

**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), January 2020**

- CAYSI and Easterseals Outreach conducted two of the five proposed trainings for the school year on *Serving Students with Multiple Disabilities and Dual Sensory Impairments*.
- CAYSI provided two breakout presentations at the Arkansas Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference. The first presentation was *Communication Throughout the Day* with Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI), and the second was *We Can Do So Much!* with Easterseals Outreach.
- CAYSI currently has 229 students on its registry. In this quarter, CAYSI received 20 new referrals. Three students were found eligible for services during this quarter. Thirty-seven referrals are outstanding.
- CAYSI has provided initial home visits to families in Batesville, Fort Smith, Hot Springs, Conway, Little Rock, Rogers, Pine Bluff, and Springdale. Two parent groups met in Siloam Springs and Osceola, as well as, the family leadership group (Arkansas Empowering Families with Deaf-blindness).
- CAYSI provided school consultations in Ashdown, Batesville, Cabot, Benton, Lake Hamilton, Fort Smith, Little Rock, and Maumelle.

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. Communication via a Commissioner's Memo and a letter to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) was sent out on January 2, 2020, to ensure Arkansas is identifying students with deaf-blindness as well as updating the existing student data on the deaf-blind registry.
- **Transitioning Students with Deaf-blindness out of High School**
 1. Work has begun for Family Futures Planning Days, to be conducted March 14, 2020, and April 11, 2020, in collaboration with Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas Rehabilitative Services, Division Services of the Blind, and individuals from the Provider-led Arkansas Shared Savings Entity (PASSE) system under DHS.
 2. Planning has begun for the Transition Institute for Young Adults who are Deaf-blind (SETI), which will be held June 25-28 in Jackson, Mississippi. CAYSI hopes to sponsor two students and their families as well as two Deaf-blind interpreters in continued collaboration with University of Arkansas Little Rock (UALR). The interpreters will join CAYSI staff for the weekend.
 3. CAYSI staff are also involved in the National Center for Deaf-blindness' (NCDB) monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) in learning more about the systems at a national and state level, and how each state can integrate into these systems to better transition young adults into the community of employment.
 4. The Deaf-blind Interagency Team, including CAYSI, the Helen Keller Nation Center, Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas Rehabilitative Services, Division Services of the Blind, and Goodwill Industries have two planning meetings scheduled. The team is working to build a seamless process of transitioning and providing the necessary supports and longer-term services for integrative employment of our young adults. In addition, planning is continuing for ongoing trainings and collaboration in making changes for young adults with deaf-blindness.
 5. CAYSI presented a session on deaf-blindness and inclusive practices for making transition successful for our students at Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Education (CADRE) conference hosted by Arkansas Transition Services.

- **Family Engagement**

1. CAYSI is part of a leading team of state deaf-blind programs in providing 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.
2. Two parents shared their stories to educators during the *Moving Mountains* training day.
3. Follow up and training for parent facilitators continues to be provided for the national Family to Family Communities monthly calls.
4. Arkansas Empowering Families of Deaf-blindness (AEFD) now has a website, Facebook page, brochures and membership applications available. Board members are promoting the family leadership organization and working toward collaboration with other agencies who share similar goals of empowering families of children with disabilities.

- **Early Intervention**

1. CAYSI presented to the Infant Hearing Program- Department of Health Services, on the identification of dual sensory impairment and strategies and techniques for increasing communication and learning.
2. CAYSI is involved in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) with other state deaf-blind projects and National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) in understanding how to integrate into the Early Hearing Detection for Infants (EHDI) and the Hands & Voices chapters.
3. CAYSI connected with Title V, Chronic Healthcare for Children (CHC) to better understand the system and referral process since PASSE.

- **Educational Technical Assistance**

1. CAYSI provided an in-service to a school team for three students with Deaf-blindness.
2. CAYSI is working intensively with four districts, reaching 14 students, 12 teachers, and several additional individuals who serve the students. The participants have received two trainings. The first training addressed educational strategies and assessing communication skills and gaining progress in their ability to understand their students' communication attempts. During the second training, a national deaf-blind consultant presented on accessing the general education curriculum using NCDB's Literacy website. The last training will be on transition throughout the years. 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.
3. Through the encouragement of our Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Officer, Susan Weigart, CAYSI is participating in the National Community of Practice (CoP) for Project Core. CAYSI is learning more about how certain children with deaf-blindness—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 deaf-blind 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 try out the implementation of Project Core's Universal Core Vocabulary (<http://www.project-core.com/>) and to provide feedback about participating student progress, successes and challenges.