Young and ‘care-full’: the hidden group of young kinship carers in Australia

Meredith Kiraly, PhD
Research Fellow
University of Melbourne

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Kinship care

*Definition*: Family-based care within the child’s extended family or with friends of the family known to the child.

*Formal (statutory) kinship care* is ordered by a child protection authority, and is normally accompanied by a care allowance.
Supervising Mum’s visit
If you’re a grandparent raising grandchildren, you’re not alone. We can help you.
UK research 2011

38\% of children in kinship care in England were being cared for by a sibling carer without help from an older household member.
First Name

2. How is this person related to you?
- Husband or wife
- Biological son or daughter
- Adopted son or stepdaughter
- Stepson or stepdaughter
- Brother or sister
- Father or mother
- Grandchild

3. What is this person's sex?
- Female

4. What is this person’s age?
- Please report in months

5. Is this the person’s usual residence?
- Yes
- No

6. Is this a usual residence?
- Yes
- No

NOTE: Child under 5 is not required to respond to all questions.
This is the TIP of the iceberg: up to 5 times as many young kinship carers in multi-generational households
Young and ‘care-full’: The support needs of young kinship carers and children in their care

Identify young kinship carers in Australia and explore their characteristics and support needs.

Identify opportunities to better support young kinship carers and children in their care.

Alert policymakers and community to the findings.
Methodology

Census analysis re demographic characteristics of young carers
35 interviews with carers, 7 with young people
Plan for a pilot support service
Publicity, knowledge dissemination & advocacy

Funding

2014-5: Seeding grant - R E Ross Trust
2016-7: Major grant - Sidney Myer Fund
It's not the same for everybody else... like foster care ....Whereas I came from the same troubled family that these two boys came from. I'm doing the best that I can, but I wasn't given any great role models really, we just struggled. (Noelle)
Youth and multi-parenthood
Care responsibilities and study
Post-secondary education

Sources: 1. ABS census data  
2. 2011 AIHW Report *Australia’s welfare 2015*
Not much money....
Young and ‘care-full’

Our lives essentially get put on hold. I don't think they realise that there's a lot of restrictions when we take on the kids. Financially I don't think they understand how much it costs to look after a child if you can't go to work. It makes you feel lonely, I don't really know how to explain it. (Noelle)
The need for support

‘It was awful. We had no support...and we were so young...’
(Kara)
If you’re a grandparent raising grandchildren, you’re not alone. We can help you.
Advice to policymakers

[What do you think the people who are making policy need to know if they're really going to pay attention to young kinship carers?]

That we exist. And that it's not just grandparents taking care of children. (Mandy, sibling carer)
A pilot support service?

Help with child care, respite care, education costs, etc?

Discussion Board

Webpage for service access

Telephone support - dedicated kinship care service

Extensive awareness-raising publicity

Help with child care, respite care, education costs, etc?
Look at it case by case…. (Noelle)

Your ideas are welcome!
Can you help?

Further information:
Meredith Kiraly,
mkiraly@unimelb.edu.au
0400 913659

‘We’re not incapable...’ (Violet)