

child as the marker for stage transition. The arrival of the first child marks the transition from stage I to stage II. As the first child grows and develops, the family enters subsequent stages. In every stage, the family faces certain developmental tasks. At the same time, each family member must achieve individual developmental tasks as part of each family life cycle stage.

Developmental theory can be applied to nursing practice. For example, the nurse can assess how well new parents are accomplishing the individual and family developmental tasks associated with transition to parenthood. New applications should emerge as more is learned about developmental stages for nonnuclear and nontraditional families.

## Family Nursing Interventions

In working with children, the nurse must include family members in their care plan. Research confirms parents' desire and expectation to participate in their child's care ([Power and Franck, 2008](#)). To discover family dynamics, strengths, and weaknesses, a thorough family assessment is necessary (see [Chapter 4](#)). The nurse's choice of interventions depends on the theoretic family model that is used ([Box 2-2](#)). For example, in family systems theory, the focus is on the interaction of family members within the larger environment ([Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 2008](#)). In this case, using group dynamics to involve all members in the intervention process and being a skillful communicator are essential. Systems theory also presents excellent opportunities for anticipatory guidance. Because each family member reacts to every stress experienced by that system, nurses can intervene to help the family prepare for and cope with changes. In family stress theory, the nurse employs crisis intervention strategies to help family members cope with the challenging event. In developmental theory, the nurse provides anticipatory guidance to prepare members for transition to the next family stage. Nurses who think family involvement plays a key role in the care of a child are more likely to include families in the child's daily care ([Fisher, Lindhorst, Matthews, et al, 2008](#)).

### Box 2-2