

# CAYSI

## DeafBlind Project



**CAYSI**

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# CAYSI SERVICES

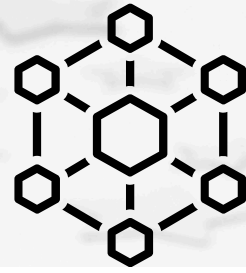


The Arkansas CAYSI Project identifies children who have a combined vision and hearing impairment and seeks to support the children, their families, and the professionals who work with them. The CAYSI Project is a technical assistance project serving individuals birth through 21 years of age across the state who have difficulty using BOTH their vision and hearing. CAYSI has an educational consultant as well as a family consultant.

**Many of the children/students that CAYSI follows may not have an actual loss of vision and hearing but difficulty using these senses because of other factors such as additional delays, disabilities and/or complex medical problems.**



# DEAFBLIND INFORMATION

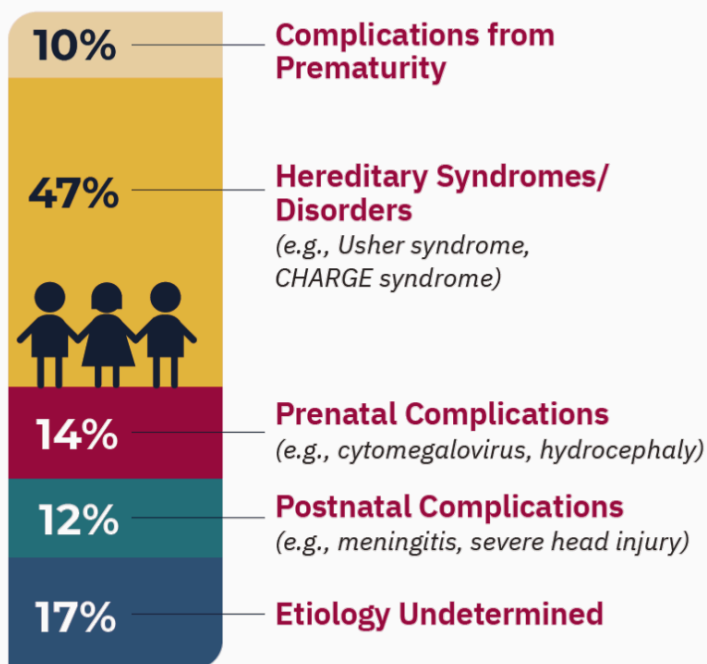


## What is deafblindness?

- **Deafblindness is a unique disability.** A child who is deafblind has a combination of hearing and vision loss where those senses are reduced, distorted, or missing entirely.
- **Most children who are deafblind have some usable vision and/or hearing.** Some are profoundly deaf and totally blind.
- **Deafblindness varies from person to person** based on things like the cause, level of hearing and vision loss, and additional disabilities.
- **Although no two children who are deafblind are alike, many share similar needs.** They may need help from others to understand their world, communicate, and build social relationships.

## What causes deafblindness?

Children who are deafblind make up one of the most diverse and complex of all disability groups. More than 70 causes have been identified for deafblindness.



*Some causes are so rare that only a few children have been identified with them.*

*Sometimes there's no known cause.*



*This information has been adapted and used courtesy of NCDB 2023*

Students with deafblindness may need help in the following areas:

- Communication
- Building Relationships
- Perception
- Incidental Learning
- Motivation
- Mobility



# FAMILIES ARE PRIORITY

**Families are the guiding force behind all life decisions for a family member who is DeafBlind. Their unique lived experiences drive our shared responsibility to the goals that they choose for themselves and their loved one.**



The National Center on Deaf-Blindness has set forth family engagement priorities for state projects like CAYSI to prioritize the needs of the families who receive services.

These priorities keep the family in the spotlight by raising awareness, creating systemic inclusion, and providing support and resources.

## **Priority #1**

*Meet families where they are*

## **Priority #2**

*Grow family connections with other families and with the Deafblind community.*

## **What this may look like:**

- Call, text, email and posting on social media opportunities to attend webinars and events hosted by partner organizations
- Conducting an initial family visit at the place of the family's choice.
- Having an individual follow-up session
- Attending a meeting for additional support if requested
- Hosting parent support groups
- Creating and hosting family events across the state
- Partnering with community organizations to present or have family involvement



# FAMILIES ARE PRIORITY

## Priority #3

*Deepen professional sensitivity and understanding of the unique experiences and needs of individuals who are DeafBlind and their families.*

## What this may look like:

- Presenting to educational staff, service providers, and community organizations regarding the journey of the family.
- Finding opportunities for families to share their stories to professionals
- Attending meetings with school teams to help address family perspective
- Collaborating with organizations and agencies to elevate the family voice

## Priority #4

*Empower and honor the family as the child's primary teacher and champion*

## What this may look like:

- Providing support to families in preparation for next steps as their child grows
- Provide resources that are relevant and timely for the families' situation
- Find supports for the family in the community or region
- Providing tools and resources to help families share what they know of their child
- Providing resources about interveners and deafblindness
- Working with the family to develop confidence when participating in an IFSP or IEP meeting.

## Priority #5

*Strengthen family and self-advocate voices, stories, and confidence*



# FAMILIES ARE PRIORITY

## Priority #6

*Deliver meaningful information in multiple modalities and transformative ways to reach families in all of their diversity, preferences, and needs at key moments in their personal journeys.*

## What this may look like:

- Utilizing various contact methods to respect the wishes of the family including text, email, calls, and social media
- Offering resources in multiple languages.
- Collaborating with community organizations to learn and respect the cultural norms of families
- Providing interpreters for meetings/events as requested.
- Providing event information and RSVP pages in multiple languages

## Priority #7

*Enable equity of family engagement through universally accessible, culturally affirmative, and unbiased services and supports.*

## Priority #8

*Amplify diverse family voices, inclusion, and leadership at all levels  
“Nothing about us without us”*

## What this may look like:

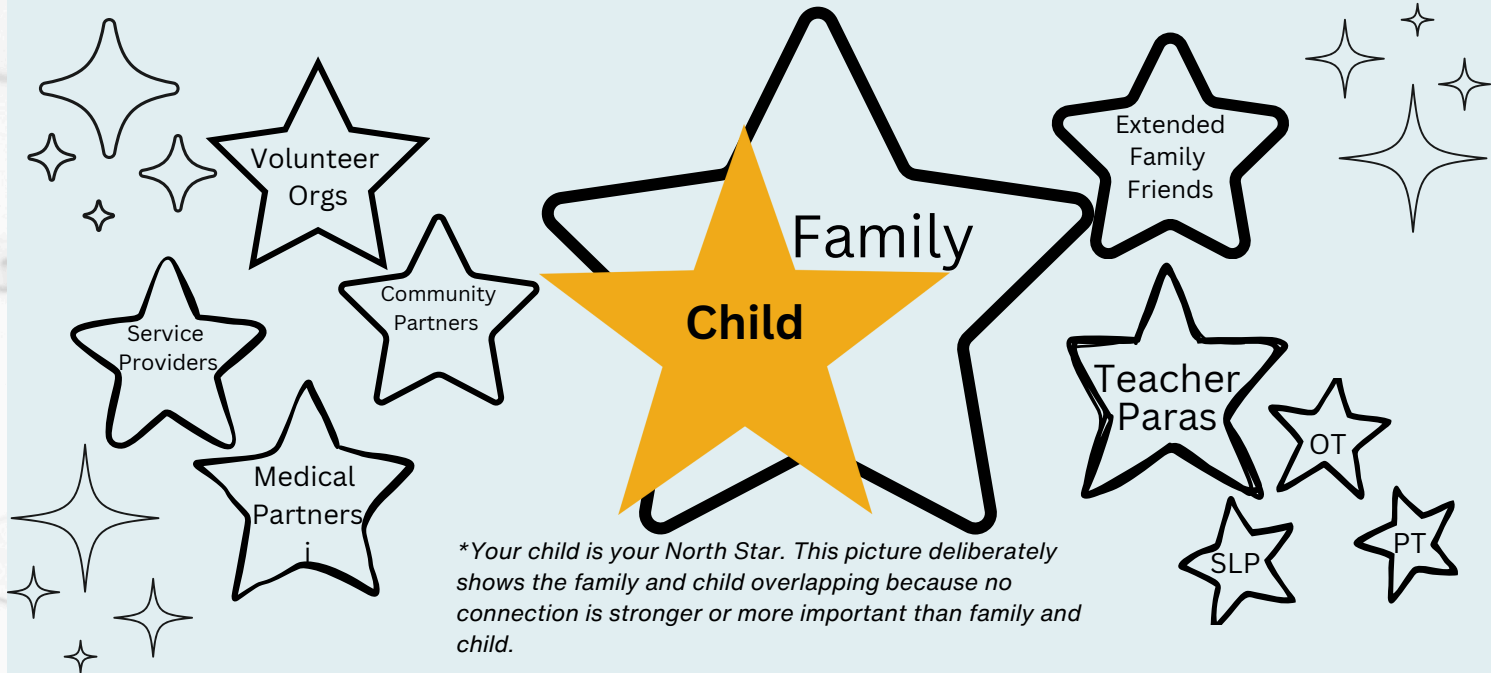
- Offering resources in multiple languages.
- Provide interpreters/interpretation for families as needed
- Presenting with organizations to bring awareness to the diversity and unique needs of our families
- Providing “host” families at events to elevate voices of families and encourage connection
- Developing a strong family support network by partnering with like organizations
- Sharing information with families about state and national organizations (NCDB, NFADB, Hands & Voices, TCDEF)





# FAMILIES ARE PRIORITY

## Build Your Child's Constellation



**Children remind us to treasure the smallest of gifts, even in the most difficult times.**

**-Allen Klein**



# ADDITIONAL FAMILY RESOURCES



## **ACCESS ARKANSAS - BENEFITS APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT**

<https://access.arkansas.gov/Learn/Home#>

## **MEDICAID QUICK ACCESS GUIDE**

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/Quick-Reference-Medicaid-Chart-3.3.23.pdf>

## **THE AR HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM PAYMENT PLAN (ARHIPP)**

<https://www.myarhipp.com/>  
1-855-MyARHIPP (855-692-7447)

## **AR DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

<https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/special-education>  
501-682-4221

## **ARKANSAS COLLABORATIVE CONSULTANTS**

<https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/special-education/technical-assistance-providers>  
501-682-4222

## **THE CENTER FOR EXCEPTIONAL FAMILIES (TCFEF)**

<https://thecenterforexceptionalfamilies.org/>  
1-888-360-9654

## **NATIONAL CENTER ON DEAFBLINDNESS (NCDB)**

<https://www.nationaldb.org/>  
516-366-0047  
support@nationaldb.org

## **NATIONAL FAMILY ASSOCIATION FOR DEAFBLIND (NFADB)**

<https://www.nfadb.org/>  
1-800-255-0411  
info@nfadb.org

## **HELEN KELLER SERVICES**

<https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/>  
516-944-8900 x 1299  
hkncinfo@hknc.org

## **ARKANSAS CHAPTER OF HANDS & VOICES**

<https://arhandsandvoices.org/>  
501-932-7700  
info@arhandsandvoices.org

## **ARKANSAS DISABILITY COALITION**

<https://ardisabilitycoalition.org/home/>  
501-614-7020  
info@ardisabilitycoalition.org

## **DISABILITY RIGHTS ARKANSAS**

<https://disabilityrightsar.org/>  
1-800-482-1174  
501-296-1775  
info@DisabilityRightsAr.org

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# CAYSI TEAM



Michelle Alvarez

**FAMILY CONSULTANT**

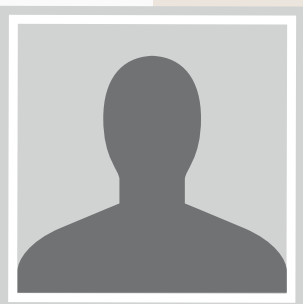
Michelle joined CAYSI in 2022 and enjoys building relationships with families and organizations to support greater outcomes for our DeafBlind children and young adults. Michelle is a mother of three children and personally understands the need to advocate and partner with medical professionals and schools for the success of children.



Jennifer Greiman

**EDUCATION CONSULTANT**

After spending over ten years in public education as a Special Education teacher and counselor, Jennifer joined CAYSI in the Fall of 2024. Jennifer brings a wealth of knowledge and experience about different classroom settings and is dedicated to helping educators find the full potential of the students CAYSI serves.



**ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST III**

This position is currently vacant. We look forward to welcoming someone soon.

# CONTACT US

Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI)  
1401 W. Capitol, Ste 450  
Little Rock, AR 72201-2936  
Office: 501-682-4222

