

setting should be made as homelike as possible. Families are encouraged to bring familiar items from the child's room at home. In addition, there should be a consistent and coordinated care plan for the comfort of the child and family.

Home Care

Some families prefer to take their child home and receive services from a home care agency. Generally, these services entail periodic nursing visits to administer a treatment or provide medications, equipment, or supplies. The child's care continues to be directed by the primary physician. Home care is often the option chosen by physicians and families because of the traditional view that a child must be considered to have a life expectancy of less than 6 months to be referred to hospice care. Fortunately, a number of hospice organizations are expanding their services to children based on the presence of a life-limiting disease process for which cure is not possible, rather than on the sole criteria of a limited time-projected prognosis.

Hospice Care

Parents should be offered the option of caring for their child at home during the final phases of an illness with the assistance of a hospice organization. **Hospice*** is a community health care organization that specializes in the care of dying patients by combining the hospice philosophy with the principles of palliative care. **Hospice philosophy** regards dying as a natural process and care of dying patients as including management of the physical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs of the patient and family. Care is provided by a multidisciplinary group of professionals in the patient's home or an inpatient facility that uses the hospice philosophy. Hospice care for children was introduced in the 1970s, and a number of community hospice organizations now accept children into their care ([Keim-Malpass, Hart, and Miller, 2013](#); [Siden, Chavoshi, Harvey, et al, 2014](#)). However, access to free standing pediatric hospice services continues to be highly variable ([Kassam and Wolfe, 2013](#)). Collaboration between the child's primary treatment team and the hospice care team is essential to the success of hospice care. Families may continue to see their primary care physicians as they choose.