

## **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 2021**

- Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI) currently has two hundred fifty-two students (252) on its registry. In this quarter, eleven new referrals were received and ten students were found eligible for services. There are twenty-six referrals outstanding.
- CAYSI grant initiative work in changing systems and building capacity in serving students and their families birth to 22 years
- CAYSI Grant cycle year three ended on Feb 28, 2021. CAYSI is in the process of completing the Annual Progress Report.

### **Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School**

1. Family Futures Planning Days for CAYSI parents was conducted by Zoom in February. This consisted of twelve hours of work. Four families were successful in learning more about transition and their role in the process, thinking about the future, and making action plans that aligned with their family goals. Six transition agencies supported CAYSI and the families through this process. They included Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division Services for the Blind, The Center for Exceptional Families, Helen Keller National Center, and iCanConnect communications distribution for deafblind agency.
2. CAYSI Transition Pilot Program continues. In collaboration with Arkansas Transition Services, action plans are being worked on from the Person Centered Planning meetings for seven CAYSI students, families, and their educational team. Additional participation and collaboration with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind to provide Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) has increased support for our students. Continued follow-up, collaboration, and planning will be provided for the seven students with the aforementioned team and the Deafblind Interagency Transition Team meeting scheduled April 1, 2021.
3. Arkansas and four other state deafblind programs are planning a virtual family preparation for the Southeast Transition Institute. Two Arkansas families will be connecting with each other and preparing for the 2022 Transition Institute planned for June, 2022 in Florida.

### **Family Engagement**

1. Fourteen home visit calls were conducted along with technical assistance via Zoom that were in the areas of transition, communication, communication dictionary, object cues, and calendar systems, deafblindness and the impact on learning.
2. CAYSI parents gathered as a group via Zoom for monthly support since January, 2021. Parent support ranges from newly diagnosed issues, grief, integrating into the community, educational and residential placement, self-care, and family leadership.
3. F2FC facilitator mentor meetings were held in February. Arkansas has one parent who is a trained parent facilitator for one of the groups and four other parents participate. The CAYSI Family Consultant continues to facilitate the monthly extended family group meetings and presented for two parent groups on mindful self-compassion and the importance of transition planning.

4. The second session of Family Story Time via Zoom was conducted by Gwyn McCormack, of Britain. In collaboration with the Southeast Deafblind State projects, Six CAYSI parents participated and were sponsored by CAYSI.

### **Educational Technical Assistance**

1. The first person in Arkansas to participate in the Intervener project through The National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) has received the Intervener Certification.
2. Technical assistance was conducted on-site and virtually for 22 students in Magnolia, Pocahontas, Fort Smith, Sherwood, Harmony Grove, Heber Springs, Greers Ferry, Siloam Springs, Fayetteville, Lowell, Dewitt, ASB, and Marion.
3. Intensive work was done with six educational teams in the CAYSI Transition Pilot Program to support the production of Person Centered Plans and action steps for their students. The plans included action steps such as socialization with peers, researching options for college and/or career, skill building needs, independent living skills needed, expanding choices made by the student rather than the family or educators, needs and abilities in assistive technology and communication, and connecting with agencies for adult services.
4. CAYSI started a collaborative group for the development of a system of support for communication and literacy for students with deafblindness. The group consisted of stakeholders from the University of Arkansas, Henderson State University, Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI), Education Audiology/Speech Resources (EARS), Easterseals Arkansas OPTS, Arkansas Hands and Voices, Brain Injury Services, Families for Children with Deafblindness, AR School for the Deaf, and DESE Special Education Unit's Early Childhood Representative.