

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), October 2020

- CAYSI currently has 237 students on its registry. In this quarter, seven new referrals were received. Five students were found eligible for services during this quarter and 27 referrals are outstanding.
- CAYSI supported six families in a joint effort with 10 state deafblind programs, offering a live and virtual Family Story Time. Parents and their children have completed four of the eight sessions with United Kingdom's Gwyn McCormack from Positive Eye. CAYSI provided the supplies for each family to make experiential supplements to Gwyn's book during their session based on the needs of the children.
- CAYSI was invited to highlight their work in Arkansas at the virtual National Center on DeafBlindness (NCDB) 2020 DeafBlind Summit, *Efforts to Improve Transition Outcomes for Students Who are DeafBlind with Additional Disabilities*.

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

- **Transitioning Students with Deafblindness out of High School**
 1. The Helen Keller National Center, Arkansas Rehabilitative Services, and Division Services of the Blind, are working together to create a Youth Services Coordinator position for the state of Arkansas. This position will be a vendor specifically for transition-age youth that are considered deafblind, working towards work-based experiences prior to graduating from high school.
 2. The Deafblind Interagency Team has approved a transition pilot program for eight students and their families, tracking what works well, and what barriers there may be in order to create a high quality transition plan with work experiences for the student that is deafblind and has other disabilities.
 3. The 2021 Southeast Transition Institute (SETI) planning has begun among the Southeast deafblind state programs. It is scheduled for June 24 – 27, 2021, at the School for the Blind in Jackson, Mississippi.
- **Family Engagement**
 1. Home visits are being conducted by phone. Seven home visit calls were conducted along with technical assistance in the areas of communication, a broken hearing device, working through a second opinion to receive a cochlear implant, grief due to the loss of a child, Usher resources and Usher parent connection, and supporting the families in their decision to have their child go virtual or go back to school.
 2. The Family Consultant, in collaboration with the National Center on DeafBlind (NCDB) and the Helen Keller National Center Southeast Region of Deafblind states, presented two sessions: *Supporting Families with Complex Needs: A strengths-based Approach in Assessing and Empowering Families for a Good Life* and *Fostering Resiliency in Families: The Parent Perspective*. One of the three parents that presented their story as part of the presentation was from Arkansas.
 3. The Family to Family Communities program (F2FC) finished the COVID-19 family drop-in-calls in August. Eight parents from Arkansas had participated. The F2FC recruited for their 6th year of parent monthly calls that occur during the school year. Arkansas has a total of five families participating in the groups, including one parent who became trained as a parent facilitator of the group. The Family Consultant will

continue facilitating the Extended Family group and serve as a facilitator mentor and trainer to the groups.

4. CAYSI was represented as a vendor at the Family Bistro Virtual Conference and received multiple compliments on the video that showcased many of our students.

- **Educational Technical Assistance**

1. The first person in Arkansas to participate in the Intervener project through the NCDB has completed her portfolio for Intervener Certification and turned it in for review. We are awaiting the results.
2. CAYSI is collaborating with the Southeast Deafblind Projects to develop a workshop for people who are working on their intervener certification or needing to continue developing skills as current interveners.
3. CAYSI collaborated with Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI) to spread awareness to an early childhood center in Fort Smith. The presentation highlighted children who are at risk, the importance of reporting early in their lives, our services, resources, and strategies for children with dual sensory impairments. This resulted in three referrals.
4. CAYSI supported 15 participants for professional development in virtual teaching to students with dual sensory impairments from United Kingdom's Gwyn McCormack from Positive Eye. This professional development consisted of five 1-hour sessions. Each participant learned how they could teach their student virtually while keeping the child engaged. CAYSI received some positive feedback from the participants.
5. CAYSI presented with a panel of Arkansas Collaborative Consultants to participants at the LEA Academy. The session, *Working Collaboratively to Solve Complex Cases*, used a case study format to deconstruct complex student cases. The intent was to guide Special Education (SPED) supervisors and the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team on how to approach decision making around the complexities of a given student to plan for effective interventions.
6. Technical assistance has been conducted on-site and virtually for ten students in Brinkley, White Hall, Pine Bluff, Bryant, Lavaca, ASB, and ASD.