



**HIV ABC ...** The series of eight books designed to explain the complexities of Aids to South African children. PICTURE: SIPHWE SIBEKO

## New series explains HIV/Aids to the young

**Lynne Altenroxel**

Two decades into the world's HIV epidemic a growing number of infected children are surviving babyhood – leaving paediatricians with the difficult task of explaining the complexities of Aids, sex and death to their young patients.

In some instances parents choose not to tell their children that they are infected and, with children as old as 14 years living with the virus in South Africa, the question is how to deal with informing youngsters about safe sex. Or even how to explain why their parents have died.

Now a local publishing company has designed a series of eight glossy books about Aids, aimed at children and the South African market.

The series tackles tough issues giving simple explanations alongside

colourful photographs and graphics.

One volume is an autobiography on the late Nkosi Johnson, who succumbed to the virus in June last year.

One section, for example, explains that HIV causes Aids: "Can you remember the last time you had a cold?" the book asks. "For a while, your head ached, you coughed and sniffed. Then the cold went away. This is because your body has an immune system.

"The immune system defends the body, and fights the germs and viruses that make you ill. But HIV attacks the immune system, and the body can no longer fight germs and infections."

Michael Neu-Ner, spokesman for Awareness Publishing, said his company had developed the series to fill a gap in the local market. The books cost about R120 each.