

the child's care. For example, parents may become preoccupied with their ability to carry out certain procedures, overlooking the child's personal comfort and satisfaction, or failing to offer praise for anything less than perfect cooperation or performance. They may pursue a frustrating activity until they achieve "success" — long after the child has become irritable and uncooperative. As a result, parents can become caught in a pattern of interaction that is mutually unrewarding and minimally productive. This situation may become exacerbated by disagreements or lack of support from other family members and judgment from caregivers and others in the community. For these parents, several strategies may be helpful, including education regarding what can reasonably be expected of their child, assistance in identifying the child's strengths, praise for a parental job well done, and respite care so that parents can renew their energies.

Box 17-3

Anticipated Parental Stress Points

Diagnosis of the condition: Parents require considerable education while dealing with an emotional response.

Developmental milestones: Times that children normally achieve walking, talking, and self-care are delayed or impossible for the child.

Start of schooling: Particularly stressful are situations in which appropriate schooling will not be in a regular class placement.

Reaching the ultimate attainment: Parents must handle situations such as realizing that ambulation will be impossible or that the child will not learn to read.

Adolescence: Issues such as sexuality and independence become prominent.

Future placement: Decisions about placement must be made when the child becomes an adult or when the parents can no longer care for the child.