

## **December 16, 2015 – Bennington County Child Care Association honors Vermont Birth to Five with annual award**

The Bennington County Child Care Association in November recognized Vermont Birth to Five as the latest recipient of the Annual Award for Outstanding Support to Young Children and Their Families in Bennington County.

The Bennington Child Care Association (BCCCA) is a membership-supported organization of people committed to supporting affordable, quality early childhood care and education services in Bennington County and throughout the nation. Vermont Birth to Five (VB5) is the 24<sup>th</sup> recipient of the BCCCA's annual award since 1972, when the inaugural award went to Hemmings Motor News owner and publisher Terry Ehrich. Individuals and organizations considered for the award do not directly provide child care but do promote quality services, life and opportunities to children, with an emphasis of those from birth to age 12. Recipients must also have a significant presence in Bennington County.

Vermont Birth to Five works to ensure that every Vermont child has access to high quality, affordable child care. A signature initiative of the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children, VB5 supports the work of child care providers—whether center- or home-based—with quality improvement initiatives, professional development, mentoring and help creating sustainable business practices. VB5 was launched in July of 2015, bringing together the work of Vermont Birth to Three and the Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative (VCPC) to ensure greater coordination of efforts to support young children.

“This award shows our appreciation for the work VB5 has done to mentor and support Bennington area child care providers, especially when it comes to professional development and to navigating the SStep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) quality program,” said Nancy Noel, BCCCA board co-chair. “Brenda Schramm and Sharron Harrington from VB5 have earned the trust, respect and gratitude of providers in our area for their work on behalf of Bennington's youngest children.”

Noel presented the award to VB5 Director Becky Gonyea in November at BCCCA's Annual Meeting in Bennington.

“We are honored to receive this award from BCCCA, which is such a great partner in support of the 88 early childhood programs in the Bennington region,” said Gonyea. “We are grateful that BCCCA and so many other organizations and individuals in Bennington have embraced our work and helped us understand the needs of your community.”