



QRIS State Profile: Vermont

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Component	State Details
INTRODUCTION	
<p>The STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) is Vermont’s quality recognition system for child care, preschool, and afterschool programs. STARS is based on providers earning points for recognition in five arenas: 1. Regulatory Compliance; 2. Staff qualifications and training; 3. Program practices (includes the environment and overall support of children’s learning/development; 4. Families and communities (includes implementing Strengthening Families Protective Factors policies and practices); and 5. Administration. Program assessment and plans for improvement are found in both the Families and community and the Program practices arenas. All programs providing pre-kindergarten services must meet the 4- or 5-star level standards or be nationally accredited.</p>	
CONTACTS	
QRIS Name	STep Ahead Recognition System for Child Care Programs (STARS)
Organization	Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Vermont Agency of Human Services
Web Site	http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/stars/
RATING LEVELS AND ASSESSMENT METHODS	
Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 star ■ 2 stars ■ 3 stars ■ 4 stars ■ 5 stars

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Rating Assignment Method	<p>Point system:</p> <p>Providers must be licensed or registered to be eligible to participate. Zero to five points are awarded in five arenas of action (i.e., standards). Each star level requires a range of points: 1-4 points = 1 star, 5-8 points = 2 stars, 9-11 points = 3 stars, 12-14 points = 4 stars, 15-17 points = 5 stars. Accredited programs automatically earn a certain number of points in specific arenas of action.</p>
Use of Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and Other Assessments	<p>The ERS is used in the Program Practices Arena. Specific scores are required to achieve 3 or 4 points. A mentoring visit and approved plan is required for 2 points, a self assessment and approved plan is required for 1 point. Accredited programs achieve 5 points in this arena. CLASS is another approved tool to be sued at the 3 or 4 point level. Afterschool programs may choose the YPQA (Youth Program Quality Assessment.)</p>
Program Assessments Included in QRIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) ■ Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) ■ Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) ■ School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) ■ Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) ■ Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)
QRIS QUALITY STANDARDS	
QRIS Quality Standards: Categories and Web Site	<p>There is one set of standards for child care centers and FCC homes, although there are customized STARS applications based on program type.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Qualifications and training ■ Families and community ■ Program practices ■ Administration <p>STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) Standards</p> <p>http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/pdf/cdd/stars/Adopted_STARS_rule_FINAL.pdf</p>

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Programs Eligible to Participate in QRIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child care centers ■ Group child care homes ■ Family child care homes ■ Early Head Start programs ■ Head Start programs ■ Pre-kindergarten programs ■ School-age programs
Use of Accreditation	<p>Accredited providers automatically earn a certain number of points in specific arenas.</p> <p>Because of the accredited program articulation of points in each arena, the STARS Application forms are streamlined for accredited programs.</p>
Accreditation Organizations Accepted for QRIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Council on Accreditation, After School Programs (formerly the National AfterSchool Association) ■ National Association for the Education of Young Children, Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation ■ National Association for Family Child Care ■ National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
Financial Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tiered subsidy reimbursement ■ A program bonus for each star level attained ■ STARS participation at the highest levels is required for certain types of grants such as Strengthening Families Child Care grants through the Child Development Division ■ Discounts through major companies (such as Kaplan and Lakeshore) and some local Vermont businesses ■ Additional financial recognition for providers’ achievements. The achievements below are often inspired by STARS participation, but the bonuses are open to all who work in regulated programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ College tuition assistance ◆ Reimbursement for CDA and accreditation fees ■ One-time bonuses for achieving certificates on the Career Ladder for Early Childhood Professionals or achievements in the Afterschool Pathways

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<p>Additional Information</p>	<p>Public Pre-K services provided in centers, homes or schools must meet STARS standards at the 4 or 5 star level or be at the 3 star level with an approved plan to achieve 4 or 5 stars, OR be nationally accredited.</p> <p>STARS has a standing Oversight Committee of partners and stakeholders that advise, support, evaluate and promote STARS in partnership with the Agency of Education and the Child Development Division</p>