

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), July 2021

Highlights

- Children And Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI) submitted the 2020 Deafblind Child count to the National Center on Deafblindness (NCDB) with 209 students reported. In this quarter, five new referrals were received. Five students were found eligible for services during this quarter. There are twenty-five referrals outstanding.
- CAYSI submitted the annual performance report, year three of the five year grant.
- In collaboration with the Helen Keller National Center's Southeast Deafblind Region, CAYSI planned and conducted three presentations focused on family-centered work. Parents told their stories reflecting on the perspectives of: Dads, Early Years, and Transition.
- CAYSI participated as a vendor in the virtual Family Bistro Conference, Parent Advisory Council for Children's Medical Services.
- CAYSI is planning, with the help of a multicultural company, to provide a Spanish speaking video to increase understanding of CAYSI program and services as a part of providing equity, inclusion and cultural competence to Arkansas' population of vulnerable families.

Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School

CAYSI Transition Pilot Program continues. Continued follow-up, collaboration, and planning have been provided for seven students who are considered DeafBlind. DeafBlind Interagency Transition Team continues to meet to improve the quality and support needed to prepare our families and students for successful work outside of high school. NCDB and CAYSI are exploring the capacity and need for technical assistance and training of transition school teams and Pre-Employment Transition Services counselors in the area of exploration of career activities that would lead to Customized Employment.

Family Engagement

1. Four home visits were conducted by phone or face-to-face. CAYSI parents continue to gather as a group on Zoom for monthly support. Parent support ranges from newly diagnosed issues, grief, integrating into the community, educational and residential placement, self-care, and family leadership.
2. F2FC facilitator mentor meetings were held in May to close out year six of the program and begin recruitment for parent facilitators and parents for year seven, beginning in the fall of 2021.
3. CAYSI is planning and recruiting approximately five Arkansas families and their children for a seven-session virtual Family Storytime beginning July 15.
4. In preparation for the DeafBlind Summit, Arkansas will be presenting on family engagement and CAYSI's work during Covid and transitioning out of Covid.
5. CAYSI will also be presenting on equity, inclusion, and cultural competency as a session at the virtual Deafblind Summit in July and in collaboration with the Professional Learning Community NCDB leads with several other deafblind states.

Educational Technical Assistance- last Quarter's

1. Technical assistance was conducted on-site and virtually for 12 students in Bigelow, Maumelle, Fort Smith, Batesville, Quitman, Arkansas School for the Deaf, Marion, and Strong.
2. CAYSI completed the Communication Matrix assessment and report with two educational teams to help them develop a communication plan. The teams met with CAYSI to complete the assessment, review the data in the report, and determine what consistent steps are possible for the team to take with the student across all environments. CAYSI plans to continue this with educational teams who are in need during the 2021/2022 school year.
3. CAYSI's collaborative group for communication and literacy met three times. The group is currently working on a survey to send to schools who have students on the DeafBlind census to determine how their students are currently communicating and what types of services the students are receiving to address their complex communication challenges.
4. CAYSI is meeting with ESVI and Easterseals to offer training around the state during the upcoming school year to address the needs of students who are DeafBlind and to bring more awareness of deafblindness. The group will use this data to drive decisions for trainings needed around the state.
5. CAYSI is meeting with NCDB and other states for Professional development for providers of students with deafblindness. The group is discussing micro learning and how to utilize it to reach those who want training at small intervals.
6. CAYSI and ESVI made a presentation to Teachers of the Visually Impaired that was approved for the national Getting In Touch With Literacy conference later this year. The presentation, *Communication throughout the Day for Children and Youth with Dual Sensory Impairments*, will give attendees the knowledge of different calendar systems, the appropriate time to use them, and how to use them throughout the day for communication and literacy.
7. CAYSI is participating in the Cognitive Coaching training that was offered by the SPDG team. The skills learned in this 8-day training will be used when working with teachers and educational teams.