Research study  Young and ‘care-full’: The support needs of young kinship carers
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‘We’re quite capable, we just need support.’  December 2016

This study is a work in progress. It was inspired by international studies of sibling kinship care\textsuperscript{1,2,3}. Since we can’t identify sibling carers from our census, we have focused on young kinship carers (under 31 years) – a hidden group.

Research Aims
1. To identify young kinship carers & explore their characteristics and support needs.
2. To identify opportunities to better support young kinship carers & children.

Methodology
- Census analysis.
- Survey of young kinship carers.
- Interviews carers and children/youth.
- Action research: pilot project.

Early results
1. Number of kinship care households in Australia in 2011 (census data)
There were 45,182 two-generational kinship care households across the age spectrum, 9,705 of whom were headed by a person aged under 31 (20% of the total). By comparison, 14,063 (31%) of such households were headed by a person age 60 or more. In multi-generational households, the numbers can’t be seen in census data, but there may be up to five times as many young kinship carers. (Australian Bureau of Statistics data)

2. Carer interviews
So far: 17 female, 2 male; mostly siblings and aunts/uncles; mostly stable, permanent care. Emerging themes include:
- Arrested education and employment.
- Parental drug abuse & mental ill-health.
- Child development & behavioural issues.
- Needing practical & emotional support.
- Wish to talk to others in their situation.

3. Pilot national support service
- Service organisation identified.
- Model developed: online peer support & professional phone support.
- Expected start 2017.

Call for collaboration
We are seeking young kinship carers of all backgrounds to participate. Can you join this research effort?

More information
Contact  mkiraly@unimelb.edu.au
Webpage  http://young kinship carers research project

\textsuperscript{1}(UK) Selwyn & Nandy, 2012;  \textsuperscript{2}(UK) Family Rights Group, 2011;  \textsuperscript{3}(US) Denby & Ayala 2013