

**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 2023**

Highlights

- CAYSI received 12 new referrals since July 2023. Six students were found eligible for services during this time. Eighteen referrals are outstanding.
- The final Annual Performance Report for the 2018-2023 grant was completed and submitted on September 29, 2023. It was submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
- OSEP accepted the DeafBlind grant proposal from CAYSI. CAYSI started strong on October 1st in the first year of the five-year grant.

Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School

- CAYSI continues its efforts in transition using the strategies discovered and processes developed throughout the pilot project. CAYSI will continue making efforts to connect students with adult services and Pre-Employment Transition Services counselors.
- Noteworthy student success and results during this reporting period:
 - CAYSI collaborated with Arkansas Transition Services (ATS), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Division of Services for the Blind, in a panel discussion at the Central Arkansas Human Resources Association
 - Two students attended and performed at ATS' Film Camp and Debut at Pulaski Technical College (PTC) on October 3, 2023
 - One student has had a Person-Centered Planning (PCP) meeting, and an action plan was made that includes visiting Project Search, Access, and the 3D Program at PTC.
 - One student is scheduled for a PCP at the end of October 2023.

Targeted and Intensive Technical Assistance (TA)

- Targeted TA was given to students and families in Palestine-Wheatly, Gurdon, and Little Rock. The TA provided were follow-ups on accessing the General Education Curriculum (GEC) and in DeafBlind awareness and overview, routines and literacy adaptations, active learning, communication strategies, and family leadership.
- CAYSI provided intensive TA for 3 students. One was for a better understanding of the child's communication through the informal assessment of a *Communication Matrix*, another was to assist a team with access to the GEC, and the third was for transition through a PCP.
- Ongoing TA with families to provide support through, phone calls, text, and in-person visits as the school year began.
- Another Storytime Adventure was offered to families. CAYSI had 2 families participate in this session.

Collaborations & Systems Change

- CAYSI collaborative efforts with outside agencies have resulted in meetings with Early Hearing Detection & Identification (EHDI), Helen Keller National Center, The

Center For Exceptional Families, Jamar Hildreth Foundation, Deaf Leadership Council, Arkansas Collaborative Consultants (ACC), and CHARGE Syndrome Foundation.

- CAYSI attended the Strengthening Families Conference
- CAYSI is facilitating efforts to assist families in developing a new strategic plan for Arkansas Empowering Families of Deaf-Blindness, the state's affiliate to National Family Association for Deaf-Blind to sustain and grow membership and provide family-to-family support.
- CAYSI provided two collaborative trainings in August, *Inspiring Communication and Literacy for Students with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities*, with Easterseals and Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI) in Little Rock. This marks 117 participants since the first training in March of 2022. Another is scheduled for November 7, 2023.
- CAYSI attended the CHARGE conference along with a teacher of a student with CHARGE Syndrome and a Family with a young adult with CHARGE Syndrome.
- CAYSI Presented at the Special Education Automation Software Conference to provide Special Education Supervisors with state census data and awareness information to encourage referrals for students with Deafblindness.
- CAYSI Presented to National Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired Division 3 with the Virginia DeafBlind Project and the National Center on Deafblindness. *Tools for Your Toolbox: Access to Learning for Students with VI and Extensive Support Needs*.
- CAYSI collaborated with ESVI to present to school therapists about strategies and resources to use for students who are visually impaired, blind, or DeafBlind.
- CAYSI led the charge in two panel discussions. These panel discussions highlighted collaborative efforts between ACC in providing quality TA for a student in need of educational services in a small district who had never served a student with complex needs.
- CAYSI was a key partner in getting a family engagement project started for state consultants. In the early phase of this project, the team presented to the ACC about plans and awareness of their own websites being targeted to families. Another presentation, to Special Education Supervisors, also provided plans and encouraged feedback from the participants including the possibility of joining a focus group.
- CAYSI provided the first Triple P Parenting training session to families in the state.
- CAYSI was invited into a new collaborative effort, *Early Childhood Vision and Hearing Collaborative* with the Special Education Early Childhood Program, EHDI, Department of Human Services, Arkansas School for the Deaf, ESVI, and the Deaf Education Specialist. This group has met three times so far and has had many great discussions around the data each has on identification.