

**TABLE 17-3****Assessment of Factors Affecting Family Adjustment**

Factors Affecting Adjustment	Assessment Questions
<b>Available Support System</b>	
Status of marital relationship	To whom do you talk when you have something on your mind? (If answer is not the spouse, ask for the reason.)
Alternate support systems	When something is worrying you, what do you do? What helps you most when you are upset?
Ability to communicate	Does talking seem to help when you feel upset?
<b>Perception of the Illness or Disability</b>	
Previous knowledge of disorder	Have you ever heard the word (name of diagnosis) before? Tell me about it (if answer is yes).
Imagined cause of disorder	What are your thoughts about the causes of the disorder?
Effects of illness or disability on family	How has your child's illness or disability affected you and your family? How has your lifestyle changed?
<b>Coping Mechanisms</b>	
Reactions to previous crises	Tell me one time you've had another crisis (problem, bad time) in your family. How did you solve that problem?
Reactions to the child	Do you find yourself being a little more cautious with this child than with your other children?
Childrearing practices	Do you feel as comfortable disciplining this child as your other children?
Influence of religion	Has your religion or faith been of help to you? Tell me how (if answer is yes).
Attitudes	How is this child different from the siblings or other children of similar age? Describe your child's personality. Is it easy, difficult, or in between? When you think of your child's future, what thoughts come to mind?
<b>Available Resources</b>	
	What parts of your child's care are causing the most difficulty for you or your family?
	What services are available to help?
	What services do you need that currently are not available?
<b>Concurrent Stresses</b>	
	What other problems are you facing now? (Be specific; ask about financial, marital, sibling, and extended family or friends concerns.)

Special challenges exist in assessing the child's feelings about having a chronic condition. [Chapter 4](#) presents several approaches to encourage children to discuss their feelings about their conditions. The nurse should use a variety of communication techniques, such as drawing and play, as assessment tools rather than relying solely on parental reports. Often, children are neglected partners in their care, and their unique needs are not identified ([Dixon-Woods, Young, and Heney, 1999](#); [Young, Dixon-Woods, Windridge, et al, 2003](#)).

The needs of working parents and siblings also should be