

## Hilltop's Early Childhood Program Receives 5 Stars Again!



We are thrilled to announce that Hilltop Montessori School has been recognized once again by the State of Vermont's [Step Ahead Recognition System](#) (STARS). A huge thank you and congratulations to Serina Keppel! In her role as the Early Education Partnership Program Director, Serina led the Children's House and Toddler Program in the assessment and documentation that resulted in this achievement.

"STARS is Vermont's quality recognition system for child care, preschool, and after school 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." STARS evaluates early childhood programs by thoroughly analyzing the following areas:

- Regulatory History
- Staff Qualifications and Annual Professional Development
- Families and Community
- Program Practices
- Administration

The STARS review process included thorough documentation of qualifications and program policies and procedures. This material is supplemented with an assessment from an evaluator who spent time in each of our early childhood classrooms on multiple days this past December. It was reaffirming, though not surprising, to have her so appreciate and value the quality programs that we are providing.

While the Montessorian in each of us might not want to emphasize the external reward and "gold star" connotation of this program, it is a wonderful accomplishment and yet another confirmation of the outstanding, staff, facilities, and programs that we are offering to your children.

There is also a financial benefit in receiving 5 stars. The STARS rating is a component determining the amount available to our families who are eligible for [Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program](#). This recognition also enables us to qualify for the [PreK funding](#) that all Vermont children ages 3 and 4 receive.

If you have any questions or would like any additional information about the STARS program, evaluation process or its meaning to us, please feel free to [email Tamara](#) or stop by.

January 19, 2018