

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), October 2021

Highlights

- Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI) received three new referrals in this quarter. One student was found eligible for services during this time. There are twenty-seven referrals outstanding.
- CAYSI is working with Karen Erickson to align literacy instruction with the R.I.S.E. initiative for students with deafblindness, significant cognitive disabilities, and/or complex communication systems. Karen Erickson is one of the developers of the statewide alternate assessment (DLM) and is an integral part in other projects and resources in CAYSI's work around communication and literacy. Her work is important to aligning literacy instruction due to the capacity in which AR uses her expertise in special education and literacy.

Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School

1. CAYSI Transition Pilot Program continues. Preparation for Phase II is being conducted in collaboration with Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division Services for the Blind, the families of the 10 pilot students, and the associated school teams of the DeafBlind student. The Lead DeafBlind Interagency Team determined that the National Center for Technical Assistance will be providing intensive technical assistance this fall. The Center will be conducting training and mentoring in Arkansas by using an age appropriate transition assessment known as Discovery through Griffin-Hammis Associates. Discovery will be in the area of determining student skills and applying them to develop work experiences in order to create customized employment specifically for those students with no formal communication system and complex needs. Primary Long-term outcomes will be to:
 - 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 Person Centered Planning, annual IEP, determining benchmarks and products, and agency/position responsible).
2. The Southeast Transition Institute is being planned for students who are DeafBlind and planning for college or full-time work out of high school. Arkansas is one out of approximately eleven other state deafblind programs planning the Institute, which will be hosted by the Florida Deafblind Program in Gainesville, Florida, June 2022. CAYSI anticipates two families to be attending.
3. CAYSI is working with Helen Keller National Center in efforts to have a long-range service plan among its stakeholders in Arkansas.

Family Engagement

1. Seven initial home visits were conducted face to face for newly eligible families. Additional intensive technical assistance provided to families 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. The southeast state deafblind programs began the Family-to-Family Communities (F2FC) parent facilitator trainings to begin year seven of the monthly parent groups, beginning in September, 2021. Five CAYSI parents are participating.
3. September 22nd, CAYSI will be presenting virtually for a family leadership conference on grief over the lifespan for parents with children who have complex needs in collaboration with Pennsylvania's deafblind program and the National Center for DeafBlind.
4. Three CAYSI parents from the Transition Pilot Program participated in giving feedback on their child's experiences over the last school year.
5. In collaboration with the southeast deafblind states, the virtual Family Story times by Gwyn McCormack from the UK provided a seven-week series on the Seaside Adventure. Three Arkansas parents were sponsored by CAYSI. Plans to bring in the mid-west state deafblind programs for two other short stories on Halloween and the Holidays are being planned.

Early Identification and Referral

1. Efforts to increase deafblind awareness and collaboration with other agencies and families include CAYSI meetings with Arkansas School for the Deaf Outreach, Arkansas Support Network's Community Parent Resource Center, and Arkansas Children's Hospital Complex Care.
2. CAYSI is beginning working SeSo, Inc., a multilingual and multicultural interpreting service, to create a Spanish translated video of an introduction to CAYSI, deafblindness, and the support CAYSI provides. This will be intended for all Spanish-speaking parents whose child has been referred to CAYSI.

Educational Technical Assistance

1. Technical assistance was conducted on-site and virtually for 8 students in Van Buren, Mt. Ida, Little Rock, Jacksonville, White Hall, Pine Bluff, and Mayflower.
2. CAYSI completed the Communication Matrix assessment and report with one educational team to help them develop a communication plan. The team met with CAYSI to complete the assessment, review the data in the report, and determine what consistent steps are possible for the team to take with the student across all environments. This team has agreed to intensive technical assistance for the year to develop communication and learning in all of the student's environments.
3. CAYSI's collaborative group for communication and literacy met one time. The group discussed the text *Comprehensive Literacy for All* by Karen A. Erickson and David A. Kopenhaver for the purpose of sharing expert knowledge with the R.I.S.E. team for literacy instruction to students who are DeafBlind.
4. CAYSI, ESVI, and Easterseals will be offering a training to address communication and literacy for students who are DeafBlind and to bring awareness of deafblindness.
5. CAYSI is participated in the Cognitive Coaching training that was offered by the SPDG team. The skills learned in this 8-day training will be used when working with teachers and educational teams.