try to write your thoughts in a diary, poem or letter first. This can help to make sense of your thoughts and how you feel, before getting help.

## **Help from teachers and other school staff**

Teachers are there to help pupils get the most out of school. They can be a good person for you to speak to about any problems you have.

If you're missing lessons to help look after someone at home, or struggling 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.

As a young carer, you might find school a place where you can forget about your caring responsibilities and feel "normal" for a while. But it can also be a place where you're under extra pressure or where people do not understand what your life is like outside school. It can sometimes be hard to juggle all your responsibilities as a young carer with the demands of teachers, friends and homework.

## **Keeping up-to-date with school work**

You might not want your school to know you're caring for someone. But if they do not know about your situation, it will be difficult for teachers to understand if you struggle to keep up in class or do not do your homework. It's a good idea to let at least one teacher you feel able to trust know you're a carer.

You might find it difficult to talk about your home life with a teacher, so you could ask someone in your family to write to the school, perhaps to the head of year.

Some young carers find it easier to talk about the situation if they keep a diary or a list of all the jobs and tasks they have to do.

If you're having trouble with school or homework, your teachers may offer:

- extra time for school work when you have to give more help to the person you care for
- to talk to you privately about your home life
- homework clubs

## **Support at school**

There are lots of ways your school can help. You could be allowed to use a phone during breaks and lunchtime so you can check on the person you're looking after.

The school could also put you in touch with your local young carers service, or get a young carers worker to talk to you.

Some schools run lunchtime groups or homework support groups for young carers. If your school does not do this, you could suggest it to your teachers.

Nobody wants to get into trouble at school. If teachers know you're a carer, they may be more sympathetic to your problems (such as lateness), but it will not necessarily stop you being disciplined if you break the rules.

If you're given detention, you could ask to have it during lunchtime rather than after school because of your caring responsibilities.

## **Missing school**

You may feel you have to miss school to care for someone. But missing school can affect your whole future. Try to get help as quickly as possible so the situation does not go on for a long time.

A GP, nurse, social worker or another person whose job is to help the person you look after can organise more support at home to help you concentrate on school or college.

## **Friends and your social life**

As a young carer, you may miss out on opportunities to play and spend time with your friends and classmates. You may feel isolated from your friends because:

- you do not have as much free time as them
- you're often thinking about the person you look after
- you may be worried they will bully you

Being a young carer can make you stand out from other people, or you may find that you do not get included in certain activities.

It's important to get the help you need so that you have time to do the things you want to do and be with your friends.

If possible, put aside some time each day to do something you enjoy. Your local young carers project or carers centre may be able to help.

## **Are you being bullied?**

Bullying can include being deliberately left out of activities or groups, as well as being called names, hit, kicked, punched or threatened.

Young carers are sometimes bullied because the person they care for is ill or disabled, or because they cannot always do the things other young people can. Some people are bullied for no reason.

In fact, nearly half of children and young people say they've been bullied at school. Even adults get bullied.

It's natural to feel sad, angry or scared if you're being bullied. But remember: there are ways to deal with the problem.

## **Childline**

Childline is a free and confidential telephone helpline for children on 0800 11 11.

You can talk to someone on [Childline](#) who may be able to give you advice and get you help. They will not tell anyone that you have called unless they think you or someone else is at risk of harm.

## **Meet other young carers**

Meeting up with other young carers is a great way to make new friends, have some fun and share some of your worries with people in similar situations to your own.

Young carers projects can help you have a break from home, plus meeting other young carers can help you to relax. Young carers projects may offer evening clubs, weekends away, days out and even holidays, as well as friendly advice and information for you and for your family.

[The Children's Society](#) can help you find a young carer group in your local area. They also run the [Young Carers Festival](#).

[Sense](#) run online and in-person activities for young carers under 18.

## **Help from social workers**

A social worker from your local council has to visit, if you or your parents request this.

Social workers may be asked to help a young carer's family if there are problems that the family members are finding hard to sort out on their own.



## **Help from doctors, nurses and other health workers**

If you're worried about your health, or the health of the person you care for, speak to a doctor or GP.

School nurses visit schools and are usually happy to speak with you about any of your health concerns.

Counsellors work in a variety of places, including schools, hospitals and youth centres. Their job is to listen carefully and give advice – in a private setting.

Local mental health nurses can offer emotional support and advice about mental health conditions. If the person you care for has a "community psychiatric nurse", you can talk to the nurse about their condition and how you can help them cope.

There's a lot you need to deal with from the moment you deal with youth care. It's good to be aware of what is and what is not permitted in youth care. You might not understand everything or be afraid of asking questions. Or you might disagree with how things are done. This is where Jeugdstem helps out. We're here to listen to you and give you a chance to speak up.

## **What is a confidential adviser?**

A confidential adviser is someone with whom children, youngsters, parents or foster parents can discuss confidential things without anyone else knowing what has been discussed.

## **We know everything concerning your rights**

We inform you about how youth care works, what you can

expect, what your rights are, how to discuss what is bothering you and how to file a complaint. We know a lot about these topics and our help is always free of charge.

Confidential advisers often pay house visits to youth care institutions where children and young people stay. The frequency of these visits is as follows:

- Open youth care institutions: once every two weeks
- Closed youth care institutions: once a week
- Family homes: four times a year

Everything you tell us is confidential. The confidential advisers do not work for or on behalf of youth care agencies. If you discuss something with us that might endanger you, your child or the people in your or your child's area, we are obligated to do something about it. Safety first. Before acting we will always consult you on how and what we are going to do.