

# of the Child Who is Hospitalized

## Parental Reactions

The crisis of childhood illness and hospitalization affects every member of the family. Parents' reactions to illness in their child depend on a variety of factors. Although one cannot predict which factors are most likely to influence their response, a number of variables have been identified ([Box 19-4](#)). (See also [Chapter 18](#).)

### **Box 19-4**

#### **Factors Affecting Parents' Reactions to Their Child's Illness**

Seriousness of the threat to the child

Previous experience with illness or hospitalization

Medical procedures involved in diagnosis and treatment

Available support systems

Personal ego strengths

Previous coping abilities

Additional stresses on the family system

Cultural and religious beliefs

Communication patterns among family members

Recent research has identified common themes among parents whose children were hospitalized, including feeling an overall sense of helplessness, questioning the skills of staff, accepting the reality of hospitalization, needing to have information explained in simple language, dealing with fear, coping with uncertainty, and seeking reassurance from caregivers. Reassurance from the health care team can be in the form of collaboration, information sharing, preparation for procedures, ensuring formal and informal support