



# Young Caregivers (age 15-19) in Canada

Making a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults and their families by bridging research, policies and practice

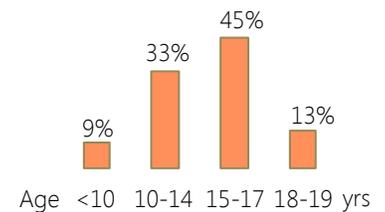
# 596,244

young Canadians (age 15-19) help someone with challenges resulting from illness, disability or aging. They comprise 7% of all Canadian caregivers and 27% of all Canadians aged 15-19. The numbers could be much bigger because Statistics Canada doesn't collect data on caregivers under age 15.

- 54% are female
- 46% are male
- 61% are age 15-17
- 39% are age 18-19

## Young caregivers start early

When asked when they first started to provide care, more than 40% were younger than 15 years old. Other evidence shows that when caregiving starts early, it tends to follow them well into adulthood.



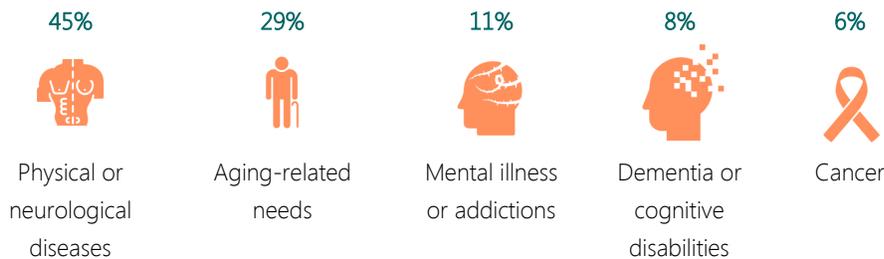
## Young caregivers care for nearby family members and friends

- 1 in 2 (48%) care for grandparents
- 1 in 4 (24%) care for parents
- 1 in 5 (17%) care for friends & neighbors
- 6% care for siblings

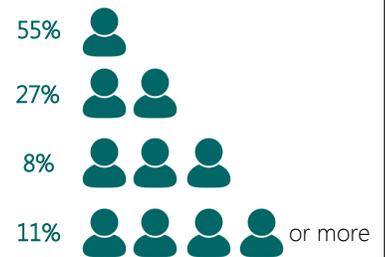
Most young caregivers live with or near their care receiver.

- 1 in 3 (38%) same household
- 1 in 2 (54%) < 1 hour drive
- 1 in 10 (9%) ≥ 1 hour drive

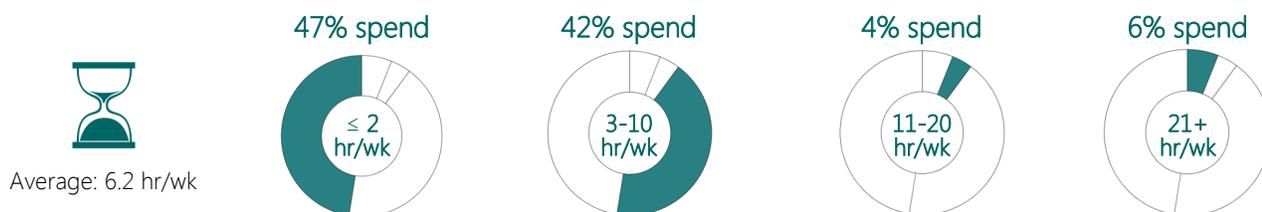
Most young caregivers in Canada support people living with:



Nearly half cared for more than 1 person in the last year



## Young caregivers collectively spend 192 million hours per year providing care



# Caregiving impacts young caregivers' lives



## EDUCATION

Most young caregivers are enrolled in school: 90% of those 15-17 and 80% of those 18-19 years old.



3% postponed enrollment in an education or training program

Young caregivers may fall asleep in class, have difficulty concentrating or have poor grades because of their caregiving. Some may drop out of school altogether, putting their future job prospects at risk.

## HEALTH

1 in 3



34% feel **overwhelmed, short-tempered or irritable**

1 in 4



24% are **tired** and 1 in 10 report sleep disturbances

1 in 14



7% **feel depressed**

## RELATIONSHIPS

While 85% of young caregivers say that caregiving strengthened their relationship with the person they care for, it may strain relationships with other family members or friends.

1 in 3



36% spend less time with **friends** or other socializing

1 in 8



12% report **strained relationships with others**

1 in 20



5% **feel lonely or isolated**

## PAID JOBS



**3 in 5** (61%) young caregivers are employed alongside providing care and going to school.

**1 in 4** (23%) work full time (30+ hrs/wk)

**1 in 3** (38%) work part time



For young caregivers who had paid jobs, **1 in 6** (17%) arrived to work late, left work early, or took time off to provide care

## Supporting young caregivers

Young caregivers have the same needs as other caregivers—more time, more help and more money. But they also have unique needs related to their mental health, schooling and school-to-job transitions. Better mental health supports that recognize caregiving as a common role for youth are crucial to long term resilience. Early identification and intervention with care support to free up time to study, tutorial support for their school work and additional student financial aid would help keep them in school and pursue post-secondary education.

<sup>1</sup>Consequences questions are asked only of young caregivers who provide care 2 or more hours per week.