

STARS

Step Ahead Recognition System



STARS is Vermont's quality recognition system for child care, preschool, and afterschool programs. Programs that participate in STARS are stepping ahead – going above and beyond state regulations to provide professional services that meet the needs of children and families.

How STARS works:

Regulated early childhood and afterschool programs apply for points in one or more of the five arenas of quality.

- Regulatory history
- Staff qualifications and annual Professional development
- Families and Communities
 - Program practices
 - Administration

There are three to five points possible in each arena. Providers identify the points their program is eligible to earn based on their specific achievements. The point total determines the star level.

1 – 4 points = ★

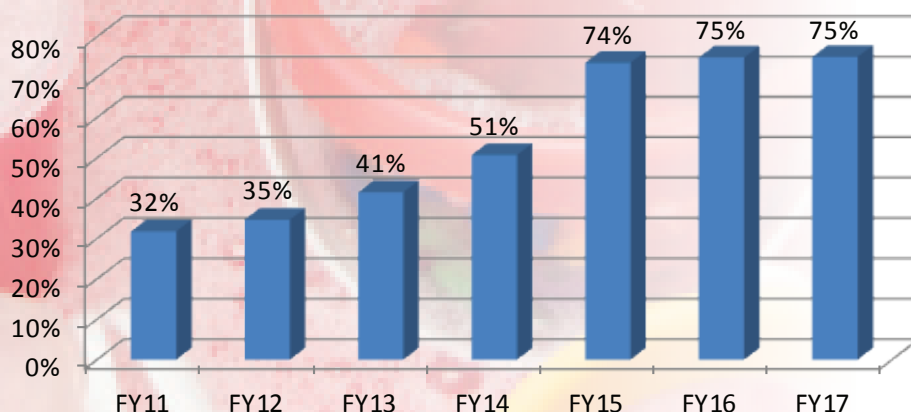
5 – 8 points = ★★

9 – 11 points = ★★★

12 – 14 points = ★★★★

15 – 17 points = ★★★★★

Percentage of Programs Participating in STARS by State Fiscal Year



Standards in STARS have been jointly developed by the Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families and the Agency of Education.

How Does a Regulated Program Achieve STARS?*

Arena	No Points Requested	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	Total Points
Regulatory History	In regulatory compliance	Operated as a regulated program for 12 months to 35 months with no serious or reoccurring violations	Operated as a regulated program for 36 months to 59 months with no serious or reoccurring violations	Operated as a regulated program for 60 months or more with no serious or reoccurring violations			
Staff Qualifications	In compliance with Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations for staff training and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have an individual professional development plan <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> Score based on achievements in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course work Experience Annual Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a individual professional development plan <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> Score based on achievements in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course work Experience Annual Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a individual professional development plan <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> Score based on achievements in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course work Experience Annual Training 			
Families and Communities	In compliance with Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations for working with families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a family satisfaction survey Create a plan based on what was learned from the family satisfaction survey Have a written philosophy on relationships with families Share community information & resources with families Do some professional networking activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for one point Have social & education events for families Have opportunities for families to be involved in the program Be an approved Specialized Child Care Provider Refer families to community supports as needed 	Criteria for one and two points <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Strengthening Families Child Care Assessment Tool Develop a Strengthening Families program improvement plan <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a leadership statement Do leadership activities Professional reference about your leadership role 			
Program Practices	In compliance with Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations for program practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do an evaluation of the program using an approved tool Develop a program improvement plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a trained mentor do an evaluation of the program using an approved tool Develop a program improvement plan Do child observations Use child observations to plan curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a independent assessor evaluate the program using an approved tool. Achieve a specific score Develop a program improvement plan Do child observations Use child observations to plan curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a independent assessor evaluate the program using an approved tool. Achieve a specific score Develop a program improvement plan Do child observations Use child observations to plan curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have national accreditation Program improvement plan Do child observations Use child observations to plan curriculum 	
Administration	In compliance with Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations for administrating a child care program.	Family Homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a written agreement or contract Licensed Centers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy about planning individual professional development and benefits and salary scale 	Family Homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for one point Policy on program closures Professional membership Licensed Centers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for one point Staff breaks policy 	Family Homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for one & two points Parent handbook Liability insurance Written budget Licensed Centers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for one & two points Wage at least 85% of the livable wage 			