

Situation of young carers

Young people with care responsibilities receive far too little attention in Germany. Therefore, there is no awareness about their situation – which is true for the young people themselves as well as for those providing counselling.

Large variety of assistance and care duties



Exchange with health insurances and public offices



Assume household chores



Do the shopping



Take care of siblings



Assist relatives with their personal hygiene



Provide emotional support to relatives

If children and adolescents are burdened with too much responsibility it can lead to physical and mental issues. Young carers are too often left to deal with their worries and fears on their own. Reasons for this may include that they want to protect their ill family member or just do not know whom to turn to. Additionally, young people often do not view themselves as carers.

Publication details

This flyer is part of the Federal Government's public relations; it is offered free of charge and not intended for sale.

Published by:

Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren,
Frauen und Jugend
11018 Berlin
www.bmfsfj.de

For further questions, please call our
service hotline: 030 20179130
Monday –Thursday 9 a.m.–6 p.m.
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Email: info@bmfsfj.service.bund.de

Publications can be ordered at:

Publikationsversand der Bundesregierung
(Federal Government publications mail order office)
Postfach 48 10 09, 18132 Rostock
Tel.: 030 18 272 2721 Fax: 030 18 10 272 2721
Sign language tel.:
gebaerdentelefon@sip.bundesregierung.de
Email: publikationen@bundesregierung.de
www.bmfsfj.de

Product no.: 3FL281

As of: September 2023, 1st edition

Editing: Nummer gegen Kummer e.V.

Design: TLGG, 365 Sherpas GmbH

Picture credits: Cover: © screen moment,

Lisa Paus: © Federal Government/Steffen Kugler

Printed by: MKL Druck GmbH & Co. KG, Ostbevern

In cooperation with:

NummergegenKummer



Kinder- und
Jugendtelefon

116111

NummergegenKummer

freecall unterstützt durch
die Deutsche Telekom



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

PAUSENTASTE

The service for children and adolescents
looking after family members with care
needs: www.pausentaste.de



Dear Reader,

About 500,000 children and adolescents in Germany look after relatives with a disease or long-term care needs. They give care to their father who lives with cancer, support their grandma who has dementia or are there for their physically impaired brother. They selflessly take care of many things. But who takes care of them?



Young people giving care and support to a family member should not be left alone with their burden, their worries and fears. This is why in 2018, the project “*Pausentaste – Wer anderen hilft, braucht manchmal selber Hilfe*” (Press Pause – Sometimes the helpers need help themselves) was initiated by the Ministry for Family Affairs. “Press Pause” offers young people with care responsibilities free counselling and support via phone, email or chat. In an atmosphere of trust, they can share their concerns with the voluntary counsellors of the “*Nummer gegen Kummer*” helpline for children with problems.

In addition, the web portal www.pausentaste.de provides an overview of counselling agencies, discussion groups and workshops offered by initiatives in the vicinity, which focus on young carers. I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to those initiatives for their commitment as well as for the large variety of services they offer.

Children and adolescents with care responsibilities make enormous efforts for their families that also benefit our society. This is why they need high-quality practical and emotional support and the attention they deserve. To enable them to “Press Pause” if and when they need to.

With best regards,

Lisa Paus
Federal Minister for Family Affairs,
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

The three pillars

Young people with care responsibilities need very specific support services:

1. Counselling services for young carers



Counselling via phone

Monday-Saturday 2 p.m.-8 p.m. by dialling 116 111



Counselling via email and instant chat

www.nummergegenkummer.de/kinder-und-jugendberatung/online-beratung



Peer-to-Peer

Every Saturday, counselling is provided by youth volunteers

2. The web portal

The web portal www.pausentaste.de provides a regularly updated list of useful links around the topic and personal accounts of young people looking after family members with chronic diseases and long-term care needs. Young carers can check the web portal for support services near them; professionals and parents can find many tips and materials for download there.

3. The network

Since 2017, a network exists that comprises various initiatives, helplines and young carers' advocacy groups. The network aims to enhance and expand the support services for those affected and organizes a meeting every year to facilitate the exchange of know-how. In addition, the BMFSFJ sends a newsletter to the network members twice a year.

Target groups

Since it was set up in 2018, “Press Pause” has focussed on different target groups and developed specific materials for each of them. In addition to caregiving children and adolescents, the materials also target young carers' parents as well as professionals.



(caregiving) children and adolescents

Development of a dynamic map of support services offered across Germany, social media posts on various aspects of the topic to help raise awareness among the public about the situation of young carers

Teachers

Development of teaching materials on the topic of caregiving children and adolescents



University staff

Development and distribution of materials about improving reconciliation of studies and caregiving



Extensive materials and supporting programs of “Press Pause” are available at www.pausentaste.de and www.bmfsfj.de free of charge