of diagnosis and the appearance of the femoral head and position within the acetabulum. Activity causes microfractures of the soft ischemic epiphysis, which tend to induce synovitis, stiffness, and adductor contracture.

The initial therapy is rest or activity restrictions and limited weight bearing, which helps reduce inflammation and irritability of the hip. The use of NSAIDs can provide relief of pain or discomfort; physical therapy or range of motion exercises help restore hip motion. In some cases, traction is applied to stretch tight adductor muscles and improve containment of the femoral head. Abduction braces or casting may also be utilized for containment of the femoral head. If nonsurgical or conservative management is unsuccessful, surgical reconstruction or containment procedures such as a pelvic or proximal femoral osteotomy may be necessary.

The disease is self-limiting, but the ultimate outcome of therapy depends on early and efficient treatment. Children 5 years old and younger, whose epiphyses are more cartilaginous, tend to have the best prognosis or outcome. Children older than 8 years old have a significant risk for degenerative arthritis, especially if they have femoral head deformity at the time of diagnosis. The later the diagnosis is made, the more femoral damage will have occurred before treatment is implemented (Herring, 2011).

Nursing Care Management

Because these children are largely cared for on an outpatient basis, the major emphasis of nursing care is teaching the family the required care and management. The family needs to comprehend the diagnosis and understand the purpose and function of activity restrictions and limitations in achieving the desired outcome. The child and family may rely on the nurse to help them understand and adjust to therapeutic measures (see Family-Centered Care box).

Family-Centered Care

Legg-Calvé-Perthes Disease

A family with five healthy children was startled one day to learn that their 2-year-old son could no longer walk. He was diagnosed with Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease. Through several years of