

**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), July 2023**

Highlights

- CAYSI has received two new referrals since April, 2023. Nine students were found eligible for services during this time and 17 have been referred for CAYSI services.
- The 2022 DeafBlind Child Count has been completed and turned in to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. The national report is expected to be released in the fall. Once that report is finalized CAYSI will report the official 2022 count.
- CAYSI submitted the Common Project Measures to OSEP on April 28, 2023, providing valuable insights. Notably, the report indicated a decrease in the average age of referral from 7 in the previous reporting year to 5.3, reflecting the project's success in raising awareness among early childhood providers. CAYSI surpassed the targets for intensive technical assistance, employing effective strategies to enhance access to the GEC, facilitate the implementation of communication systems and interventions by educational teams, and support students in acquiring employment experiences. The achievement of these targets can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of family and educational consultants, who effectively collaborated with families, educational teams, and external agencies. Despite operating without a family consultant for nearly half the year, CAYSI achieved the target activities for family engagement, transition, and communication & literacy. This also demonstrated the necessary teamwork and dedication of the family and educational consultants to the project's success.

Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School

Intensive TA with NCDB's guidance has ended along with the conclusion of the Pilot Project but the intensive work continues with the educational teams and the families of the students in the pilot project to gather data past graduation.

- CAYSI will continue efforts in transition using the strategies discovered and processes developed throughout the pilot project. CAYSI will continue making efforts in connecting students with adult services and Pre-ETS counselors.
- CAYSI is requesting feedback on the Family Guide before disseminating it as a product.
- CAYSI is working with HKNC and outside agencies to support the Deafblind Employment Specialist
- Noteworthy student success and results during this reporting period:
 - One student is moving to World Services for the Blind for the summer and planning to begin taking college courses either in the fall or winter session.
 - One student has applied and interviewed for entry into Project Search.
 - One student works part-time in a local bakery and attends a transition camp.
 - One student's team is making progress toward her Person-Centered Plan

- The youngest student's mother in the pilot is meeting with the family consultant in preparation for transition services that will begin this year
- An additional two families are being scheduled for their PCP with a third anticipated for Fall 2023.

Technical Assistance

- Targeted TA, in person and virtually was given to students and families in Sherwood, Clinton, North Little Rock, and Little Rock. The TA provided was in DeafBlind awareness and overview, literacy adaptations, active learning, communication strategies, family leadership, and access to the GEC.
- CAYSI provided intensive TA for five students on transition activities and to three families on communication, family engagement, and leadership. This included Film Camp, Person-Centered Planning activities, IEP transition preparation and planning, and a Parent/Agency/Teacher meeting.
- CAYSI met with the new LEA for Arkansas School for the Deaf and the new interim Superintendent to address collaboration and their DeafBlind students.
- Ongoing TA with school teams and families that received TA throughout the school year to ensure needs are still being met as CAYSI plans TA for the fall.

Collaborations & Systems Change

- CAYSI collaborative efforts with outside agencies have resulted in meetings with EHDI, HKNC, TCFEF, Jamar Hildreth Foundation, Deaf Leadership Council, ACC, and CHARGE Syndrome Foundation.
- CAYSI is facilitating efforts to assist families in developing a new strategic plan for 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 family-to-family support.
- CAYSI provided families with an online meet and greet with the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation family liaison for Arkansas.
- A family event, *CAYSI Casual Connections*, was held in Bentonville to bring families together to share stories and increase family-to-family support.
- CAYSI provided two collaborative trainings, *Inspiring Communication and Literacy for Students with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities*, with Easterseals and ESVI in Farmington and Pine Bluff.
- CAYSI attended the professional development, *Investigating Disproportionality* to learn about factors that may impede student success.
- CAYSI also attended an abbreviated and practice session on *All In: For Teachers of Students with Extensive Support Needs* to provide feedback about the training and to make sure CAYSI presentations align with the practices that the Office of Special Education is delivering to professionals in the field.
- The family consultant added the Stepping Stones accreditation to her Triple P, Positive Parenting Program, provider status. Triple P is a parenting and family support system designed to prevent and treat behavioral and emotional problems in children and teenagers.