

trusting and effective partnerships and finding the best ways to meet the needs of the child and family (Corlett and Twycross, 2006; Kuo, Houtrow, Arango et al, 2012). Collaborative relationships are characterized by communication, dialogue, active listening, awareness, and acceptance of others' differences (Kuhlthau, Bloom, Van Cleave, et al, 2011).

## **Family–Health Care Provider Communication**

The disclosure of a serious chronic or complex condition of a child is one of the most stressful aspects of communication between families and health care professionals. Often, parents have suspected for some time that something is wrong with their child and believe that their concerns were minimized or ignored by health care professionals (Smaldone and Ritholz, 2011; Thomlinson, 2002; Whitehead and Gosling, 2003). After a diagnosis is made, factors that influence parent dissatisfaction with the way in which information is communicated include disrespectful attitudes, breaking bad news in an insensitive manner, withholding information, and changing a treatment course without preparing the child and family (Barnes, Gardiner, Gott, et al, 2012; Hsiao, Evan, and Zeltzer, 2007). Conversely, parents report satisfaction when they perceived health care providers to be available, demonstrate competence, and engage the child and parent in care decision making (Barnes, Gardiner, Gott, et al, 2012; Hsiao, Evan, and Zeltzer, 2007; Kuo, Sisterhen, Sigrest, et al, 2012). Similar factors are important in communication of changes in the child's condition throughout the course of the illness.

Providing information to families with a chronically ill child should be a process of repeated discussions to allow the family to process the information and their reactions to that information and allow them to ask for clarification and further information. Nurses play an important role in ensuring that families' needs are met during discussions related to the child's diagnosis, condition, and treatment (Kavanaugh, Moro, and Savage, 2010). This requires assessment regarding how much information the family is comfortable with, what they understand of the information already given to them, and how they are coping with the information both cognitively and emotionally. Nurses should ensure that the appropriate health care professionals address any concerns or