Societal Trends:

The increasing complexity of the problems facing children with cancer and their families will require new strategies of care. Societal trends that influence the care of a child with cancer include the following:

Demographic changes in the family –

- rise of a single parent family
- nuclear family structure
- increasing numbers of step-families and/or cohabitating partners
- increasing numbers of “latch key” kids
- “sandwiched” generation” – increased life expectancy and the average age of grandparents who could potentially care for the child

Educational needs of the family and/or the caregiver

Average parents are older and more educated, more involved in child care, and therefore more likely to take the time to learn how to care for their children during and after the illness.

The internet influences how parents and caregivers seek information and make decisions.

These societal changes could bring about adjustment difficulties that lead to personal and family stress. For example, a child in a single parent household may not know the benefits of lifelong, dependable ties with families and the stability that a family structure offers.

Economics:

The economic impact on child care includes the fact that child poverty in the US is the highest among the 17 developed countries. Some families have problems getting health care insurance or accessing health care resources. Another challenge to child health is the variability of “safety net” programs designed to protect children. Eligibility and inclusion criteria in the Medicaid program and the degree of participation in the Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP) vary among states; creating gaps in the safety net to protect children.
Examples of situations that may jeopardize access to care for children secondary to economic factors include:
- Employed parents/guardians who lack health benefits
- Unemployed parents/guardians who are no longer eligible for welfare benefits
- Employed parents with minimal/suboptimal health benefits

**Professional and Ethical Trends:**

Increasing demand for professional accountability and the issue of evidence-based practice are professional challenges for the pediatric oncology nurse. A key role for the pediatric nurse is to humanize the cancer experience in a way that recognizes and supports the uniqueness, dignity and strengths of the child and the family.

Rapid developments in the field of oncology continually impact cancer therapies and thus affect nursing care of pediatric oncology patients. This means that nurses must keep current on the latest advances in pediatric oncology and how those advances impact nursing care.

Examples of issues within pediatric oncology that impact the practice of nursing are:
- The question of who gives consent for a child to enroll in a clinical trial
- Ethical issues in genetics
- New insights into the biology of cancer based on information from the Human Genome Project
- Palliative care decisions and who makes them; and new insights into palliative care
- Newer novel therapies and its inherent requirements
- Educational opportunities

**Helpful Web Links:**

- Clips from John Q movie:
  - Click on the story for the synopsis of the movie
  - Click on Links for a list of organizations available to help patients who need transplantations
  - Click on trailers to see movie clips

**Related www.Cure4Kids.org Seminars**

Seminar # 215 *The Art and Science of Caring: Our Commitment to Our Patients*
Cancervive/Oncology Nursing Society

Seminar #173 *Joy in the Morning: Sustained by meaning*
Pamela Hinds, RN, PhD
[http://www.cure4kids.org/seminar/173](http://www.cure4kids.org/seminar/173)
Appendix

Latchkey kids
Latchkey kids – the term used to describe children (generally school-age children) who come home earlier than an adult household member, such as a parent. These children have their own house keys and often care for themselves for a few hours before the parents come home. More information found at the following links:

Phoenix.gov, Phoenix, AZ
http://www.ci.phoenix.az.us/FIRE/keykids.html
COPE Incorporated online, Washington, DC
http://www.cope-inc.com/latchkey.html

Sandwich Generations
Traditional: those who are required to help/care for both their aging parents and help/care for their own children/family at the same time.

Club Sandwich: those in their 50s or 60s, sandwiched between aging parents, adult children and grandchildren OR those in their 30s and 40s, with young children, aging parents and grandparents. (Term coined by Carol Abaya)

Open Faced: anyone else involved in elder care. (Term coined by Carol Abaya)

More information found at the following links:

University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Lincoln, NE
http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/family/q1117.htm#expectations
The Sandwich Generation
SandwchGen@aol.com
http://www.thesandwichgeneration.com/
**Nuclear Family**

An independent family unit formed by a monogamous union. A family consisting of parents and their children. Such a unit is also called *elementary family* in sociology and anthropology, a term that refers to a group of persons united by ties of marriage and parenthood or adoption and consisting of a man, a woman, and their socially recognized children.

A nuclear family can be defined as parents and children living together in a home separate from the rest of their extended family. The absence of immediate relatives and possible support system result to family isolation and the role of the school, the church and other social agencies in the care of children become very important.

---

The Everything Development Company  
nuclear.family@Everything2.com  

Salon.com, San Francisco, CA  

First Things, The Institute on Religion and Public Life, New York, NY  

Bahá’í Library Online  
[http://bahai-library.org/articles/bsnb3-1.khavari.html](http://bahai-library.org/articles/bsnb3-1.khavari.html)

Mesa Community College, Mesa, Arizona:  

---

Go Back