Who are ‘Young Carers’?
Youth under the age of 18 who are in a caregiving role parent, sibling of relative with a chronic or life threatening illness, disability, mental illness, addiction and/or language barrier.

Young Carers can often encounter barriers to their learning:
Underachievement, withdrawn and tired
- Frequently absent from school and missing deadlines for assignments
- **Bullying:** Some young carers are bullied because of the condition or illness of the person they are caring for. Others might be bullied due to a lack of connection with their peers as a result of the demands of caring
- **Behavioural issues:** May keep negative feelings to themselves to protect their parents from additional stress and anxiety, and transfer these frustrations within the school environment

How can teachers help young carers?
- Be aware and understanding of the learning barriers of young carers
- Have a good rapport so the student views the school community as a place of safety and support
- Be aware of the caring tasks they are performing and the impact this may have on the student
- Consider the following questions that may be used in identifying a young carer:
  - Are they frequently late and/or absent?
  - Are they regularly late on handing in assignments?
  - Are they being bullied? What is the reason?
  - Do they struggle with school work?
  - Do they miss out on extracurricular activities?
  - Are they visibly worried when they are out of contact with home?
- Be aware that parental engagement may be compromised due to the home situation. Parents that are being cared for may have difficulty completing forms and maintaining communication with the school which as a result may require accommodations when necessary

Developing a Plan:
- Maintain open communication with the student’s home so that both the teacher and the family are aware of any changes in circumstances in both the school and home
- It is important for teachers to be aware of where to get additional information, advice and supports on young carers (**Young Carers Program: Hospice Toronto, Young Carers Project**)

1 in 4 young Canadians provide care to a family member (Statistics Canada, 2014)