

Ałchíní Bighan

We call our multi-age (ages 3-5) classroom **STAR Ałchíní Bighan** or 'STAR Children's House' because it reminds us that this classroom belongs to the children. It is their space in which to learn, play, grow, and interact. The title 'Children's House' reflects the Montessori base upon which our curriculum and much of its philosophy are founded. Further, the name Ałchíní Bighan, is rich because it honors the children's native language. Ałchíní Bighan has layers of meaning regarding the relationship of the children with the space that are not adequately expressed just in English.

The children's work is their play and their play is their work, it is important business and a joy to observe!



STAR (Service To All Relations) School is a small rural charter school located in Northern Arizona east of Flagstaff and just outside the southwestern edge of the Navajo Nation. The school is a Green Schools leader and serves a majority Native American population from Pre-K thru 8th grade. The early learning center for ages 3-5, STAR Ałchíní Bighan, is a national model considered to be one of the "Best in Indian Country."

To arrange a campus tour or classroom observation please call or email.

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STAR Ałchíní Bighan (STAR Children's House)

STAR School's Early Learning Center
Featuring a Bicultural, Multilingual
Montessori Approach

An Effective Model of High Quality,
Culturally Responsive,
Early Childhood
Education.

High-Quality Early Learning

“Data on student achievement from this program shows a steady increase in annual mathematics and vocabulary gains. By the end of the year, most of the children who attended full time improved by nearly double the government standards for success.”

-- Dr. Derek Price, Professor Emeritus, Wheaton College, Early Learning Program Evaluator



The STAR Ałchíní Bighan Model

Elements of Philosophy & Practice

**Service to All Relations (STAR)
Four Rs: Respect, Relationship,
Responsibility, Reasoning**

Montessori Curriculum

Navajo Language and Culture

Focus on Math

**Place-Based Learning and
Sustainability**

Sign Language

Prepared Environment

40 Developmental Assets

Voices Literature

STAR Ałchíní Bighan is an innovative early childhood education program designed for our unique community. We integrate a Montessori curriculum with Navajo cultural values and language, our STAR School philosophy, and other research-based early learning elements. Our model incorporates high-quality beautiful materials, multi-age classrooms, and the STAR foundational core values of the 4R's – Relationship, Respect, Responsibility, and Reasoning, which come from Navajo Peacemaking.

Navajo language and culture as well as a place-based education focus connect us to our place and our community. We include curriculum elements that research has found valuable such as a strong focus on math, incorporating make-believe play materials, and supplementing the curriculum with sign language.

STAR Ałchíní Bighan teachers comprise a collaborative team of Montessori trained and Navajo bilingual educators committed to a child-centered approach whose aim is to foster autonomous, competent, responsible citizens who are life long learners and problem-solvers.

By thoughtfully balancing and harmonizing the many strengths of our community with educational research, STAR Ałchíní Bighan has become a leading model of high-quality early childhood education for other indigenous communities nationally.

STAR Ałchíní Bighan is tuition-free yet we encourage parental involvement because we recognize that a strong family-school relationship is necessary for student success.

Potential families should apply early since there is often a wait list.