

B.E.T. Learning Academy makes History

Omaha Star
Omaha, Nebraska, US

Friday, June 16, 2023
Page 2, Section: LOCAL NEWS
591 words, 63in² in size
30,000 circulation



B.E.T. Learning Academy makes History

Bernard Turnbo Jr.'s main goal for the children of B.E.T. Learning Academy is for them to leave the child care center prepared to make history.

"By that, we mean we want every child who walks out of here to be someone when they become of age ... to go on to college and have a successful career," said Turnbo Jr., the director and CEO of the North Omaha-based academy.

B.E.T. Learning Academy recently made history itself by becoming the first program in Nebraska to achieve a Step 5 rating under Step Up to Quality 2.0 — a revamped version of the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care providers. Step 5 is the highest rating, and just 5% of all participating programs in Step Up to Quality across the state have earned this rating.

Step Up to Quality this year rolled out several updates to the five-step process. The updates allow for more personalization based on an individual provider's strengths and have made some steps less time-consuming to complete. Months of research and input from more than 40 early childcare education professionals in Nebraska guided the 2.0 updates.

Only 15% of Nebraskans are very satisfied with the quality of early child care and education programs where they live. Step Up to Quality is confident these updates will encourage more Nebraska providers to enroll and continue working through the steps, leading to an increase in the confidence Nebraskans have about the quality of early childhood education in their area. B.E.T. Learning Academy is the first example of the updated program's success.

Located near North 41st Street and Grand Avenue in Omaha, B.E.T. Academy, founded in 1987, focuses on positive, hands-on education for children that supports social-emotional, language and literacy skills.

"Achieving the Step 5 level is one of the biggest accomplishments that's happened during my leadership tenure," Turnbo Jr. said. "Step Up to Quality coaching, combined with training sessions, reaffirmed that my teaching staff were doing all they were supposed to while helping us become a more quality center."

Read more about B.E.T. Academy's journey to its Step 5 rating here.



"B.E.T. Academy embodies what a high-quality child care program looks like," said Lauri Cimino, director of Step Up to Quality. "The staff and leadership were already doing so many wonderful things for the children in their care, and by embracing the resources and tools that we offer at Step Up to Quality, they've flourished."

Step Up to Quality began in 2014 and is operated out of Nebraska's Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. As of 2023, more than 700 Nebraska child care programs have enrolled in Step Up to Quality, receiving specialized training, access to professional coaches and financial incentives as they go through the five steps. By enrolling in Step Up to Quality, early childhood education professionals across Nebraska are taking steps to provide the best care for the children and families they serve.

Learn more about Step Up to Quality's growth in its annual report.

About Step Up to Quality

As Nebraska's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Step Up to Quality helps great child care providers become even better and helps parents find high quality care in their area. With 90% of brain development occurring before age 5, high-quality early childhood education is crucial to every child's future — and the future of our state. Step Up to Quality began in 2014 and is operated by the State of Nebraska's Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.★