

## Program Highlights

- Innovative individualized and small group instruction
- Support with a low student-to-teacher ratio
- Multimodal teaching
- Direct collaboration and consultation with Speech and Language Pathologists
- Language-based Reading Specialist direct instruction and consultation
- High academic standards aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- Individual and group social skills instruction
- Extended School Year Program option
- Inclusion opportunities
- Ongoing communication with all constituents
- Transitional support back to sending school



## Admission Criteria

- Student must be in grades 6 through 8 and be referred by their sending district.
- Students must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Students with moderate language and learning difficulties

ACCEPT, founded in 1974 and headquartered in Natick, Massachusetts, is an education collaborative serving 16 school districts in Boston's MetroWest area. ACCEPT provides a wide range of innovative, high quality regional programs and services, including special education student programs, transportation, technology, home-based services, Medicaid reimbursement, behavioral consultation and professional development.

ACCEPT uses the collective power and resources of member school districts to provide exceptional programs and services that maximize the potential of students, their families, educators and communities.

ACCEPT's special education teachers, therapists and professionals are experienced, well trained and licensed.

Member School Districts are: Ashland, Dover, Dover/Sherborn, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Sherborn, South Middlesex Regional Technical, Sudbury and Wellesley.

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## STAR

**Strategies and Tools  
for Academic Rewards**

**Language and Social  
Skills Development  
for Students Grades 6 – 8**



## Program Overview

STAR (Strategies and Tools for Academic Rewards) prepares students for a successful middle school experience focused on language and social skills development. Language-based learning difficulties are a common cause for students' academic difficulties. Language and communication is the common thread present throughout all academic content areas. Thus, weak language skills may hinder comprehension and communication for students across their academic areas. STAR provides supports centered on developing oral and written language skills to enhance communication and the comprehension of academic content. Staff work with students, families, schools, and community agencies to provide support services that meet the unique needs of students. Skills targeted through this program include: communication and social skills, academic skills with provided individualized supports for each student level, executive functioning skills and compensatory strategies to increase student independence.



## Educational Services

STAR offers individual and small group instruction focused on teaching principles, which are heavily oriented towards enhancing communication by strengthening oral and written language. Special educators and speech, occupational, physical, and other therapists work in collaboration to provide a wide range of direct services and supports. Reading instruction is provided through multisensory language-based structured, sequential reading programs. Speech and Language Pathologists provide direct therapeutic services and provide consultation to the classroom teacher on how to present information in a language-based manner. Students are provided opportunities for success across all subjects throughout the school day.

Academics are presented and tracked daily with hands-on experiences and interactive opportunities. Academic information is provided through many different modalities including visual, auditory, and tactile. Class instruction and information is presented in a highly structured, organized manner where information is broken down into small units. Teachers focus on providing instructions that can be followed clearly and sequentially. Learning opportunities also embed social skills instruction throughout the day focusing on increasing student independence, self-advocacy, and self-esteem. A strong support network is provided that nurtures students' strengths, facilitates self-awareness, and teaches strategies for coping with difficulties.

Inclusion opportunities are made possible through the strong partnership ACCEPT has built with member school districts. Students who meet individualized academic, behavioral, or social development criteria have the opportunity to integrate within the general education environment when possible, with ACCEPT staff support provided through specified criteria.

## Behavioral and Social Skills Services

Students are provided supports including clear expectations and feedback regarding expected classroom and community behaviors. Board Certified Behavior Analysts are available to provide each student with a positive and effective method of developing more appropriate adaptive skills. Individual goals and reinforcers are identified for each student, and data is collected on a continual basis.

STAR also offers individual and small group social skills instruction on a regular basis. Instruction is facilitated via teachers and Speech Language Pathologists during structured times as well as during incidental opportunities that arise in the classroom.

Conversational skills, perspective taking, safety concerns, and peer relationship development are systematically broken down and taught through the use of a variety of techniques. These techniques may include social thinking, scripts, behavioral mapping, video modeling, video feedback, and self-rating scales. These tools assist students in generalizing skills from the smaller group environment to larger social settings or into the community.



## ACCEPT Guiding Principles

- Respect for diversity and human differences
- Best practices
- Continuous improvement
- Open and honest communication
- Integrity