

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education - Special Education Unit Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI), April 2020

- CAYSI and Easterseals Outreach conducted an additional two of the five proposed trainings for the school year on *Serving Students with Multiple Disabilities and Dual Sensory Impairments*. This totals 4 professional development opportunities for educators of students with dual sensory impairments and multiple disabilities.
- CAYSI currently has 236 students on its registry. In this quarter, CAYSI received 13 new referrals and nine students were found eligible for services. There are currently forty-four outstanding referrals.
- CAYSI has provided home visits to families in Hot Springs, Little Rock, Pine Bluff, Siloam Springs, Lonoke and Springdale. Three parent groups, as well as the family leadership group, Arkansas Empowering Families with Deafblindness, met in Siloam Springs, Osceola and Little Rock.
- CAYSI provided school consultations in Branch, Hackett, Fort Smith, Mena, Little Rock, Texarkana, Ashdown, Springdale and Dewitt.

CAYSI grant initiative work in changing systems and building capacity in serving students and their families birth to 22 years:

- **2019 December 1 Child Count**
 1. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) provided updated data on existing students on the deafblind registry. 100% of the LEAs responded.
- **Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School**
 1. Planning for Family Futures Planning Days was scheduled for March 14 and April 11, 2020, in collaboration with Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas Rehabilitative Services, Division Services of the Blind, and individuals from the PASSE system under DHS. The first day of planning, March 14, was postponed until April 11 due to a family illness. The second day of planning has not yet been re-scheduled.
 2. Planning has begun for the Transition Institute for Young Adults who are Deafblind (SETI), to be held in Jackson, Mississippi, June 25-28. CAYSI will sponsor one student and his/her family as well as continue to collaborate with UALR by sponsoring two Deafblind interpreters who will join CAYSI staff for the weekend.
 3. As part of the National Center for Deafblindness' (NCDB) monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC), CAYSI Staff is learning more about the systems at a national and state level and how each state can integrate these systems in order to better transition young adults into the community of employment. CAYSI is working with NCDB in receiving intensive technical assistance from NCDB. The application process is currently being completed.
 4. The Deafblind Interagency Team which includes CAYSI, the Helen Keller Nation Center, Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas Rehabilitative Services, Division Services of the Blind, and Goodwill Industries has had one planning meeting this reporting period. Another meeting is scheduled to occur April 7, 2020, to work on systems change. The team's goal is to build a seamless process of transitioning as well as the provision of necessary supports and longer-term services for integrative employment of our young adults. In addition, planning is continued for ongoing trainings and collaboration in making change for the young adults with deafblindness.
- **Family Engagement**
 1. CAYSI is part of a leading team of state deafblind programs in the provision of more educational awareness and work on cultural competence in order to better serve this vulnerable population. As a result, connections have been made with Arkansas Advocates for Families and Children and UA's Partners for Inclusive Communities to collaborate in efforts for inclusive practices and service equity among vulnerable populations. This reporting period, the committee is finalizing its work, and it will be compiled and shared with the state deafblind projects via NCDB.

2. Follow-up and training to parent facilitators continues to be provided for the national Family to Family Communities monthly calls. A new group has been created for extended family. CAYSI Family Consultant facilitates the group of 5 grandparents from Arkansas who provide support to one another and are learning how deafblindness impacts their families as well as how their grandchild learns.
3. Arkansas Empowering Families of DeafBlindness (AEFD) continues to build its infrastructure while increasing awareness of the family leadership group.

- **Early Intervention**

1. CAYSI presented to the Arkansas Hands and Voices, Guide By Your Side board, on the identification of dual sensory impairment, communication and learning.
2. CAYSI also met with Arkansas Hands and Voices, Advocacy Support and Training (ASTra) representative, Sharon Ross, to learn about the program's goals and objectives and to acknowledge our shared interest in family support of their children in communication and learning.
3. CAYSI met with Donna Smiley and Rachel Sievers, ACH EARS program to increase awareness, understanding, and identification of children with deafblindness and to collaborate in a more meaningful approach in the support the family and child.
4. CAYSI is working with a child and their family in the development of a communication system using the Communication Matrix. By focusing on the strengths of the child, CAYSI is better able to address the needs of the family and the Little Rock Early Childhood Center the child attends. Center staff members attended the training at Easterseals Outreach Center in March.

- **Educational Technical Assistance**

1. CAYSI is working intensively with 14 students in four different districts. Twelve teachers and several additional individuals who serve the students participated in two trainings. The first training addressed educational strategies and assessing communication skills and helped participants progress in their ability to understand their students' communication attempts. During the second training, a national deafblind consultant presented on accessing the general education curriculum using NCDB's Literacy website. The last training will focus on transition throughout the years but has been postponed due to school closures. Because of the postponement, CAYSI provided the educational teams with materials that will be helpful during annual reviews and offered one on one assistance as needed via phone conference or zoom. All of the students' parents have been informed and invited to these trainings. Some have joined the trainings and two parents told their stories to the participants.
2. CAYSI is working intensively with other Arkansas Collaborative Consultants and an education team, including a parent, to improve communication for a student with multiple, complex communication needs.
3. CAYSI is working intensively with an education team, including a parent, to improve the outcomes for a student. CAYSI has met the team 3 times and has another meeting scheduled soon.
4. Through the encouragement of our OSEP Officer, Susan Weigart, CAYSI is participating in the National Community of Practice for Project Core. CAYSI is learning more about how certain children with deafblindness—specifically those with significant cognitive impairment who are not proficient communicators—will respond to instruction in the use of Universal Core Vocabulary. We have identified three teachers of a deafblind child who might benefit from Core Vocabulary instruction. We have also included education consultants from ESVI and Easterseals Outreach in this CoP. During the monthly CoP call, our goal is to review and implement of Project Core's universal core vocabulary (<http://www.project-core.com/>) and to provide feedback about participating student progress, successes, and challenges.