

**Division of Elementary and Secondary Education – Office of Special Education
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities
Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI), January 2023**

Highlights

- Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI) received eleven new referrals this quarter. Five students were found eligible for services during this time. There are twenty-one referrals outstanding.
- Preparation for the 2022 Deafblind Child Count is underway. CAYSI will continue to use the database that will allow LEAs to review and update their students who are DeafBlind electronically.
- On December 19, 2022, the application for the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities-State Technical Assistance Projects to Improve Services and Results for DeafBlind Children and National Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center for DeafBlind Children was opened. CAYSI started the process of applying for the 5-year state DeafBlind grant award. CAYSI will pause most on-site technical assistance to meet the deadline for this application set for February 17, 2023.
- CAYSI presented to two AASEA Regions and shared eligibility criteria, the referral process, and the services provided for students and their educational teams. Information presented included the importance of the family's role in providing input concerning the student's communication and the plan for transitioning into adulthood, especially for students who have complex communication systems and needs. This resulted in 2 additional referrals and technical assistance requests for students currently being served by CAYSI. This also resulted in an additional request for this information to be given to a team of psychology specialists. That presentation is scheduled for January.
- CAYSI met four times to plan with the co-host states (MS, LA) for the Southeast Deafblind Transition Institute (SETI) and one time to discuss plans and anticipated students and activities during the events.
- Michelle Alvarez started in September as CAYSI's Family Consultant. The Director, Educational Consultant, and Administrative Specialist have met with Michelle to explain CAYSI processes, grant objectives, and procedures that are in place within the project and the department.

Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School

1. CAYSI Transition Pilot Program continues. Phase III started in collaboration with Arkansas Transition Services (ATS), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), Division Services for the Blind (DSB), Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), the families of eight pilot students, and the associated school teams of the DeafBlind student.
 - School teams of three CAYSI students in the pilot program who have more complex needs and no formal communication have met individually to be coached on the process of Discovery. These teams and families are invited to a training for Discovery in February.
 - Additional site visits with 3 educational teams occurred in Prairie Grove, Caddo Hills, and Van Buren.
 - CAYSI attended and participated in 9 meetings and trainings for students and their teams in the pilot project.
 - In collaboration with the agencies listed above, CAYSI will have a two-day meeting and training for counselors and educational teams to further address processes for students at the transition age to receive pre-ETS services with a

focus on Discovery for students with DeafBlindness and the most complex needs.

- CAYSI attended a tour of Project REACH at UAMS. The tour provided insight into the needed skillset and anticipated outcomes that can be expected for enrollment and acceptance into the program.

Projected outcomes:

- Raise expectations for all supporting agencies, families, the community, and the young adult as the growth and inclusive opportunities of work experiences in high school show the student's strengths and abilities.
 - Establish a process for implementing Discovery with students with significant disabilities in Arkansas as part of Transition Planning (identify what Discovery activities will be completed, timelines, the embedding within Person Centered Planning, annual IEP, determining benchmarks and products, and agency/position responsible).
2. In partnership with HKNC, the Youth Services Coordinator/Deafblind Employment Specialist position has been filled. CAYSI is working with the Specialist and the South-Central Regional Representative to determine roles and processes for collaboration and support for DeafBlind students at the transition age. CAYSI has had 3 meetings regarding this new position during this reporting period.

Family Engagement

1. Three Communication Matrix sessions have been initiated by the CAYSI team involving families and professionals as the first step in creating a Personal Communication Dictionary for the child and to develop strategies and goals to better identify nonverbal cues. Additionally, the series of sessions allows family leadership growth opportunities for the parent by furthering better child advocacy.
2. Two home visits were conducted for families to provide intensive technical assistance in the transition process, ensure access to FAPE, and to understand and access additional resources. Other intensive technical assistance was provided to an additional 15 families (16 students) for this quarter within the areas of newly diagnosed issues, grief and coping with the changes to a child's diagnoses, communication, educational placement, self-care, family leadership, potential legal issues, and the process of transition and accessing available resources.
3. CAYSI is identifying and recruiting families for the next Story Time program which is in collaboration with the southeast state deafblind programs and Gwyn McCormack of the United Kingdom. The dates have not yet been released but is anticipated for early Spring.
4. CAYSI has continued involvement with the monthly online meetings of Arkansas Empowering Families of Deaf-Blindness (AEFDB), the state's affiliate to National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB) to sustain and grow membership and provide other assistance and family-to-family support.
5. Additional meetings and collaboration efforts have been conducted to establish and build strategic partnerships with state and national organizations such as Helen Keller National Center and AR Hands & Voices to continue to serve families across the state with consistency.

Educational Technical Assistance

1. Targeted technical assistance was given to 8 students in Little Rock, Nettleton, Sherwood, Fayetteville, Siloam Springs, Springdale, Jacksonville, and Pocahontas. The technical assistance provided was in deafblind awareness and overview, instructional

strategies, literacy adaptations, active learning, communication strategies, access to the general education curriculum, and determining eligibility for some referrals. Seven of our new referrals were the result of CAYSI's technical assistance with current students.

2. Intensive technical assistance was provided fifteen times for two students to access FAPE, those in the transition pilot project, and completing the communication matrix for students with complex communication needs. These included educational teams, families, and appropriate agencies to develop appropriate goals, strategies, and implementation for the student in the targeted area of assistance.
3. CAYSI presented to three early childhood centers to bring awareness of Deafblindness. Each center expressed that they likely have children they will refer. Another visit is pending for one center in Rogers, AR in January.
4. CAYSI attended the Arkansas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Conference as a vendor. As a vendor CAYSI met with Teachers of Students who are Visually Impaired (TSVI) and discussed current shared students. This resulted in more collaborations with ASBVI's Early Childhood consultant and additional technical assistance teaming with ESVI consultants.