

Publication

What do French school staff know about young carers? A qualitative study about their perceptions

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Young carers (YCs) are children and adolescents who provide a significant help to family member(s) with a disease or a disability. They often remain hidden, especially in France where awareness levels and policy responses regarding YC are just emerging. Several studies show that YC often have difficulties at school because of their situation. However, school staff seems to have difficulties to identify and support YC. The aim of this study was to explore schools teachers and other professionals' levels of awareness and their perceptions of the potential impacts of caring on pupil attainment, achievement, and wellbeing. Thirtythree professionals working with pupils from 6 to 18 years old (primary, secondary, and high schools) took part in a semistructured interview and in a short phone interview. The results showed that almost all had already met a YC. Despite knowledge and perceptions of potential impacts for their pupils, few undertook actions to support them. Healthcare professionals and school counsellors seemed more aware of these situations than teachers and more prone to offer support. These results underline the need to enhance all school staff's knowledge about YC and help them develop appropriate support.

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