

ashamed about such feelings ([Murray, 1999](#)). Nurses can assist the family by helping the parents identify ways to involve siblings in the caring process, perhaps by bringing some supplies or favorite toy, game, or food item. Parents should also be encouraged to schedule time focusing on the siblings. Helping parents identify a trusted friend or family member who can sit with the ill child for a short period will allow them to attend to their own needs or those of their other children.

Fear of Dying Alone or of Not Being Present When the Child Dies

When a child is being cared for at home, the burden of care on parents and family members can be great. Often, as the child's condition declines, family members begin the “death vigil.” Rarely is a child left alone for any length of time. This can be exhausting for family members, and nurses can assist the family by helping them arrange shifts so that friends or family members can be present with the child and allow others to rest. If the family has limited resources, community organizations, such as hospice or churches, often have volunteers who are willing to visit and sit with children. It is important that whoever is sitting with the child be aware of when the parent(s) would like to be notified to return to the child's bedside ([Fig. 17-6](#)).