

YOUTH CAREGIVERS

CAREGIVING AS A BARRIER

5.4 million youth under age 18 are caregivers in the US.

Why does this matter?

Caregiving responsibilities pose a significant barrier to youth education, employment, and wellbeing:



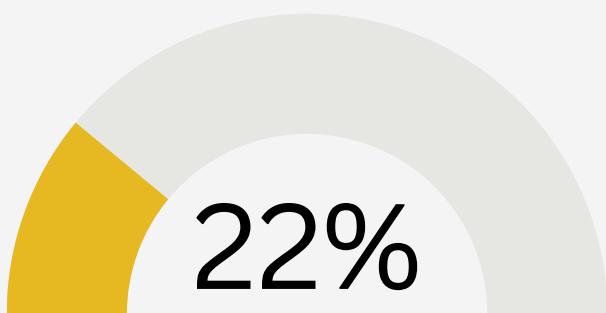
Increased school dropout, absences, and difficulty concentrating in school



Difficulty finding and maintaining jobs due to caregiving responsibilities



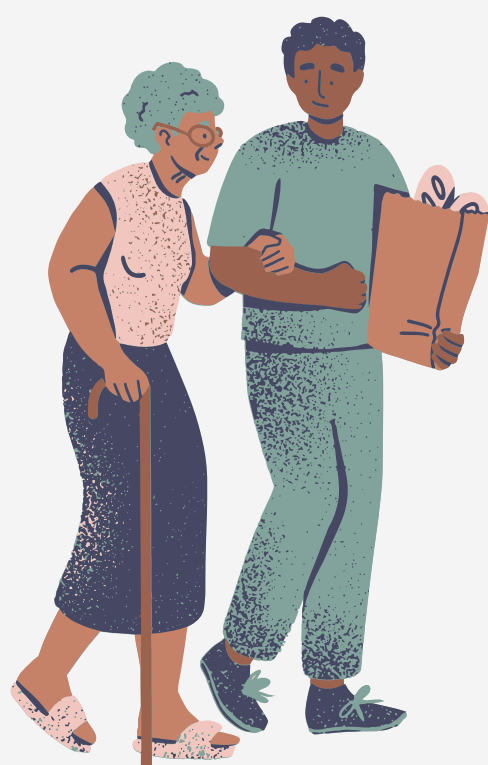
Increased risk of suicide, depression, anxiety, and violence



22% of young adults who dropped out of school reported doing so to care for a family member.

Strengths of Youth Caregivers

While caregiving can pose a barrier to youth, it can also provide them with valuable strengths:

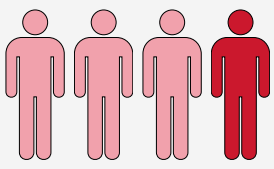


- Improved time management
- Increased sense of purpose
- Empathy
- Responsibility
- Life skills

How can we leverage the strengths of caregiver youth to better support their success?

COVID-19 Associated Orphanhood

The pandemic increased the population of caregiver youth:

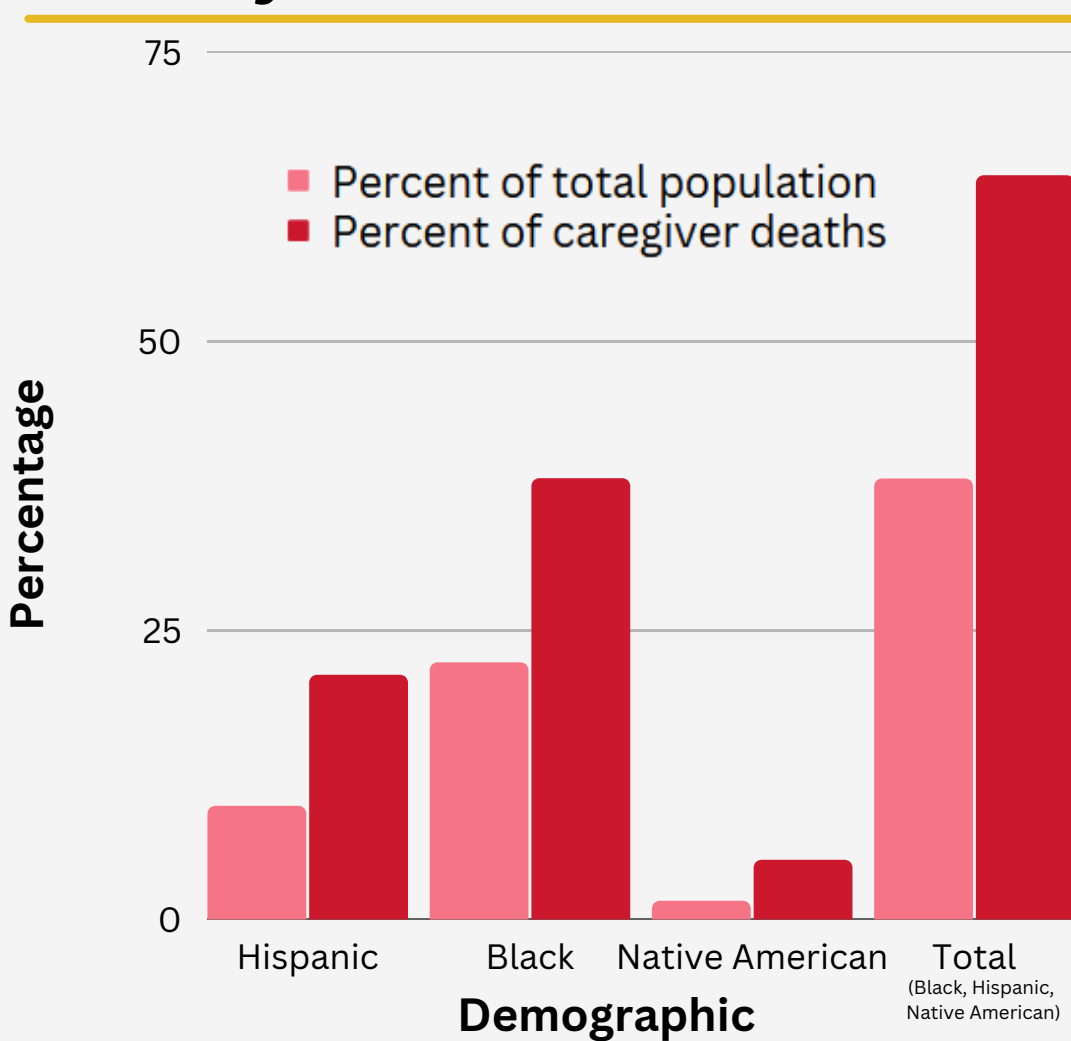


It is estimated that for every **4** COVID deaths, **1 child is orphaned.**

over
3,600

youth in NC are coping with the **death of a caregiver** due to COVID-19.

Caregiver loss disproportionately affected youth of color in NC:



Intervention opportunity:
Mentorship programs are an evidence-based way to give youth access to caring adults.

Takeaway

Caregiving is often an unseen barrier to youth engagement, and disproportionately impacts youth of color. Challenging inequity means supporting parentified youth in paving their own path. **How can we better support caregiving youth for success in education and employment?**

References

- <https://www.covidcollaborative.us/assets/uploads/img/HIDDEN-PAIN-FINAL.pdf>
- <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2021/11/03/a-growing-phenomenon-youth-caregivers-need-recognition-support>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jyJhNh96kT9smagkNTz1x4fpZ6bebDDd/view>
- <https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2022/01/08/n-c-children-are-coping-with-the-death-of-a-caregiver-due-to-the-pandemic/>