

AIDS: Selected Bibliography for Educators

Peggy Brick

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The issue of students with AIDS will soon change. As of 1 January 1986, 231 cases of AIDS had been reported in the pediatric population (DHHS/CDC 1986). This includes children who acquired the disease in utero, youngsters who received contaminated blood transfusions, and adolescents who themselves are either intravenous drug abusers or sexually active gay men. Since March 1985, however, all donated blood has been screened for the AIDS virus. Transfusion-borne AIDS may well be eliminated in several years (because AIDS can lie dormant for a number of years, it necessarily takes several years for the effect to be seen).

As transfusion-borne AIDS is eliminated, so too will be the majority of instances of younger children with AIDS. Of total pediatric AIDS patients, 76 percent were infected in utero and will die before they are old enough to attend school (DHHS/CDC 1986). The group that will become proportionately more significant is the older AIDS-afflicted student, and this is the population that educators need to assist. Youth need strong role models within

the professional communities to turn to for support and guidance.

The Role of Educators

As youth view teachers, doctors, lawyers, and school administrators participating in discriminatory practices, is it any wonder that the cycle of partiality is so difficult to break? The very people who are needed as role models for dealing with the current epidemic are often part of the problem. This behavior is criminal. It is an insult to the professions we practice, and the people we serve. The only socially responsible position for educators to take is to become leaders in disseminating accurate information about AIDS.

As educators, we need to get the message across that the disease is not transmitted by casual contact with an AIDS victim. But, perhaps most important, we could take advantage of the opportunity to discuss alternative lifestyles, safe sexual practices, drug abuse, and so on with our students. If we close our eyes to the reality that AIDS exists, and that adolescents will experiment sexually and pharmacologically despite the current epidemic,

we are compounding the problem. Let us actively participate in helping ease and eradicate this epidemic. □

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