

HIV & AIDS

in your school



What parents need to know

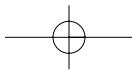


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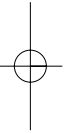
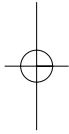
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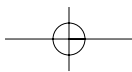


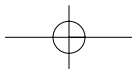
HIV and AIDS in your school

What parents need to know



Issued by the Department of Education





**HIV and AIDS in your school:
What parents need to know**

Commissioned by:
The Department of Education

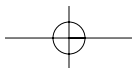
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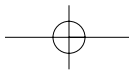
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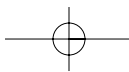
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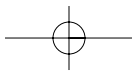
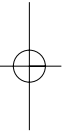
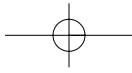
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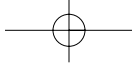
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HIV and AIDS in schools

Why do we need to talk about HIV and AIDS?

Our children are growing up in a world with HIV and AIDS. Almost every family in the country will be affected by the disease. Many adults and children have died because it is a disease that does not have a cure. As parents we grew up in a world that did not know about HIV. This makes it difficult for us to prepare our children to deal with this disease and prevent it.

HIV can be prevented. But once a person has HIV, there is no cure. The most important thing we as parents can do for our children is to teach them this fact. It is our duty to help them to be safe. We need to encourage them to choose a healthy HIV-free life. For this they need knowledge and skills. They also need to know that we love them and care enough to do everything in our power to help them prevent HIV.

What is the purpose of this book?

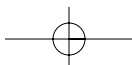
This little book is about HIV, AIDS and Education. It has been written by the Department of Education for parents. It has been written to encourage and assist parents to become partners in responding to HIV and AIDS in our schools and communities. The book will answer some basic questions about HIV and AIDS. Most importantly, it will help parents understand how to work together with the school to protect their children against HIV.

What should every parent know about HIV and AIDS?

- HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
- AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
- An epidemic is a disease occurring much more commonly than we would normally expect.

We all have a system in our body that fights off infections and diseases. It is called the immune system. HIV is a virus that slowly breaks down our immune system. At first this does not seem like a big problem at all. A person with HIV still looks good and feels well for a long time. But the virus is active. Slowly the immune system of a person with HIV will become weaker and weaker and the body will not be able to fight off infections. Then a person living with HIV will become ill more often and it will also take a long time to recover from each illness.

When HIV has permanently damaged the immune system, the immune system can no longer do its job. At this stage, the person with HIV develops AIDS. This means



that AIDS is the last stage of infection with HIV. The time that passes between HIV infection and the first signs of AIDS will be different for every person. On average, however, it takes 4 to 8 years before people with HIV develop AIDS.

The spread of HIV and the suffering caused by AIDS is now beginning to affect all our schools. As parents we are aware that we are all vulnerable to HIV. But young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection and they need protection from the disease. There are many ways in which we can offer this protection. We will discuss the different ways in this book.

Although a lot has been spoken about HIV, many people, especially our young people in South Africa, are still getting infected with HIV. Many of our parents still bury their children, nieces and nephews because of AIDS. In addition, more young girls and women die of AIDS than young men.

This situation is of great concern to the Government of South Africa and Professor Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education. That is why all schools are now required to run a programme on the prevention of HIV and management of AIDS as part of the curriculum of the school. This programme on Life Skills and HIV and AIDS is part of the Life Orientation Learning Area of our new curriculum, and is compulsory in all schools.

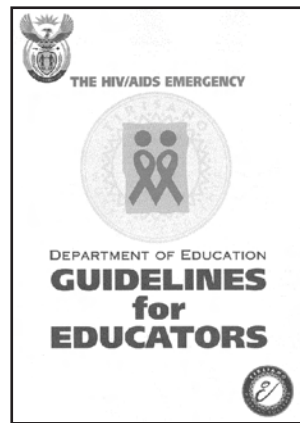
Did you know?



If the current rate of infection does not slow down, by the year 2010 one in every four people in the country will have HIV. In ten years the disease will have made orphans of 750 000 children.

(Professor Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education)

(ref: Guidelines for Educators – message from the minister)



1. How are HIV and AIDS affecting education?

AIDS is causing a lot of pain and trauma in the lives of our children. Many of them are struggling to do well at school. Their stories are told in the pages that follow.

- In many schools learning is disrupted when children or teachers get ill.
- Many educators and parents feel stressed and worried because of problems related to HIV and AIDS. They themselves are sick, or they are worried about a colleague, a relative or a student. As a result they cannot do their job well.
- As more parents get sick, they are unable to work and pay fees. This causes a lot of problems for the children.

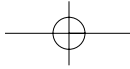
We do not have a choice but to educate our children about HIV and AIDS. Talking and teaching, however, are not enough. When parents and educators fall ill, more and more children need our care and support. That is why we also have to think about the way family illness keeps learners out of school.

Although our children are vulnerable, we believe they are also our greatest hope for the future. They offer us the greatest chance of changing the course of the HIV epidemic. Our schools in particular present us with an opportunity to do something about the spread of HIV and the way we live with AIDS. Parents are in daily contact with their children. That is why our joint response to HIV and AIDS in education is a national priority.

Everyone in the school community has a very important role to play.



“They (children and youth) are a window of hope for the future – even though some may already be HIV-infected, the overwhelming majority are not. This is where the hope for the future really lies. The challenge that formal and non-formal educational provision faces is to work with these disease-free children to enable them to remain so. Education can be the world’s single most powerful weapon against HIV transmission.” (Michael Kelly, *Planning for Education in the Context of HIV/AIDS*, IIEP 2001.)



2. Why are our schools talking about HIV and AIDS?

There are three reasons why schools have to talk about HIV and AIDS:

1. HIV affects adults and children alike.
2. HIV affects people within schools, but also the way schools operate.
3. Parents and educators have a responsibility to keep young people safe.

My name is Sesi, I come from North West Province. I am 11 years old. I stay with my brother, my sister and my little sister. My big sister is 25 years old and has completed her studies at UNIBO. She does not work. I don't have a mother, I don't have a father because of HIV. Some of my friends do not have mothers as well. My sister's boyfriend is buying us food. He also pays our school fees.

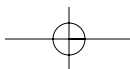
(Pg 11, Conference Report: Conference on HIV, AIDS and the Education Sector)

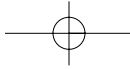
Sesi's story helps us to understand how the presence of HIV in our communities eats away at the foundations on which a healthy schooling system is built. This is happening very slowly and so it is difficult to keep track of the impact of the disease. However, HIV and AIDS have caused many small but important changes in the way schools work. At first only a few learners lost their parents to AIDS and struggled to pay their fees. Only a few teachers were off sick. However, more and more people are now becoming ill and soon their problems work together to weaken the education system as a whole. We cannot remain silent when HIV and AIDS are affecting the wellbeing of many thousands of teachers and learners in the country. We have to speak out. The only choice is to urge everyone in our schools to begin talking openly about HIV and AIDS.

Think about this!



School is like a social vaccine for children. Children who drop out of school are more vulnerable to HIV infection. They are more likely to have sex at a young age, and to drink alcohol earlier than children at school. It does not seem to matter much how well children do at school. What matters is that they are at school. Simply by making sure that children do not drop out, we can help to keep them safe and prevent the spread of HIV.





When we start talking about HIV and AIDS at our schools, it is important for us as parents to think about the time gap between HIV infection and the first signs of AIDS. At first there are no outward signs that can tell us if we are living with HIV. Unless we test our blood for HIV, we will not know if we have the virus and are passing it on. This means it is very difficult to 'see' the HIV problem. We also will not know how fast HIV is spreading in our communities until many years later when more people begin to die of AIDS. Young people in particular find it difficult to believe that a healthy looking person can be HIV positive and do not believe they could be at risk. If HIV is invisible for such a long time, is it not all the more important that we protect young people from becoming infected?

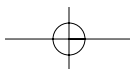
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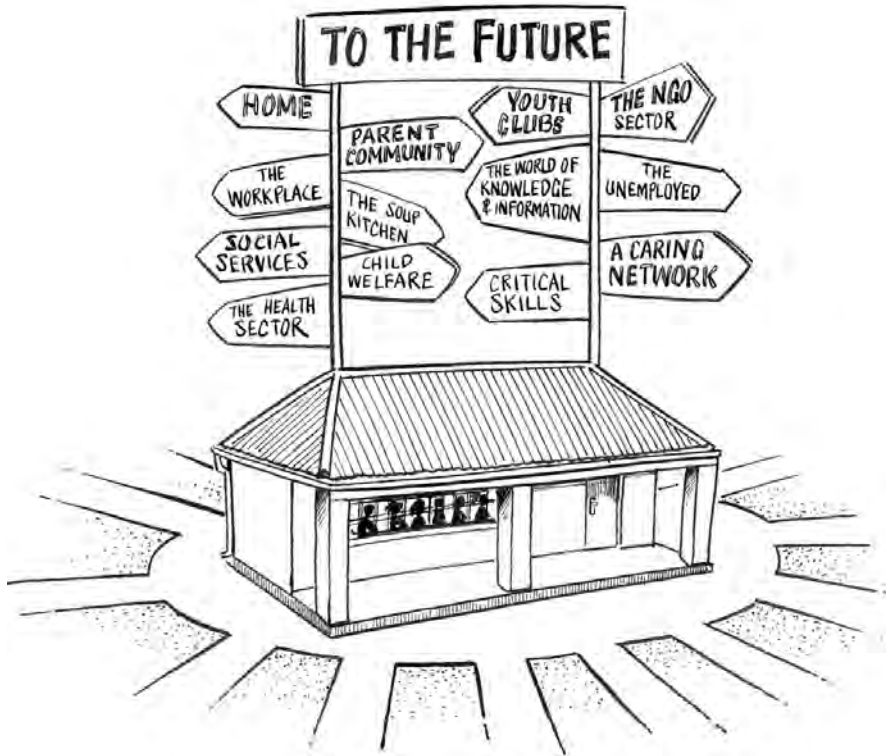


The Minister of Education has declared the response to the HIV epidemic a national priority. The National Department of Education has issued a national policy on HIV and AIDS, as well as guidelines for educators urging schools to help prevent the spread of HIV. More recently the department has also developed a national strategic framework to effectively respond to the problems of the disease.

In all our policy documents the Department of Education is encouraging our schools to become caring communities, where parents and children can:

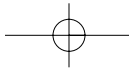
- Speak openly about HIV and AIDS.
- Live with dignity and acceptance, especially if they have been infected with HIV.
- Find care and support in times of need.
- Experience compassion in times of sorrow or when there is an urgent need.





Schools cannot do everything, but they can lead the way.

Our schools are like a busy crossroads where many sectors of society meet. This puts parents and educators in a powerful position to become partners and do something about the trauma caused by HIV. When we work together our schools will become symbols of hope and circles of care. The parents, traditional leaders and educators who attended the education conference on HIV and AIDS committed themselves to working together to prevent HIV and provide these circles of care.

**Declaration of Intent**

At the invitation of Professor Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education, we the representatives of every sub-sector of South African education and of its many partners, join hands in a partnership of hope against HIV and AIDS and its impact on the nation.

We noted that:

- Our country and our education system are under ongoing attack from the HIV and AIDS epidemic.
- HIV and AIDS has a damaging impact on all levels of education.
- We are bound by our national moral purpose to ensure that the education sector maintains suitable capacity and structures to manage its confrontation with HIV and AIDS.

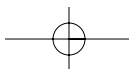
We agreed that:

- Education must lie at the centre of the national response to HIV and AIDS because it is principally through education that we can hope to achieve an AIDS-free South Africa.

We decided, as a matter of utmost urgency, to:

- Maximise our efforts to prevent the further spread of the disease.
- Demonstrate care and support for those infected and affected by the disease.
- Mainstream HIV and AIDS in every aspect of our professional lives.

(This is a summary from the declaration of intent, presented by the conference delegates at the national conference on HIV/AIDS and the education sector, 1 June 2002. You can get a copy from the Department of Education. See page 27 for contact details)



3. How does the HIV epidemic affect the life of our schools?

Our homes and schools are deeply affected by the HIV epidemic because of the way it disrupts the lives of children in our care. Many people in our communities are beginning to break the silence and share stories about the effect the disease has on people they love. The following experiences from the National Conference on HIV/AIDS and the education sector bear witness to the way HIV and AIDS affect the daily life of our schools.

The presence of HIV is an emotional burden for our children and forces them to grow up too soon.

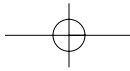
My name is Fuzi and I come from Ingwavuma in KwaZulu-Natal. 2001 was my hardest year. My mother has been sick before, but not like that year. They said it was TB, but they were lying. I believed them at first, because I did not have knowledge about HIV or AIDS, but after I learnt about it at school, I was very scared. I asked her to go for a blood test. I think she weighed 35-40 kilograms. Before she told me she was HIV positive, I was very worried and angry and I could not cope with my work at school ... Now it is mostly better because I know what she needs from me. It's much more love and care.

(Conference report, pg 10)

Many children are becoming desperate caregivers and have no time for books.

My name is Mpule and I'm 14 years old. I live in the North West Province. When I was in Grade 8 my mom left me behind with my three little sisters. They were 6 and 3 years old, and 2 months old. I couldn't sleep at night because the one who was 2 months was crying for my mother's breastfeeding. I would go to school very tired and feeling so ashamed of myself, always planning to kill myself, but I couldn't because who would take care of my sisters? I was cleaning and cooking and taking care of my sisters. There was no time for books. The teachers at my school would always shout at me because I didn't do my homework and on top of that I fell asleep in class.

(Conference report, pg 11)



Children struggle to stay at school when AIDS leaves them without parents.

My name is Sega and I come from the Limpopo Province. My problem at home is that I do not have parents. I had pupil status so that they can pay for my school fees. In the year 2000, I didn't have a school uniform so I had to stay at home.

(Conference report, pg 11)

Sometimes school is the only safe place a child can find.

My name is Mpho and I am 17 years old. I lost my mother and sister in 1999 and 2000. I was raped by my father. A year later I discovered I am HIV positive. The first person who knew about this was a teacher and the attitude that she had is the cause of my positive thinking in life.

(Conference report, pg 10)

Children are not the only people in the school community affected by HIV and AIDS. Educators suffer from the epidemic, too. When a teacher with HIV is beginning to develop AIDS, the school is directly affected.

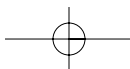
My name is Sibongile. I am a teacher in the IKhandla district. I am living with HIV. I did not tell my school about it, because I was afraid to lose my job. Now I have AIDS. I am absent a lot. I do not have the energy for my job. My colleagues try to help. They cover for me when I am ill. But they also get frustrated, because their work is too much. There is nobody I can talk to. And I get so tired. So tired, every day.

[reconstructed story, based on case report]

When teachers become ill, their absence affects the quality of learning in our schools.

I am Thami. I am a principal and I worry about the effect of HIV and AIDS on our schools. I don't know if some of my teachers are infected. That is confidential and it is up to them to disclose. But I can tell you it is difficult to run a school if teachers are always sick. You never know if they will turn up or if they will be too weak to teach. I know of teachers who are no longer productive, but they are still part of the staff. We cannot replace them but they are no longer able to teach.

[reconstructed story, based on case report]

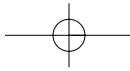


Think about this!

From these stories, we can see how the HIV epidemic makes it difficult for children to get a good education. Learners in poor communities are especially at risk. Often there are higher infection rates in poor communities and fewer resources to cope with the problems caused by the disease. Some problems that undermine a successful education are:

- **Rising educational costs:** Many families are struggling to find fees for preschooling, schooling or tertiary education, uniforms, textbooks or stationery. Families who lose their income because somebody dies of AIDS, will find it even more difficult to send their children to school.
- **Stigmatisation:** It is easy to blame or avoid young people who have problems because of HIV. Many do not get the community support they need. That is why they are at risk of dropping out of school.
- **Psychological trauma:** Children of all ages have emotional problems because of illness and loss of family members. The family unit also breaks down. When children are grieving it is difficult for them to do well at school.
- **Poor attendance:** When a family is affected by HIV, the children and young people often have to take on extra tasks to keep the home running. This leaves them with little time to do their school work. Sometimes they are absent because they are caring for their family at home.
- **Poor motivation and performance:** When children experience hardship, they find it difficult to concentrate and do well at school. This means that the education performance of learners from disrupted families and households suffers.
- **Increased risk of HIV infection:** Orphans and other affected children are at higher risk of HIV infection because they are more vulnerable to abuse. Some children agree to have sex for money or food. Others have sex with adults because they like the presents and the attention they get in return.

All the above stories and experiences tell us that it is time to take a close look at the way the HIV epidemic affects the life of our schools. We realise that talking about HIV prevention on its own is not enough. Too many of our communities have reached the stage of wide-spread HIV infection and so we have to teach our children the skills to keep themselves safe. That is why our school programmes focus on effective methods of stopping HIV. We also have to protect the quality of education in our country. We must find ways in which our schools can work with other community structures to ease the difficulties of families living with HIV or suffering from AIDS.



4. How do we respond?

Parents can respond to the challenges of HIV and AIDS by working with the school and the community to:

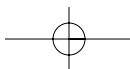
1. Prevent the spread of HIV.
2. Care for those affected by HIV or AIDS.
3. Help children to stay at school.
4. Work together to deal with the problems caused by HIV and AIDS.

Our first duty as parents is to make sure all children of school-going age are at school. Once families have their children at school they have entered into our partnership of care. Then we can respond to the impact of AIDS in at least four critical ways: by preventing infection, by providing social support, by protecting the quality of education, and by managing a coherent response to issues raised by the disease.

Preventing infection

- *focus on life skills programmes in the school,*
- *make sure your school has a teacher trained to facilitate life skills and HIV education,*
- *make sure the programme is on the timetable and is being taught,*
- *run HIV awareness campaigns,*
- *investigate youth health programmes.*

Our young people remain very vulnerable to HIV infection, and this is a concern for parents and educators alike. Girls and young women are particularly at risk because of sex with older men, social pressure and abuse, and it is easier for the virus to pass from a man to a woman during intercourse. It has become socially acceptable for older men to turn to younger girls for sex, sometimes falsely thinking that they may be free of HIV. These older men have more power than younger girls and often resist the use of condoms. There is a growing trend for younger girls to have older 'sugar daddies' who buy them 'nice' things in exchange for sex.



“There must be an end to the practice of male teachers demanding sex with schoolgirls or female teachers. It shows disrespect for the rights and dignity of women and young girls. Teachers having sex with learners betray the trust of the community. It is also against the law. It is a disciplinary offence. Tragically, it is spreading HIV and bringing misery and grief to these precious people and their families.”

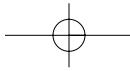
(Professor Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education)

Parents and other caregivers have an important responsibility to condemn this kind of behaviour among the adult community. We know the great majority of young girls and boys are not born with HIV. There is evidence to show that the HIV infection comes from older men. Is it not time to look at why adults continue to abuse children and young girls? It is time to put a stop to the practice of older men having sex with younger girls. As a parent you can raise these issues in your community or your school. Parents are also encouraged to learn from each other about how to talk about sexuality and HIV and AIDS in their families.



Although adults have more sexual power in the community, there are three important reasons why we should aim HIV prevention programmes at children and young people in our care:

1. Children and the youth (0-25 years) account for approximately 50% of the population and represent the future of the nation.
2. As young people become sexually aware and active they need guidance to make positive choices about their sexual behaviour. Children have to be taught from a young age how to look after their bodies and how to keep themselves safe.
3. Girls are at greater risk of becoming infected with HIV. They must be discouraged from having sex with older men. The parent community must take a stand against men who look for sex with young girls.



There is evidence that the attitudes and behaviour of young people can be changed to reduce their risk of HIV infection. This change happens more quickly when parents and teachers work together to offer leadership and guidance to children and young people. We can reduce the risk of infection by:

- Giving attention to life skills programmes.
- Teaching our young people about prevention choices.
- Encouraging them to seek treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).
- Motivating them to go for voluntary counselling and testing.

The prevention choices available are abstinence, use of condoms, and faithfulness to one partner who is not infected with HIV.

In addition to all of these, we must play our role as parents to support and encourage our young people to live positive and healthy lives. These projects are a central part of our national HIV prevention effort and we encourage you to play your part.

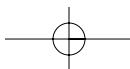
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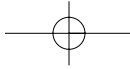


HIV Prevention Programmes are most effective when:

- They are introduced before puberty, that is, before young people become sexually active.
- The content of these programmes focuses not only on HIV and AIDS, but also on a number of different topics such as self-awareness, how to manage feelings, relationships between boys and girls, and strategies for delaying early sexual activity. They usually also include discussions about values, community customs, and beliefs and attitudes.
- Well-trained, open-minded educators support these programmes and are motivated to make them effective and successful.

We need to remember that educator-run life skills classes are only one part of a broader plan to bring about discussion in our communities. We want the formal programmes in our schools to have the support of parents and peers. Then they can really make a difference and keep our young people safe. This kind of support helps to make our programmes work and also helps us to keep our children alive. It is exciting when parents, educators and young people work together to create an open and accepting environment. Young people can then begin to change their behaviour and choose a lifestyle that will keep them HIV-free.





Try this!

Plan your Prevention Programme with the 3 Ps!

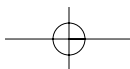
- 1. Peer education** is one way in which school communities are trying to prevent the spread of HIV. It is proving to be a very effective plan for getting young people to talk to each other and help each other both in and outside schools.
- 2. Parent involvement** supports openness and helps young people to adopt healthy lifestyles and change their behaviour. It can also help change the reasons for sex between older men and younger girls. Sex between different age groups exposes children and young people to HIV infection.
- 3. Participation.** Young people must be involved in planning prevention programmes. This will make the programmes youth-friendly and relevant. This is especially important when it comes to health issues. Young people need to know about counselling services. They need to ask about contraception and the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. These services should guarantee confidentiality and provide low-cost or free condoms to minors or unmarried adults. Everyone who wants an HIV test should have access to voluntary counselling and testing. Our government is providing the service of youth-friendly clinics across our country.

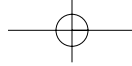
Did you know?



Parents can teach their children universal precautions by:

- Having a First Aid kit at home.
- Teaching children to stop their own bleeding.
- Teaching children not to touch other people's blood with bare hands. Teach children to wear gloves or cover their hands with a plastic bag if they have to touch other people's blood.
- Clean wounds with antiseptic and keep them clean.





Providing care and support

- identify orphans and vulnerable children,
- help feed the children,
- create safe and caring schools,
- make sure the children stay in school,
- ensure that the children are exempt from school fees,
- help the children to get Social Development Services such as child care grants, foster grants, food parcels, etc.

When HIV and AIDS cause widespread difficulties in our communities, our schools have a special responsibility to do something about this. Although our educators are not social workers, they are responsible for the welfare of the children and young people in their care. Together with parents, who are the primary teachers of their children, our schools need to provide care and support for those who are affected by HIV.



Kami is a healthy HIV-positive character who is affectionate, articulate, literate and great fun to be with! She is emotionally and intellectually intelligent, displaying a level of wisdom and insight that goes beyond what might be expected of a 5-year-old.

Professor Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education, with Kami from Takalani Sesame

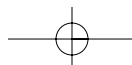
Did you know?

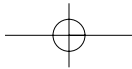


All people need:

- good physical care, such as clean water, healthy food, regular exercise, affordable medicine and regular medical check-ups.
- social care, such as access to child care grants, clear workplace policies that deal with absenteeism, boarding and pensions.
- emotional care, people who listen, an attitude of acceptance, freedom to express feelings and fears, counselling.

People living with HIV and AIDS need these things more than other people because of their condition. Children who come from needy homes need these things more than others because of their living conditions.





Who needs our care and support?

Infected children: We will find a small, but significant group of children in our schools who were born with HIV. These children may later become ill because of AIDS. These learners have special educational needs and will need support when they are absent or ill. They will also need our help in coping with prejudice and fear from other children and adults in the school community.

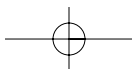
Orphans and other vulnerable children: A large number of children will be affected by the illness and death of adults in their households. These children are emotionally vulnerable because they are traumatised or grieving. They are also physically vulnerable because of poverty and isolation. Many lose their homes when their caregivers die. There is also a risk that they will drop out of school. These children have special needs in the school situation, but also need community support.

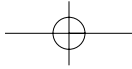
Educators are in a very good position to identify children who are vulnerable and who need our support. Educators can identify and monitor vulnerable children in a way nobody else can, with the help of parents and other adults in the community.

In their daily interactions with their classes, educators also have many small, but important opportunities to be caring and accepting of children in need. We should think of ways in which we can make more time for the nurturing of our children. We also need to think about how we can mobilise resources and skills. This will support educators who are willing to do this task.

Try this!

1. Provide food for learners who are hungry.
2. Make sure all learners in the school have an ID number. Refer them to the Department of Social Development if you can. Without an ID the children will not be able to get the support the state provides. If a child is an orphan, the principal can make the application on the child's behalf.
3. Ask class teachers to identify and monitor vulnerable children in their classes. Arrange a community meeting where the teachers can report on their observations and concerns. This must be done confidentially, respecting and protecting the privacy of the children and all concerned.
4. Train at least two teachers as lay counsellors and set specific times when these educators are available to listen to learners who need support. Rules about trust and confidentiality must apply.
5. Arrange a meeting to find out about the special needs policy, referral procedures and the resources available to support learners who need extra care.





What about adults who need care and support?

Infected educators: There is an increasing number of HIV positive educators in our schools and most of them worry about the impact of AIDS on their life and work. There are laws to ensure that the rights of these educators are protected. Many infected educators make a valuable contribution to the schools where they work. They need to know that we accept them and will support them, especially when they begin to fall ill.

Affected educators: Many educators are deeply affected by HIV and AIDS. They have to cope with AIDS-related illness in their families and absence of colleagues at school. Attending funerals, providing financial support and helping to bear the emotional burden of illness and death is very stressful for them. We need to find creative ways of caring for those who care for others. They need our support, too. Some educators may be living with HIV and deciding whether or not to disclose their HIV status.

All parents: The parent community of almost every school is deeply affected by HIV. Parents worry about the spread of HIV among young people and about how to keep their children safe. Some parents are living with HIV, others have AIDS-related illnesses. Many are worried and uncertain about their HIV status and are not sure where to go for counselling and support. While they try to cope with the impact of HIV on their lives, they often rely on the schools to look after their children's needs.

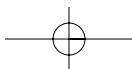
Many people who know they are infected with HIV struggle with their own sense of worth. Some feel guilty about being infected. Some feel angry, others feel rejected. We have to take these feelings seriously and help one another to live a full and positive life. We do this by creating honest, caring relationships where we all feel free to talk about the issues that worry us. Then we know that we are being heard.

Think about this



- How do you feel about a teacher with HIV teaching your child?
- Do you think your children are at risk of getting HIV at school?

If you practise universal precautions there is no need to worry that your child will be infected in the course of a normal school day. As parents you can help to enforce policies that forbid sexual activities at school.



Protecting the quality of education

- *make sure learners do not drop out. One of the best ways of keeping them HIV free is to keep them in school.*
- *keep teaching and learning going. Make sure there is a teacher teaching the class.*
- *respond creatively to absenteeism.*

In many needy households there is not enough money to send every child to school. The HIV epidemic is placing an added burden on these resources. As more and more people begin to fall ill and lose their jobs, the situation will become worse. As parents, it is our responsibility to make sure our children get the best possible education our country can provide. We constantly look for ways for our educators, our parents and their communities to work together. We want to find local solutions that will protect the quality of education of our growing generation.

The organisation of formal education is often not very flexible. Classes begin and end at set times, there are rigid timetables for subjects and irregular attendance is difficult to deal with. We realise that these routines do not serve the needs of learners who are unable to attend all the time. To counter the disruption of HIV and AIDS, a more flexible approach will be required in every aspect of educational provision. For example, it may be appropriate to consider models that 'take education to learners', such as home schooling, and distance learning. The use of TV and radio, or a more modular approach to teaching and learning should be investigated.

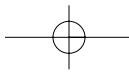
Did you know?



In countries such as Burkina Faso and Zambia, educators have developed flexible timetables to accommodate the needs of orphans and other vulnerable children, who cannot always make it to school.

Another way to provide quality education is to make sure our children learn the life skills they need. That is why the life skills programmes in our schools promote responsible sexuality behaviour and build self-esteem. Parents can support these programmes by teaching their children good values like self-respect, caring for others, taking responsibility and compassion.

Every school community has a particular responsibility to keep the children at school. We must do our best to help all children achieve their best. This means we have a personal responsibility to our learners, as well as an organisational one. Keeping



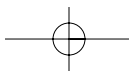
learners in our schools is an essential starting point if we want to improve their life prospects, reduce their risks of HIV infection, and produce the skilled, qualified graduates our country needs.

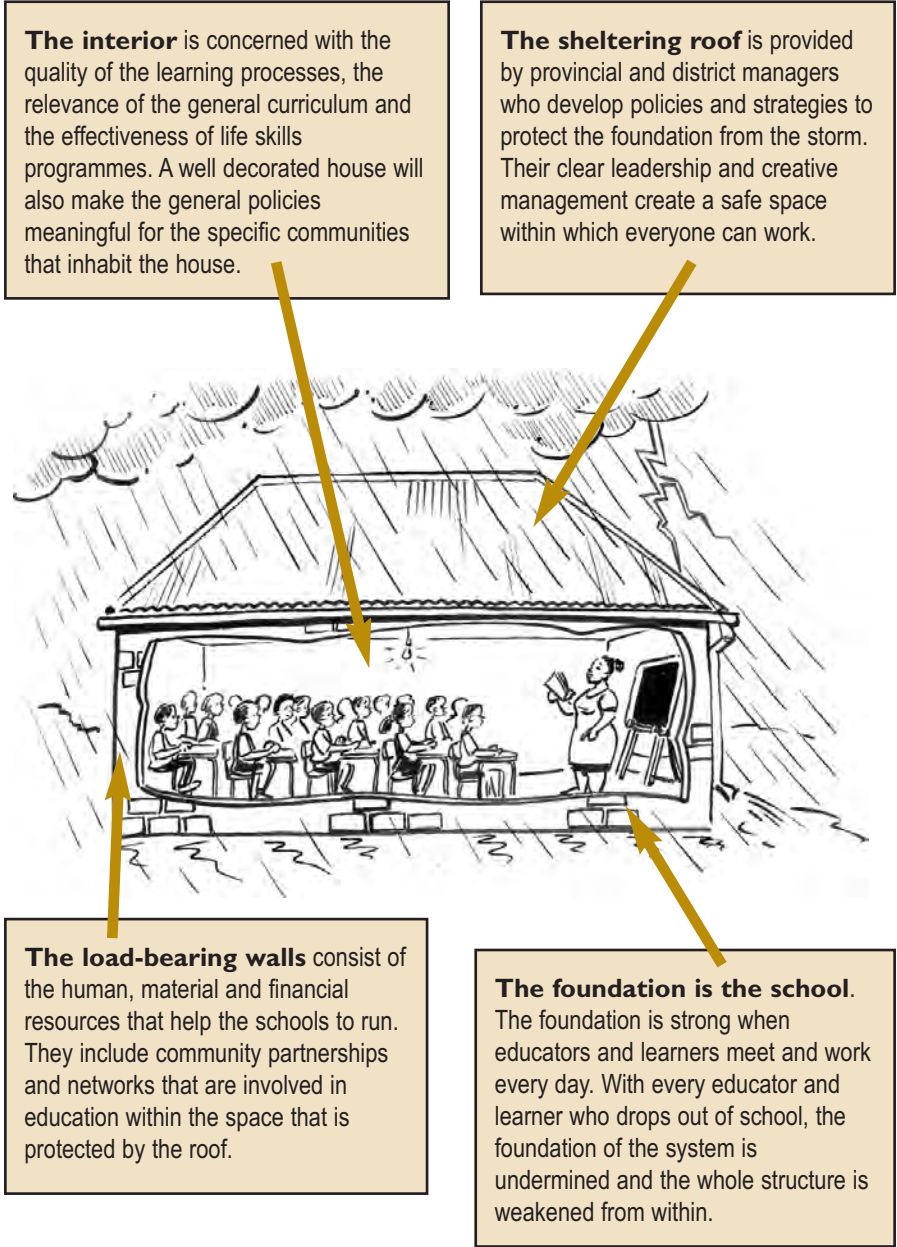
Try this!

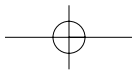
- Check your neighbourhood for children who are not at school and get in touch with your local Department of Education and Social Development. Government has a programme to ensure that all children, in particular girls, are in school.
- As school communities, fundraise for uniforms or stationery to support children who are too poor to come to school.
- Develop a homework buddy-system to make sure children can continue learning, even if they are absent for a while.

What is our foundation for action to protect the quality of education our children will receive?

Think of the education sector as a house in a storm. Its capacity to withstand the destruction of the HIV and AIDS epidemic will depend on four things: the strength of the foundation, the quality of the roof, the capacity of the walls and the safety of the interior.







Try this!

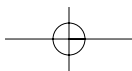
Think about your local school community. How does it compare with the picture of the house? Which parts of your house need to be put in order so it can survive the storm?

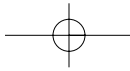
Think about this!



Parents secure quality education for their children when they:

- Get involved in school matters.
- Communicate with the educators and school management.
- Attend meetings and talk about issues that affect the education of their children.
- Ask for progress reports on the life skills programme and other Tirisano initiatives.
- Make educators feel appreciated.
- Offer to share their skills.



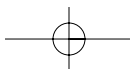


Managing a coherent response to HIV

- *partnerships in the community,*
- *sharing resources,*
- *ensure ongoing and focused actions against the epidemic.*

We realise that all levels of the education system will be affected, from early childhood development through to tertiary level. It will also affect all informal educational processes. For this reason we need a creative, flexible response from parents as well as educators. We need strong leadership and dedicated resources so we can make a difference wherever we are.

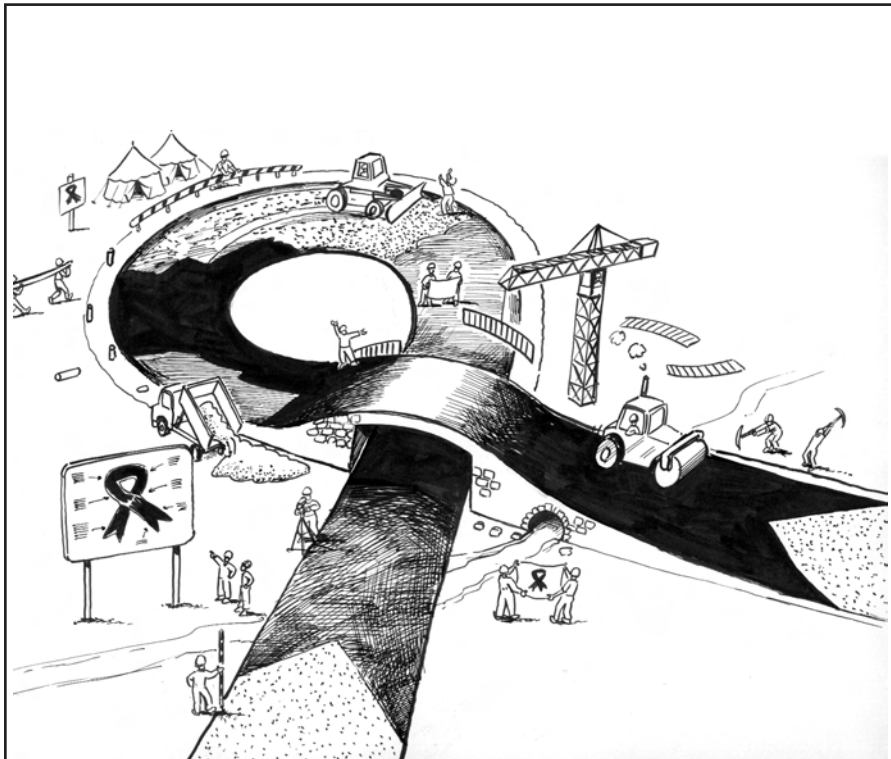
When we decide to deal with the problems of HIV and AIDS, there is no doubt that we need to do something soon. A well-managed response will require action on a large scale as HIV is continuing to spread. All partners in education are invited to become actively involved in programmes that are reaching out into the community and helping to keep our young people safe. HIV and AIDS must be seen as a core issue in all parts of the education system, but especially in our schools. Every project and action we are involved in should support our national commitment to quality education.



5. How can we make sure our response is effective?

The Minister of Education, together with the National Department of Education, has set out a national plan to fight HIV and AIDS. This has been an important first step in preparing an effective response to the disease. This plan still has to be put into action in our schools, and the support of every parent is important here. We also need:

- Committed and informed leadership at all levels of society, including parents.
- Partnerships and networks that help our schools to share resources and play an active part in their communities.
- Policies and regulatory frameworks that provide clear guidelines and codes of conduct to keep all local projects in line with the national plan.
- Practical plans that make sense in specific situations.
- Effective programme management that builds local capacity and uses existing resources well.



Every person who responds to the national vision is making an important contribution to the fight against HIV and AIDS.

6. What role do parents as primary educators play?

Parents are the primary educators of their children, especially where their children's health and sexuality education is concerned. From a young age children look to their parents for guidance about what is right and what is wrong. They learn from them by watching what they do and listening to what they say. In this way children are educated about their culture, their basic attitudes and values long before they go to school. Teaching children about their bodies and about healthy relationships, therefore, is the right and the responsibility of parents. Schools support them in this task.

In the past every culture had many set rules about sexuality education and there was very little discussion about it. However, modern living has changed many customs and children get a lot of information about sex through listening to radio, watching TV and looking at magazines. Often this information is one-sided or incomplete. Because of the way our society is changing, parents and educators have to find new ways of speaking to children about sexuality and to educate them about HIV.

We realise that we have no option but to move forward. HIV is destroying the future of our children and we have to respond. Let us do so in a way that is open, committed and confident.

Did you know?



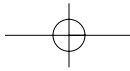
Ubungani is the name of a parent guide for Life Skills, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Education. The Departments of Education and Health published this guide and it is available at all districts of the Department of Education. As a parent you can insist that your school gets free copies of this guide.

You can also ask for the Lifeline Parent book.

You can contact loveLife for more information.

You can also contact Soul City for free booklets.

(See List of contacts on page 27.)

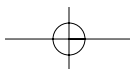


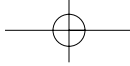
HIV education in every home

Before children are old enough to go to school parents can already teach them:

- **Basic hygiene:** Teach your children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before every meal.
- **Universal precautions:** Teach your children that blood is not to be handled with bare hands, but with gloves or a plastic bag. Show your children how to stop their own bleeding and teach them never to touch other people's blood.
- **Body awareness:** Teach your children the names of their body parts, including the names of their private parts. Tell them their body is their own. They must love and respect themselves.
- **Respect for others:** Treat your children with respect, listening to their feelings and ideas. Show them how to be respectful to others.
- **Compassion:** Give your children love and encourage them to be compassionate with their friends and others who are not their friends.

If parents care, life does become better for their children.





7. HIV, AIDS and education – what schools can do better than anybody else

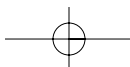
Parents and educators often feel they do not have enough knowledge to run life skills programmes or talk to their children about HIV and AIDS. They would like the Education Department to send 'experts' to do the task. In reality, however, our school communities are in a far better position than any expert to respond to the challenges of the HIV epidemic. There are at least four reasons for this.

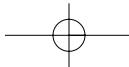
1. As educators and parents, we understand the situation in which young people live. We understand and know what is happening in our community better than anybody else. We can find out about the local problems, we know the local culture and can find out where new HIV infections come from. This means we are in a good position to listen to the real problems and plan a relevant HIV and AIDS-prevention campaign.
2. Our schools have a responsibility to give children the basic skills they need throughout their lives. Our teaching is systematic and legitimate. We reach more young people than anybody else. This places us in an excellent position to educate the nation about HIV and AIDS.
3. Children and young people spend a lot of time at home or at school. This gives us as parents and educators many formal and informal opportunities to make a difference to the lives of the children in our care. We can find realistic solutions to real problems and will not get lost in all the talk.
4. Public education is a long-term project that connects many different resources and skills. If we make HIV and AIDS education part of what we do on a daily basis, we can use all these resources to protect the quality of education of our children.

We do not know what the future holds. But we are confident that our schools can make a difference and with the support of parents they certainly will. The future need not be the same as the past. The future **can** be brighter and better, and education has an important role to play in making it so.

“The people who choose to look at their challenge as a blessing of change and not as a curse of death, these are the people who will become our teachers. They will bring us together. They will unite and take the hands of our children in the spirit of ubuntu. Our hearts have opened. We have come together to listen and discuss the solutions for transforming our children from innocent sufferers to wise leaders. All who are part of this are part of something great. We have spoken: may positive change be the outcome.”

Ntombazane 16.[Conference report, p 55]





List of contacts

1 AIDS IN EDUCATION

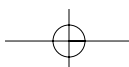
The Department of Education HIV and AIDS Unit.....	012 312 5178
Conference on HIV and AIDS and the Education Sector	012 312 5911
.....	http://education.pwv.gov.za
The HIV and AIDS Emergency Guidelines	012 312 5410
.....	http://education.pwv.gov.za
South African Education and Training System	http://education.pwv.gov.za
Guidelines for Educators, Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education, Supply, Demand and Quality	http://www.unicef-icdc.org/research/ESP/aids/aids_index.html
Aspects of children affected by HIV and AIDS	http://www.unaid.gov/pop/health/caba/archive
International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) catalogue.....	information@iiep.unesco.org

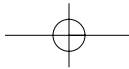
2 WORKPLACE AND HR ISSUES

Education Management Information Systems.....	Database for effective management of education systems	012 312 5239
.....	http://www.education.pwv.gov.za	
Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) sites in South Africa.....	0860 222 777	
http://www.aidshepline.org.za/_sites_list.htm		
Thethajunction – Lovelife’s Toll-Free Sexual Information and Counselling line	0800 121 900	
.....	www.lovelife.org.za	
Policy support – Planning and monitoring branch	012 312 5244	
Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS)	http://www.education.pwv.gov.za	
National and Provincial HR or HRD Directors –		
National	012 312 5466/7	
Gauteng	011 355 0281	
Eastern Cape.....	040 608 4253	
Free State	051 404 4291/2	
Kwa-Zulu Natal	035 879 3690	
Mpumalanga.....	013 766 5505	
Limpopo	015 290 7933	
Northern Cape.....	053 839 6500	
North West	018 387 3424/5	
Western Cape	021 467 2557/8	

3 CARE AND SUPPORT

AIDS Helpline & Department of Education (DoE) Websites	012 312 0000
http://www.education.pwv.gov.za	
Hospice Association of the Witwatersrand	011 483 1068
Mofolo (Soweto).....	011 982 5332
South Coast Hospice	039 682 3031
Wide Horizon Hospice.....	016 428 1410
South African Red Cross Society	
Western Cape.....	021 797 5360
Eastern Cape	041 585 6745
Free State.....	051 448 1259
Kwa-Zulu Natal	031 337 6522
Gauteng.....	011 873 5595
Department of Health.....	012 321 0000
Planned Parenthood Association of SA.....	011 880 1182
Society for Family Health	011 482 1427





AIDS Training, Information and Counselling Centre (ATICC)

Western Cape.....	021 797 3327
Gauteng.....	011 988 1064/5
Limpopo.....	015 290 2363
Kwa-Zulu Natal – Durban.....	031 300 3104/3020
Pietermaritzburg.....	033 395 1612
Mpumalanga – Nelspruit.....	013 759 2167
Witbank.....	013 690 6204
Eastern Cape – East London.....	043 705 2968
Port Elizabeth.....	041 506 1249
Queenstown.....	045 838 2233
Umtata.....	047 531 2763
Free State.....	051 405 8544

4 GENERAL INFORMATION

Helplines

AIDS toll-free Helpline 0800 012 322.....	www.aidshelpline.org.za
Thethajunction – Lovelife’s Toll-Free.....	0800 121 900
Sexual Information and Counselling line ; Hours: 1 - 9 pm Monday - Friday; 12 - 5pm Weekends	

Other information

Free Brochures and Information

Red Ribbon Resource Centre (011 880 0405).....	http://www.aidsinfo.co.za
Soul City.....	011 643 5852
.....	www.soulcity.org.za

Other

Joint United National programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).....	012 338 5294/5304
.....	www.unaids.org
Medical Research Council.....	021 938 0911

