



# **Early Childhood Licensed Programs**

## **STARS Application**

STARS is Vermont's Step Ahead Recognition System for Child Care, Early Education, and Afterschool Programs, and is a quality initiative of the Child Development Division, the Department of Children and Families, the Agency of Human Services, and the Agency of Education.

# STARS Application Contents

- Completing the application.....3
- How star levels are earned .....4
- Application Cover Pages..... 5–8
- Regulatory History Arena.....9
- Staff Qualifications and Annual Professional Development Arena..... 10–16
- Families and Community Arena ..... 17–23
- Program Practices Arena..... 24–27
- Administration Arena (*except Public School Operated Pre-K*) ..... 28–30
- Administration Arena for Public School Operated Pre-K Only ..... 31–32

## Completing the application

**PLEASE NOTE:** This application is **ONLY** for licensed homes and center based childcare and preschool programs. Organizations that operate multiple licensed sites or programs will need to submit an application for *each* licensed site or program.

### New STARS applicants

Welcome to STARS and congratulations on your achievements thus far! To enter your program into the STARS system, complete and submit this application according to your *current* program practices and achievements. Once the application process is complete you will receive a three-year certificate. Programs must submit an annual report each year to maintain STARS status. Additional points can be added at this time as more achievements and activities become part of the program. The STARS process is meant to be ongoing. Planning program improvements and implementing them over time as well as keeping records of current activities and practices will make the process most effective.

### Existing STARS participants

This form should be used to renew your STARS status upon the expiration of your three-year certificate. It may also be used to increase your star level before your annual report is due, otherwise known as an early update.

### Tips for submitting the application

- Group application materials by arena.
- Clearly identify the documents supporting each arena. Use the boxes in the application to check what has been achieved and to indicate that appropriate documentation is included.
- Binders or special presentation materials are not needed or recommended.
- Applications should be signed and submitted with all supporting documents and mailed to: **STARS - MJCC, 81 Water Street, Middlebury, VT 05753**
- Please keep a copy of your application for your records.

## How star levels are earned

There are five arenas in which points can be earned. The points from these arenas are then added together to determine the star level.

### ARENAS

Regulatory History .....	1 to 3 possible points
Staff Qualifications and Annual Professional Development ....	1 to 3 possible points
Families and Community.....	1 to 3 possible points
Program Practices .....	1 to 5 possible points
Administration .....	1 to 3 possible points

### STAR LEVEL

1 Star Program .....	1 to 4 points total
2 Star Program .....	5 to 8 points total
3 Star Program .....	9 to 11 points total
4 Star Program .....	12 to 14 points total
5 Star Program .....	15 to 17 points total

### Need assistance or have questions?

Call the STARS coordinators at **(802) 398-2037** or email [stars@mjcvt.org](mailto:stars@mjcvt.org)

### To learn more about STARS please visit:

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/childcare/providers/stars>



## Application Cover Pages for Early Childhood Licensed Programs

STARS certificate #

OR

This is my first STARS application and  
I do not yet have a STARS certificate #

### Affirmation

*I certify that the information contained in this full application is true and correct. I understand that if any information contained in this application for the STARS program is found to be incorrect, that this application shall be voided and any certificate awarded shall be rescinded.*

Signature of program representative

Date

### Contact Information

Program Name (as it appears on CDD license)

Contact Name

Position (director, coordinator, principal, etc.)

Director, owner or principal name (if not above)

Mailing Address (Street, City, State, Zip Code)

Town where facility is located

County

Phone number(s)

Email (for STARS correspondence)

## Points Requested

The points requested should reflect the information supplied in the following pages. To earn points in a particular arena, you must complete that section of the application and submit it along with the appropriate documentation.

Arena	Number of Points Requested
Regulatory History   1–3 points	
Staff Qualifications and Professional Dev.   1–3 points	
Families and Community   1–3 points	
Program Practices   1–5 points	
Administration   1–3 points	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	

## Star Level Requested

Based on the total points above, please use the information below to determine the appropriate star level to request.

**STAR LEVEL REQUESTED:**

### STAR LEVEL

- 1 Star Program ..... 1 to 4 points total
- 2 Star Program ..... 5 to 8 points total
- 3 Star Program ..... 9 to 11 points total
- 4 Star Program ..... 12 to 14 points total
- 5 Star Program ..... 15 to 17 points total

## Background and Statistical Information

**Regulatory Status:**      Licensed Center      Licensed Home

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License Number

Date first licensed

### Program Affiliation

NAEYC      Head Start      YMCA      Waldorf      Montessori  
 Religious      Other \_\_\_\_\_      No affiliation

### Business Entity

Independent/sole proprietor      C Corporation, S Corporation or LLC  
 Not for profit corporation: 501 (c)(3)      Partnership or LLP  
 Public school      Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

### Type of program offered during regular operation

Full day only (over 5 hours)      Full and part day  
 Part day only      Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

### Days and Hours of Operation

Days regularly open:      MON      TUE      WED      THU      FRI      SAT      SUN

Hours of operation: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (please indicate AM/PM)

Do you offer more than one session per day?      YES      NO

Do you offer additional hours on school vacations?      YES      NO

### This program is best described as:

Open year round      Open during school year only  
 Open in summer only      Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

## Enrollment and Funding Information

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of children enrolled in program

\_\_\_\_\_ Typical number of children attending on a given day

In the chart below, enter the number of children enrolled, both full and part time, in the indicated categories. Some children will fall in more than one category.

	<b>Infant</b> (up to 23 mos.)	<b>Toddler</b> (24–35 mos.)	<b>Preschool</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>School Age</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> grade – 15 years)
<b>TOTAL # OF ENROLLED CHILDREN IN EACH AGE GROUP</b>					
Current number of children with families paying regular tuition/fees (receiving no other support)					
Current number of children enrolled through a public preschool partnership or because the program is a public school managed preschool	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>		<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Current number of children funded through scholarships					
Current number of children receiving Child Care Financial Assistance (subsidy)					
Current number of children receiving Head Start/Early Head Start funding					

# Regulatory History Arena for Early Childhood Licensed Programs

**1–3  
POSSIBLE POINTS**

Check *one* of the statements below and, if the second statement is checked, indicate the number of points requested.

**NO POINTS REQUESTED**

\_\_\_\_\_ (#) **POINTS REQUESTED.** The program is in compliance and the number of points requested in the Regulatory History Arena of STARS reflects the program’s documented history and that it meets the required criteria as described below.

**IMPORTANT:** The program must have a visit from a Child Development Division (CDD) Licensing Field Specialist or Licensing Supervisor within two years of the day of the STARS application. Licensing will be notified by the STARS Coordinators if a licensing visit is needed.

## FOR 1 POINT, 2 POINTS or 3 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Regulatory History Standards

- Program is in full compliance with Vermont Child Care Regulations and has not exhibited a pattern of non-compliance.\* Previous violations have been corrected as noted in the Bright Futures Information System.
- A licensing visit has been conducted within the past two years.

The program has had no serious violations in the past:	The program has been in operation and licensed for:	Point Level Earned
12 months	0–35 months	1 POINT
36 months	36–59 months	2 POINTS
60+ months (5 years)	60+ months (5 years)	3 POINTS

### What to submit for verification

Signed Application (pages 5–8) and Regulatory History Arena (page 9)

A STARS Coordinator will confirm with CDD that the program has been in operation for the required number of months, that no serious violations have occurred in this time period, and that there is not a pattern of non-compliance.\*

*\*Non-compliance has been defined as “when there is an increased number of licensing visits with repeated systemic violations with immediate and/or direct impact on the health, safety, and development of children OR three or more violations with similarities that indicate a systemic pattern of non-compliance over time.*

# Staff Qualifications and Annual Professional Development Arena for Early Childhood Licensed Programs

**1–3  
POSSIBLE POINTS**

Check *one* of the statements below and, if the second statement is checked, indicate the number of points requested.

**NO POINTS REQUESTED**

\_\_\_\_\_ (#) **POINTS REQUESTED.** Documentation submitted meets the criteria for the requested number of points.

*If you are requesting points in this arena, please check one of the following statements.*

- Individual Professional Development Plans\* (IPDPs) and all other professional development documentation to support the information on the worksheet have been submitted.
- Staff professional development information has been verified and entered into BFIS by Northern Lights. Staff IPDPs have been entered into BFIS.

Contact the Northern Lights Career Development Center at [Professional.development@ccv.edu](mailto:Professional.development@ccv.edu) if you would like further information about ensuring that BFIS has all the required professional development information to support your program's point level request.

*\* An IPDP means a current (updated within a year), personalized plan for increasing one's knowledge and improving skills in the field of early care and education or afterschool services. It includes assessing current knowledge and skills in each of the core knowledge areas required to work in the field; identifying areas for growth and learning; stating specific measurable professional goals based on these areas of growth, with related strategies, resources, and a timeline to meet each goal. Sample IPDP format and information can be found at: [northernlightscdc.org](http://northernlightscdc.org)*

## FOR 1 POINT, 2 POINTS or 3 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Staff Qualifications Standards

- All teaching staff members and/or the registrant have an updated IPDP or a statement of annual professional development goals.
- Documentation of degrees/professional development must be submitted with application *except* when it is all verified and in BFIS.
- Staff Qualifications Worksheet on pages 12–13 documenting a program score of:

0.31 to 1.3 = 1 POINT | 1.31 to 2.3 = 2 POINTS | 2.31 to 3.0 = 3 POINTS

### What to submit for verification

- Current (updated within a year) IPDPs for all staff. Public school teachers may submit their approved annual professional development goals in place of an IPDP.
- Documentation of degrees/professional development for all staff *OR* certification that it is all verified and in BFIS.
- Completed Staff Qualifications Worksheet documenting a program score of:

0.31 to 1.3 = 1 POINT | 1.31 to 2.3 = 2 POINTS | 2.31 to 3.0 = 3 POINTS

# Staff Qualifications Worksheet

This worksheet assigns a numerical value to educational level, experience in the field and hours of participation in relevant professional development.

Staff members to be included are those individuals responsible for planning, implementing and/or evaluating the program’s curriculum (e.g. teachers, teaching assistants, classroom aides, paraprofessionals, and program administrators).

1. Use Charts A, B and C on pages 14–16 to determine a score for all teaching and/or program staff. Additional copies of this chart may be added to your application as needed.
2. Add the scores in columns A, B and C for each staff member listed.
3. Convert the score(s) using chart D on page 16.
4. To calculate the point level in this arena, add all of the converted staff scores together from Column D, and then divide by the number of staff (see bottom of page 13). Refer to chart E on page 16 to determine the point level.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A+B+C</b>	<b>D</b>
Names of teaching staff	Score for Educational Attainment	Score for Professional Development	Score for Experience	Total Individual Score	Converted Score
<b>Total from Column D</b> (Add all of the converted staff scores and carry over to following page) →					



## Chart A: Educational Attainment

Score	Education
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Lights Career Ladder Level I Certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>Fundamentals for Early Childhood Professionals course (or NL approved equivalent) <i>OR</i></li> <li>On-the-Job Training Certificate (for afterschool staff) <i>OR</i></li> <li>Afterschool Essentials Certificate</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Lights Career Ladder Level II Certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>Current CDA credential <i>OR</i></li> <li>12 related college credits <i>OR</i></li> <li>Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Lights Career Ladder Level IIIA Certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>Certificate of Completion of Registered Child Care Apprenticeship <i>OR</i></li> <li>21 related credits in at least two of the VT core knowledge areas <i>OR</i></li> <li>CCV Child Care Certificate</li> </ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Lights Career Ladder Level IIIB Certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>Early Childhood Family Mental Health Credential <i>OR</i></li> <li>Program Director Credential Step 3 <i>OR</i></li> <li>Associates degree in a related field, or associates degree with 21 related credits in at least 3 VT core knowledge areas</li> </ul>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Lights Level IVA Certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>Bachelor degree in related field <i>OR</i></li> <li>Bachelor degree with 30 related college credits in at least three of the VT core knowledge areas</li> </ul>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Lights Level IVB Certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>Educator license with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education or Early Childhood Special Education or Elementary Education <i>OR</i></li> <li>For afterschool programs only: an educator license in any area of endorsement</li> </ul>
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Lights Level V or VI certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>Master's Degree or PhD in related field</li> </ul>

### Northern Lights Levels

Descriptions of levels and applications for certificates can be found on the Northern Lights website:  
<http://northernlightscdc.org>  
 under "Career Pathways"

### College Degrees and Related Fields

To be eligible, the degree earned must reflect a major or concentration in one of the following fields:

- Early Childhood Education
- Child or Human Development
- Child and Family Studies (including home economics)
- Elementary Education
- Special Education

### Related Credits

Related credits are college courses that must earn a grade of C- or higher and directly relate to one or more of the Early Childhood or Afterschool Core Knowledge Areas:

- Child and Youth Development
- Curriculum/Teaching and Learning
- Healthy and Safe Environments
- Partnering with Families and Communities
- Professionalism and Program Organization

**Important note:** All degrees and college coursework must be from an approved and accredited higher education institution. If you have any questions about this contact Northern Lights.

## Chart B: Professional Development *(in the past year)*

Score	Full-time Programs	Part-day/part-year programs
1	24–29 hours	18–20 hours
2	30–35 hours	21–23 hours
3	36–41 hours	24–29 hours
4	42–47 hours	30–35 hours
5	48 or more hours	36 or more hours

### Required criteria for professional development:

- Training approved by Northern Lights, including online trainings.\*
- Relevant to the person’s position or individual professional development plan (IPDP)
- Delivered by a qualified instructor who has demonstrated competence in the subject by being in the Northern Lights Instructor Registry, who has national recognition as an instructor, or whose position and qualifications are deemed appropriate by the STARS Coordinators.
- Documented. (Verified professional development and degree information in the individual’s BFIS account is strongly encouraged.)

*\*Possible exceptions:* Public school sponsored or affiliation-based trainings that meet these criteria as determined by the STARS Coordinators. If you have questions about whether a particular training qualifies, please contact the STARS Office.

### Professional development formats accepted:

Workshops, classes, conference sessions, college coursework and formal mentoring relationships *(no more than one-third of the total annual hours counted may be mentor meetings or other individualized instruction.)*

### Typical sponsors of professional development include:

Community Child Care Support Agencies, the Agency of Education, Head Start and Vermont Birth to Five. These and other approved trainings are listed in the Bright Futures Information System BFIS-Course Calendar.

**Chart C: Experience working in Early Childhood Education or another related field**

<b>Length of Experience (does not have to be continuous)</b>	<b>Score</b>
12 to 23 months	<b>1</b>
2 to 5 years	<b>2</b>
5 years or more	<b>3</b>

**Related Fields**

- Child or Human Development
- Child and Family Studies (including home economics)
- Elementary Education
- Special Education

**Chart D: Conversion Table**

<b>If the staff member's total individual score is:</b>	<b>Their converted score is:</b>
0–4	<b>0</b>
5–11	<b>1</b>
12–20	<b>2</b>
21–33	<b>3</b>

**Chart E: Program Points**

<b>If the staff's average converted score is:</b>	<b>The program's point level in the arena is:</b>
0–0.3	<b>Not Rated</b>
.31–1.3	<b>1</b>
1.31–2.3	<b>2</b>
2.31–3.0	<b>3</b>

# Families and Community Arena for Early Childhood Licensed Programs

**1–3  
POSSIBLE POINTS**

Check *one* of the statements below and, if the second statement is checked, indicate the number of points requested. Clearly label all Families and Community documentation and attach to this section of the application.

**NO POINTS REQUESTED**

\_\_\_\_\_ **(#) POINTS REQUESTED.** Documentation submitted meets the criteria for the requested number of points.

## 1 POINT

### Evidence to meet the Families and Communities Standards

- The program surveys families at least once a year, and uses information from the survey to improve the program. The survey includes questions on daily routines, curriculum, and program policies.
- A written philosophy regarding the relationship between the program and families, including the role of families in a child’s development and how programs support that role.
- The program has strategies to communicate with families, which they evaluate for efficacy.
- The program staff engages in professional networking activities. These are defined as activities where program staff has the opportunity to engage with other professionals in the field to share ideas, information, and professional knowledge.

### What to submit for verification

- A blank sample of the family survey and a summary of the results of the survey.
- A written philosophy on parent/family relationships with the program.
- A description of three communication strategies and a summary of their effectiveness.
- A list of four networking activities (see Table A on page 20) including the date, activity, name of the activity organizer or contact, and staff attendee.

## 2 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Families and Communities Standards

- The program has met the criteria for one point.
- The program encourages families to be involved in the program.
- The program provides at least three events for families to meet program staff and other families each year. Two events can be social in nature, and one of the three events must address topics related to children and families.
- The program must be a specialized care provider (this will be confirmed by the STARS Coordinators via BFIS) *OR* is a public school operated program that ensures all staff is trained in policies regarding the care of all children who are at-risk, have disabilities, have been abused or neglected, or are in the foster care system.
- The program maintains connections with the community to support and advocate for children, families or the profession.

### What to submit for verification

- The documentation for one point is submitted.
- A copy of the program policy describing how families are encouraged to be involved in the program. Typically this is addressed in the program handbook for families.
- The name, date and a brief description of each of the family events. Suggested documentation includes an event announcement, a family sign-up sheet, a photograph of the event, or an article describing the event.
- Specialized care provider agreements are confirmed by the STARS Coordinators via BFIS. Public school operated programs that do not have a specialized care provider agreement should submit documentation of staff training regarding the care of children who are at-risk, have special needs, have been abused, neglected and/or are in the foster care system.
- A list of at least three activities (see Table B on page 21) in which the program participated that supported maintaining connections with the community in support of families, children or the profession (see page 21 for example activities and evidence).

### 3 POINTS WITH A LEADERSHIP FOCUS

#### Evidence to meet the Families and Communities Standards

- The program has met the criteria for two points.
- The program has a written leadership philosophy that includes a description of leadership activities and how they are aligned with the leadership philosophy.
- The staff engages in leadership activities that support the childcare system and profession.

#### What to submit for verification

- The documentation for one and two points is submitted.
- A written leadership philosophy that includes a description of leadership activities and how they are aligned with the leadership philosophy.
- Documentation of six activities (Table C on page 22) where staff persons have engaged in leadership activities (see page 22 for examples).

### 3 POINTS WITH A STRENGTHENING FAMILIES FOCUS (instructions are on page 23)

#### Evidence to meet the Families and Communities Standards

- The program has met the criteria for two points.
- The program annually assesses their family strengthening practices using the Center for the Study of Social Policy Strengthening Families Program Self-Assessment. *See page 23 for detailed instructions on completing this assessment.*
- The program creates an Action Plan that identifies and supports areas of strength and outlines an approach to addressing areas that need improvement.

#### What to submit for verification

- The documentation for one and two points is submitted.
- Completion of the Strengthening Families Program Self-Assessment tool and a detailed description of the process used.
- A copy of the program's most-recent Action Plan.

## Table A: Professional Networking

Date	Professional Networking Activity	Contact Person for Activity	Name of staff attendee(s)

### Professional Networking Examples

- Provider or director network meetings
- Meetings with expert consultants, such as health consultants
- Conference attendance
- Families and Community related training
- Face-to-face mentoring (may count for up to two of the four activities)

**Table B: Community Support and Advocacy Activities**

Date	Activity	Example	Evidence

**Community Support and Advocacy Activities Examples**

*This list of examples is not exhaustive. If you have a question about an event or evidence to document your participation, call or email the STARS office for clarification at [stars@mjcvt.org](mailto:stars@mjcvt.org) or (802) 398-2037.*

Activity	Example	Evidence
Children in the program are involved in community service	Fundraise for charitable organization, donate to food shelf, participate in Green Up Day	Photo, written description, or article
Program participates in the CACFP		Copy of Day Care Home Application or online program agreement with AOE
Program staff receive formal mentoring	Apprenticeship, Vermont Birth to Five or VAEYC Quality Project mentoring	Copy of mentoring agreement or other verification from mentor agency
Children receive special services while attending the program	Service providers or special educators provide services to children while in attendance at the program	Meeting notes, description of services provided, sample dates and time of service
Participation in community activities on behalf of the program	Program participates in the community events like parades or Dabble Day.	Sign-up lists, planning meeting notes, photographs, narrative description, contact person
Attend recognition or advocacy events	Week of the Young Child, Let’s Grow Kids events or Alliance events, attend a conference	Copy of announcement, narrative description, photo

## Table C: Leadership Documentation

Please list six activities and provide documentation. This is in addition to activities already noted for two points.

Date	Activity	Example	Evidence

## Leadership Documentation Examples

The list of examples is not exhaustive. If you have a question about an event or evidence to document your participation, call or email the STARS office for clarification at [stars@mjcvt.org](mailto:stars@mjcvt.org) or (802) 398-2037.

Activity	Example	Evidence
Attending meetings of statewide or national organization.	Attending VAEYC, VCCPA or other statewide meetings, NAEYC, NAFCC or other national conferences	Copy of conference registration confirmation or receipt of registration payment
Supporting the Profession	Presenting at a statewide or regional meeting, keynote or workshop training	Copy of agenda or workshop schedule
	Teaching a college level course	Copy of course syllabus or course description
	Participating in the Instructor Registry	Copy of Instructor certificate
	Providing formal mentoring, participating in the MATCH registry	Copy of mentor agreement or MATCH certificate
Participate in statewide committees reviewing state policies/practices/grants	STARS Oversight, Evaluation, Blue Ribbon Commission	Copy of meeting notes or agenda
Legislative Advocacy	Testifying before a committee, representing Let's Grow Kids at a community or legislative event	Description of activity, photo, article
Author a professional article		Copy of table of contents for publication, or first page of article
Organize or host a community event, collaboration or initiative	Starting points or directors network leader, host professional conference or community event	Copy of event announcement, meeting notes, description of activities, photo

These instructions should be used to complete the Strengthening Families Focus for three points in the Families and Community Arena. *Your report to STARS will include a detailed description of the self-assessment process you used and a copy of the action plan.*

**Locating the program self-assessment tools**

Visit the Center for the Study of Social Policy website at: [www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org)

From the home page, go to the System Reform tab. Select the link for Strengthening Families and select the self-assessment that fits with your program. Looking into the resources on the website will help guide and inform the process for you.

**Completing the Self-Assessment**

1. Create a self-assessment team that represents a number of different perspectives at your program. You will include parents, direct service staff and administrative staff, depending on the type of program that is conducting the self-assessment. Home providers need only include yourself and parents as instructed on the self-assessment form.
2. Each member of the team should fill out the self-assessment form individually.
3. The team convenes to share and compare assessments. Each team member should have the chance to explain why they gave the rating they did. The team will make a final decision based on broad input.

**Completing the Action Plan**

1. The team will identify areas where the program scored highly.
2. Create a sustainability plan to make sure those areas stay strong. Specify key reasons for success, what needs to be done to ensure continued strength and who will be responsible for maintaining successful outcomes in the area.
3. Highlight the areas that a majority of the team rated as needing improvement.
4. Decide whether the practices needing improvement should be addressed immediately, over time, or not at all.
5. For the items that the team decides should be addressed immediately, teams should brainstorm plans to improve associated area outcomes, specifying the expected results, all resources, a timeline, who is responsible, check-in points and how and when longer term action steps will be addressed/implemented.

We encourage participants to spend time learning about Strengthening Families by accessing information from the website, which is a rich resource for providers. The STARS office also provides technical assistance with this process and can be reached at [stars@miccv.org](mailto:stars@miccv.org) or (802) 398-2037.

# Program Practices Arena for Early Childhood Licensed Programs

**1–5**  
**POSSIBLE POINTS**

Check *one* of the statements below and, if the second statement is checked, indicate the number of points requested. Clearly label all Program Practices documentation and attach to this section of the application.

**NO POINTS REQUESTED**

\_\_\_\_\_ (#) **POINTS REQUESTED.** Documentation submitted meets the criteria for the requested number of points.

## 1 POINT

### Evidence to meet the Program Practices Standards

- The program completes a self-assessment using one or more of the tools listed below. Use the chart to determine the correct assessment tool(s) for your program. Center based programs that serve infants and toddlers *and* preschool age children should use both the ITERS and the ECERS.
- The program completes a program improvement plan based on the findings of the assessment. Staff members provide input for and receive feedback on the assessment and related plan.

Assessment Tool	Program Type
Infant & Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS)	For programs with children ages birth – 30 months
Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)	For programs with children ages 2.5 – 5 years
Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS)	For licensed family child care programs

### What to submit for verification

- The “Profile” page from the assessment tool(s) dated within six months of this application (the Profile page is located at the end of the assessment booklet after the Score Sheets).
- A program improvement plan based on findings from the self-assessment.

## 2 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Program Practices Standards

- The program completes a self-assessment for one point (see previous page), and then works with an approved assessor who acts as a consultant to support the development and implementation of a program improvement plan. Staff members provide input for and receive feedback on the assessment and related plan. *Contact the STARS office to request an unscored assessment with an approved assessor. At this point level, no score is required; it is the process of becoming familiar with the tool and developing a plan that is important.*
- The program regularly uses observation and other forms of informal assessments (checklists, anecdotal notes, work samples, running records or pictures) to document children’s strengths, needs, interests and growth. The program maintains records of this documentation and utilizes the results of the ongoing system of assessment to inform curriculum planning.

### What to submit for verification

- The “Profile” page from the assessment tool(s) dated within six months of this application (the Profile page is located at the end of the assessment booklet after the Score Sheets).
- A verification form from the approved assessor who worked with the program. (This is submitted to the STARS office by the assessor after the unscored assessment.)
- A program improvement plan based on the results of the consultation.
- A description of how the program observes children and keeps records to support the observation process.
- Documentation of two different observations and how they were used to develop the curriculum.
- A summary of the results and planned changes to the program based on child observation.

## 3 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Program Practices Standards

- The program is evaluated by an approved assessor using the appropriate assessment tool(s) (refer to chart on page 24) and achieves a minimum score of 4.0. Staff members provide input during the evaluation process and receive feedback. The program submits a written improvement plan. *Contact the STARS office to request a scored assessment with an approved assessor.*
- The program regularly uses observation and other forms of informal assessments (checklists, anecdotal notes, work samples, running records or pictures) to document children’s strengths, needs, interests and growth. The program maintains records of this

documentation and utilizes the results of the ongoing system of assessment to inform curriculum planning.

#### What to submit for verification

- A verification form from the approved assessor who evaluated the program, indicating that a minimum score of 4.0 was achieved using the assessment tool(s). (This is submitted to the STARS office by the assessor after they complete the assessment.)
- A program improvement plan based on the results of the assessment, and addressing any subscale score below 3.0.
- A description of how the program observes children and keeps records to support the observation process.
- Documentation of two different observations and how they were used to develop the curriculum.
- A summary of the results and planned changes to the program based on child observation.

### 4 POINTS

#### Evidence to meet the Program Practices Standards

- The program is evaluated by an approved assessor using the appropriate assessment tool(s) (refer to chart on page 24) and achieves a minimum score of 5.0. Staff members provide input during the evaluation process and receive feedback. The program submits a written improvement plan and evidence that actions specified in previous improvement plans have been completed. *Contact the STARS office to request a scored assessment with an approved assessor.*
- The program regularly uses observation and documents children’s strengths, needs, interests and growth. These observations are recorded using the Teaching Strategies Gold tool at least twice a year. The program maintains records of their documentation and uses the results from child assessments to inform curriculum planning.
- **For programs who have already achieved 4 points in this arena:** *The Class Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool may be used as an alternative to the ECERS or the ITERS. Please contact the STARS office if you are interested in having an approved CLASS assessor visit your program.*
- **For programs with Infants and Toddlers:** *The Ounce Scale may be used instead of Teaching Strategies Gold to observe and document children’s strengths, needs, interests and growth.*

#### What to submit for verification

- A verification form from the approved assessor who evaluated the program, indicating that a minimum score of 5.0 was achieved using the assessment tool(s). (This is submitted to the STARS office by the assessor after they complete the assessment.) **OR** a verification form from the approved assessor who evaluated the program, indicating that the average

score of each of the 3 domains was 4 or higher using the CLASS assessment tool. (The CLASS assessment tool is only an option for programs who have *already* achieved 4 points in this arena. The verification form is submitted to the STARS office by the assessor after they complete the assessment.)

- A program improvement plan and evidence that the actions specified in the previous improvement plans have been completed. The plan must also address any subscale score below 3.0.
- A schedule showing that the Teaching Strategies Gold tool was used at least twice a year and a summary of how the results have impacted the curriculum/program **OR**, for programs with Infants and Toddlers, verification of using the Ounce Scale as designed and a copy of a developmental profile with any personal information hidden.
- A description of how staff members are involved in program evaluation and program improvement plans.

## 5 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Program Practices Standards

- The program holds NAEYC accreditation or is a Head Start Program or Early Head Start Program with a Triennial Review Cover Letter indicating full compliance.

### What to submit for verification

- A copy of NAEYC accreditation, or, for Head Start, a copy of the Triennial Review Cover Letter indicating full compliance.

# Administration Arena for Early Childhood Licensed Programs

(*except Public School Operated Pre-K Programs.*

These programs should skip to page 31.)

**1–3**

**POSSIBLE POINTS**

Check *one* of the statements below and, if the second statement is checked, indicate the number of points requested. Clearly label all Administration documentation and attach to this section of the application.

**NO POINTS REQUESTED**

\_\_\_\_\_ **(#) POINTS REQUESTED.** Documentation submitted meets the criteria for the requested number of points.

## 1 POINT

### Evidence to meet the Administration Standards

The program has an employee handbook detailing how professional development is supported and how IPDPs are incorporated into staff supervision. Staff members have opportunities to refine their skills through a system of regular feedback and guidance. The program's employee handbook details policies on hiring and firing, benefits, advancement, grievance, sexual harassment and reporting of child abuse or neglect.

### What to submit for verification

- A policy demonstrating administrative support for development and implementation of IPDPs.
- A copy of a contract verifying benefits and salary scale.

## 2 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Administration Standards

- The program has met the criteria for one point.
- Staff members working five hours or more per shift have paid work breaks within the scheduled work day.
- Staff members responsible for planning curriculum are given at least one hour per week of paid planning time.
- Staff members receive at least two of the following benefits: paid vacation, paid sick days, paid personal time, paid professional time.

### What to submit for verification

- The documentation for one point is submitted.
- A written policy on staff breaks, paid planning time, and paid vacation/sick days/personal time/professional time.

## 3 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Administration Standards

- The program has met the criteria for two points.
- Staff members are provided with written policies addressing a salary system that recognizes professional achievement.
- The median adjusted pay for all employees is at least 85% of Vermont’s livable wage for a “single person without employer paid health benefits.” This means that at least 50% of staff must make \$14.23 per hour or more.

### What to submit for verification

- The documentation for one and two points is submitted.
- A copy of salary system.
- The completed Hourly Adjusted Wages Worksheet on page 30 or other documentation that at least 50% of staff earns an hourly adjusted wage that is equal to or greater than \$14.23 per hour. If the program meets the wage standard with salary alone, the worksheet is unnecessary.



# Administration Arena for Public School Operated Pre-K Programs *only*

(all other programs should complete the previous section on pages 28–30)

**1–3  
POSSIBLE POINTS**

Check *one* of the statements below and, if the second statement is checked, indicate the number of points requested. Clearly label all Administration documentation and attach to this section of the application.

- NO POINTS REQUESTED**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **(#) POINTS REQUESTED.** Documentation submitted meets the criteria for the requested number of points.

## 1 POINT

### Evidence to meet the Administration Standards

The teaching staff has a contract that includes terms of employment, access to benefits, and a salary scale. The staff supervision process is described and fully implemented. Staff is provided with policies related to sexual harassment.

### What to submit for verification

- Copy of contract verifying benefits and salary scale.
- Supervision policy and confirmation of implementation.
- Policy on sexual harassment.

## 2 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Administration Standards

The program adheres to all standards for one point and provides staff with a description of their rights and grievance procedures.

### What to submit for verification

- The documentation for one point is submitted.
- Policy on rights and grievance procedures.

## 3 POINTS

### Evidence to meet the Administration Standards

The program adheres to all standards for one and two points and has an articulated and fully implemented process for staff supervision and professional development.

### What to submit for verification

- The documentation for one and two points is submitted.
- Policy describing expectations for regular supervision and reflection.
- Policy regarding support of maintaining Individual Professional Development plans.
- Sample form for documenting supervision and feedback.

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### Need assistance or have questions?

Call the STARS coordinators at **(802) 398-2037** or email [stars@mjccvt.org](mailto:stars@mjccvt.org)

### To learn more about STARS please visit:

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/childcare/providers/stars>