



BLIND EARLY SERVICES TN

Impact Report

FY 2022-23

July 1, 2021-June 30, 2023

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Introduction

Dear Friends, Families, Providers and Supporters,

Blind Early Services TN has had a great year of growth and expansion. We have continued to stay true to our mission of providing much-needed specialized services for families across the state of Tennessee while empowering, equipping and encouraging those families to provide their child with tools to thrive.

Now close to three years into our programming, we are proud to say that with the generous support of our state's early intervention system, grants from charitable foundations, and private donors we have been able to reach more families year over year and to increase awareness in our community, build relationships with schools and medical professionals, and most importantly, impact outcomes for young children who have vision impairments and/or multiple disabilities.

We have done so much, but as always, there is more work to be done to keep this impact going well into the future and to ensure BEST has a lasting and secure place in the Tennessee support service landscape. Like the two years prior, there are still children with vision impairments throughout our state yet to be identified; there are families and providers who do not yet know that a vision-specific early intervention agency is available in Tennessee; there is a shortage of specialized providers across the country and limited resources to ensure they are compensated appropriately. We are not and will not be deterred. Instead, we keep these challenges top of mind as we continue to expand our organization, reach and impact. We are so grateful for your support and hope you will continue to charge on with us every step of the way. The BEST is yet to come!



All the BEST,
Alison & Stacy

Alison Clougherty
Co-Founder
Executive Director Programs & Development

Stacy Cornwall
Co-Founder
Executive Director Finance & Administration

Our Mission

Our Mission

BEST was co-founded in 2020 by two moms on a mission. When our boys were born one year apart in Nashville with visual impairments, we each found ourselves looking for answers. What does the future look like for our sons? How do we raise a child with sensory loss? Who can help us ensure the best outcomes for our children? Unfortunately we then learned that despite vision impairment being listed under IDEA Part C, the support of a vision certified early intervention specialist was not easily available through our state early intervention system or even through private agencies. We have since learned exactly why - there is a nationwide shortage of Certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (CTVIs) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Instructors (COMS), and it is costly for these providers to contract directly within early intervention rather than school systems. Determined to find a lasting solution for families like ours in Tennessee, we founded BEST modeled after agencies in other states who successfully provide vision-specific early intervention services to families. We continue to strive to be THE agency to which families are referred for comprehensive support, services and high-quality resources as soon as they learn of their young child's vision loss or impairment.



*Services should be specific
to a child's needs and it is
all of our responsibility to
do anything it takes to
meet those needs*

Our 2022-23 Goals

1

Support families of children ages 0-4 with blindness or low vision across the state with individualized, direct support services.

2

Grow our team of certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs), certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) and VIISA-trained developmental therapists, Early Interventionists of the Visually Impaired (EIVIs) to meet the identified needs in our state

3

Expand our comprehensive and customized programs to further parent connections, advocate for families, and continue to provide high-quality services directly to families at home or in the community.

4

Continue to Increase awareness of our organization and build new relationships within the educational and medical communities while demonstrating our value.

Our Strategy & Programs

To achieve our goals and to provide the BEST possible services to families, we have stayed true to our successful service model that combines the expertise and experience of CTVIs and COMS with the passion and child development knowledge of early interventionists. We bring VIISA (Vision Impaired Inservice In America) training and certification to already established early interventionists and support them through the collaboration, ongoing training and supervision of a master's level vision provider.

We continue to implement our three distinct programs: BEST Start, BEST Together and BEST Advocate.

PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME
BEST Start	In-home early intervention services by CTVIs, COMS and DTs/EIVIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In our final year of a 3-year grant/EIRA contract with Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) alongside a vendor contract for vision services • Served 231 families in 2022-23
BEST Together	Family / Caregiver support, connection and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a private Facebook group for BEST families • Released monthly episodes of the BEST Together podcast • Provide information through a monthly newsletter and social media • Offer a lending library of braille books, tactile toys and free sensory spaces
BEST Advocate	Caregiver training and transition support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided our quarterly transition webinar training called, "What Happens After Early Intervention" with the help of parent, advocate and special education attorney, Erin Richardson • Attended numerous transition meetings and supported the writing of IEP goals

159

New referrals
(combined DT and VS)

The Year in Numbers

30

Sensory spaces and
resonances boards
delivered to families

160

Families provided
developmental therapy
(DT and/or EIVI)



13

Certified TVIs / O&Ms
on staff/contracted to
serve families

2,864

direct service hours /
home visits

31

Counties served

5

Early Interventionists
hired and VIISA trained
to become EIVIs

1512

BEST Together Podcast
Episode Plays

231

Total families served

4

Parent Advocacy
Trainings / Webinars
Conducted

10

BEST Together Podcast
Episodes Published



130

Families provided vision
services (TVI/O&M)

Financial Data

REVENUE

State Grant & Contract	\$386,583
Contributions	\$161,206
Special Events	\$38,722
Private Grants	\$34,894
In-Kind Contributions	\$21,583
Program Service	\$1,780
Total Revenue	\$644,768

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$482,271
General & Administrative	\$66,165
Fundraising	\$28,784
Total Expenses	\$577,220

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$182,311
Temporarily Restricted	\$11,106
Ending Net Assets	\$193,417

Cost summary

\$95/session  *\$170/session*  *\$75/session*
Average Income Average Cost Your contribution

Our Contributors in 2022-23

- Community Foundation of Middle TN
- Francis H. Clougherty Charitable Trust
- The Predators Foundation
- Richard and Anne Lafferty
- Anne and David Propst
- Corey and Ashley Lafferty
- Patricia Wright
- Barrett and Meredith Esarey
- Catherine Summers
- Joseph and Dorothy Clougherty
- Tim and Natalie Mohan
- Vicki Clark
- Gail Cothron
- Fran Lusby
- Michael and Kathleen Dooling
- Irene Williams
- Aaron and Christa Skotland
- Mark Immerfall
- Alex and Kellie Davie
- Patricia Greene
- Martie and Ed Weatherman
- Bruce and Julia Lawing
- Anita Henderson
- David Suchanik
- Adam Goodman
- Lori Schmidt
- Julie Carpenter
- Brandy Ehrif
- Adriane Wynn
- Coffi Bell and Brandon Corbin
- Annettee and Andy Poindexter
- Brandy Neely
- Tom and Kelsey Heeren
- Sandra Zaccari
- Jason and Mellissa Mitchell
- Franco Recchia
- Edith Propst
- Mark Rubino
- Kevin Barber
- April and Dave Wyatt
- Bob Brunner
- Patrick and Stefani Waters
- Bonnie and Eric Young
- Lindsay Stone
- Sarah Immerfall
- Amy McDonald
- Callie Boyette
- Cyrus and Anne Farhanfi
- Rip and Erika Young
- Kathy Thompson
- Jeffrey Phelps
- Lyndsay and John Hayden
- Kristen Camplin
- Yvonne Cheek
- Meredith and Marc Burns
- Kenneth Propst
- Angelica Ybarra
- Darren Pultney
- Christian Toone
- Lindsay Desautels
- Beth Soltow
- Judy Sperro King
- Max Reniers
- The Hynes Family Fund
- Kathleen Regan
- Mary Prescott
- Joseph and Annie Clougherty
- Irene Williams
- Kathleen White
- Josh and Cherise Clifton
- Karri Ellen Johnson
- Grant Clark
- Katherine Buccarelli
- Trevor and Callie Wolke
- Amanda Brummett
- Alesha Williams
- Karin and David Beard
- Christine Carpenter
- Megan Piccini

We thank you for your continued support of our mission and programs!

Staff and Board of Directors

Officers

- Alison Clougherty, President
- Stacy Cornwall, Secretary
- Brandy Neely, Treasurer
- Sandra Zaccari, Chairman

Staff

- Alison Clougherty, Executive Director of Programs & Development, CTVI
- Stacy Cornwall, Executive Director of Finance & Administration
- LeeAnn McWhorter, CTVI
- Patience Piesecki, CTVI
- Genie Velasquez, CTVI / COMS
- Joanna Credeur, CTVI / COMS
- Amy Shore, CTVI / COMS
- Mandy Yates, COMS
- Jessica Mantz, CTVI
- Tina Schlipp, CTVI
- Sloan Shaw, CTVI
- Cindy Adkins, CTVI/COMS
- Wendy Morrison, CTVI/COMS
- Larisa DeZayas, COMS
- Rachel Pace, DT / EIVI
- Alycia Snowden, DT / EIVI
- Krystal Gilreath, DT / EIVI
- Catherine Saig, DT / EIVI
- Emily Melton, DT/EIVI

Board Members

- Anita Henderson
- Martie Lafferty
- Lyndsay Hayden
- Michelle Quinn

Advisory Board Members

- Dr. Robbin Sinatra
- Rebecca Davis
- Melisa Matthews
- JP Williams

Blind Early Services TN (BEST)
725 Hill Road, Brentwood, TN 37027
United States
615-200-8006
www.blindearlyservices.org
info@blindearlyservices.org