

**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 2022**

**Highlights**

- Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI) received eight new referrals in this quarter. Six students were found eligible for services during this time. There are 33 referrals outstanding.
- Preparation for the 2021 Deafblind Child Count is underway. CAYSI will be using a new database that will allow LEAs to review and update their students who are deafblind electronically.
- CAYSI met with Karen Erickson and the R.I.S.E. team to gain clarification in aligning the Science of Reading and comprehensive literacy instruction for students with deafblindness, significant cognitive disabilities, and/or complex communication systems. Karen Erickson's work is important to aligning literacy instruction due to the capacity in which AR uses her expertise in special education and literacy. She is one of the developers of the statewide alternate assessment (DLM) and plays an integral role in other projects and resources in CAYSI's work around communication and literacy. This work is in conjunction with a stakeholder team of consultants and educators from early childhood special education to higher education for future special educators.

**Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School**

1. CAYSI Transition Pilot Program continues. Phase II is in progress in collaboration with Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division Services for the Blind, the families of the 9 pilot students, and the associated school teams of the DeafBlind student.
  - A one-day training on Discovery was conducted by Griffin Hammis & Associates for our three school districts who have CAYSI pilot students with significant disabilities and no formal communication.
  - School teams, including the family, met to begin the mentoring/coaching to implement Discovery.

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 exhibit the strengths and abilities of the student.
  - 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 Peron Centered Planning, annual IEP, determining benchmarks and products, and agency/position responsible).
2. CAYSI, in collaboration with Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) presented for Division Services for the Blind (DSB), explaining the impact of deafblind on learning, CAYSI services, and the transition pilot program.
  3. CAYSI, DSB, and HKNC continue to partner in creating a Youth Services Coordinator/Deafblind Specialist to support the needs of the deafblind young adults and adults in evaluation, skill training, professional development, and increasing awareness of the value deafblind individuals contribute to the community.

## Family Engagement

1. Two initial home visits were conducted face-to-face for newly eligible families, and four home visits were conducted with CAYSI families to provide additional technical assistance in transition, cortical vision impairment, and application for other Medicaid health programs. Other intensive technical assistance to families for this quarter included areas regarding newly diagnosed issues, grief in the death of a child, educational and residential placement, self-care, family leadership, Medicaid support, legal issues, Cortical Vision Impairment, and Charting the LifeCourse mentoring on transition.
2. Training and mentoring the Family-to-Family Communities (F2FC) parent facilitators was held in October.
3. CAYSI continues partnering with NCDB and Pennsylvania's deafblind program in providing a 3-part training series with the Cornelia DeLange Syndrome Foundation, empowering parents to care for other family members whose child has died.
4. In collaboration with the southeast deafblind states, the virtual Family Story times by Gwyn McCormack from the UK provided two different series on the Halloween and Winter Wonderland. Five Arkansas parents were sponsored by CAYSI.
5. Family Futures Planning Days consisted of two evening and one Saturday morning sessions, bringing eight families together with transition agencies. Five of the families completed an action plan, and CAYSI will follow-up to support them in their child's preparation for transitioning out of high school.
6. SPARKLE training for parents new to CAYSI and learning about the impact of deafblindness on learning had two sessions in December and two sessions in January. Six parents are participating.
7. CAYSI, along with approximately 25 other Family Engagement Coordinators from other state deafblind programs are part of a strategic review committee to identify the unique needs and supports of families who have children who are deafblind. The committee will provide an extensive report to the Office of Special Education Program to consider as we move to another grant application for 2024 – 2029.

## Educational Technical Assistance

1. Technical assistance was given to 32 students in Greenbrier, Vilonia, Crossett, Sherwood, Springdale, Siloam Springs, Caddo Hills, Pocahontas, ASD, ASB, Clinton, Fort Smith, Clarksville, North Little Rock, Little Rock, Jacksonville, White Hall, and Mayflower.
2. CAYSI's collaborative group for communication and literacy met one time. The group discussed sharing expert knowledge from Karen Erickson with the R.I.S.E. team for literacy instruction to students who are DeafBlind. The team decided to read the text: *Effective Literacy Instruction for Learners with Complex Support Needs* by: Susan R. Copeland and Elizabeth B. Keefe. Some issues addressed are sustainable recommendations for communication and literacy and measuring quality data from educators to educators of students with deafblindness and complex communication systems.
3. CAYSI, Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI), and Easterseals Outreach is providing four professional learning opportunities: *Inspiring Communication and Literacy: Instructional Strategies for Students with Dual Sensory Impairments and Multiple Disabilities* starting in January.