

Parents, by law, have the primary obligation to care for and make decisions about their minor children. However, the legal principle of *parens patriae* says that the state has an overriding interest in the health and welfare of its citizens. Parents' refusal of medical treatment for their child that is deemed essential can be interpreted as neglect. In addition to advocating for the child and family, the nurse's role may include assuming the role of consultant to the staff and family regarding new, alternative methods of transfusion and, if necessary, coordinating with officials to petition juvenile or family court for temporary guardianship of the child. Nevertheless, even in the face of disagreement, collaborative communication can exist. This is characterized by open, respectful exchange of accurate medical information between the family and the clinical team caring for the child. Such communication maintains a central focus upon the healing and health of the child and focuses on points of agreement between the family and the clinicians ([Yates, 2011](#)).

Mass Media

Fifty years of research has demonstrated that the media is an influential teacher and can exert a significant impact upon the health of children and adolescents. The message conveyed in and through the media can be both positive and negative. The adults in society and in the life of children are charged with increasing the positive, pro-social effect of media and diminishing its ill effects, which can influence important health problems that afflict children across the spectrum ([Strasburger, Jordan, and Donnerstein, 2012](#)).

Children in the United States spend approximately 7 hours per day interfacing with media of some sort (i.e., television, computer, video games, smart phones). From a public health perspective, media contributes to 10% to 20% of health problems in the United States ([Strasburger, Jordan, and Donnerstein, 2012](#)). Thus, although certain media may not be a direct cause of health care problems in children, a relationship exists that nurses and other health care providers should be aware of in order to provide the best evidence-based care to children and families.

Children and adolescents utilize both “old” and “new” media. For example, television remains a popular media outlet for children and teens. What is new, however, is that television shows may be