

The psychological burden of the prognosis on the family

Family Resources and Ability to Cope

The family's physical resources

The family's emotional resources

The family's educational resources

The family's social supports and available help

The competing demands for family members' time and energy

Data from Stein REK: Home care: a challenging opportunity, *Child Health Care* 14(2):90-95, 1985.

Intrafamilial resources, social support from friends and relatives, parent-to-parent support, parent/professional partnerships, and community resources interweave to provide a flexible web of support for families of children with chronic conditions.

The Child with a Chronic or Complex Condition

The child's reaction to chronic illness depends to a great extent on his or her developmental level, temperament, and available coping mechanisms; on the reactions of family members or significant others; and, to a lesser extent, on the condition itself. A child's conceptual understanding of his or her own illness is based not only on age and developmental level but also on the duration and type of experience accumulated with the disease. Knowledge of these variables is essential in providing the kind of information and support needed by these children to cope with an often overwhelming situation.

Developmental Aspects

The impact of a complex chronic illness is influenced by the age at onset. Chronic illness affects children of all ages, but the