



Bringing Nebraska together through quality

Step Up to
Quality

Every improvement we make is driven by a shared purpose: helping Nebraska families find high-quality early childhood education and supporting the providers who make that possible every day.

In 2025, Step Up to Quality took an important step in support of this goal. The Nebraska Department of Education acquired the Nebraska Child Care Referral Network's (CCRN) child care search website, created during the pandemic as a quick solution for parents urgently searching for child care availability.

By integrating all licensed, Head Start and school district-operated child care programs into our [online provider search tool](#), families now have one trusted place to explore their child care options, and providers benefit from a more streamlined and connected experience. This milestone reflects our ongoing commitment to making the child care search process simpler, more informative and more supportive for everyone involved.

While Step Up to Quality remains a voluntary quality recognition and improvement program, participating providers continue to be featured first in search results, making it easier for families to identify programs dedicated to continuous quality improvement. Parents can also access detailed provider profiles, save favorite programs and download age-specific tour checklists to help guide one of the most important decisions they will make for their children.

As Step Up to Quality continues to grow, so does the impact of our work. By strengthening the tools, resources and connections that support Nebraska's early childhood community, we are making quality more visible, accessible and attainable for families and providers alike.

Thank you for being part of Step Up to Quality. Together, we are building a stronger future for Nebraska's children — one that begins with a foundation of high-quality early childhood education.



1,089

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

from across Nebraska are participating in Step Up to Quality



58,146

CHILDREN SERVED

in participating Step Up to Quality programs since 2014

Going above and beyond

Child care providers who participate in Step Up to Quality are committed to defining and elevating quality for Nebraska's children. They exceed licensing requirements by attending extra training, analyzing their business operations, updating their educational offerings to match industry best practices and continually improving the quality of the care they provide.

Benefits for providers

In addition to joining a community of supportive, like-minded professionals in the early childhood education field, Step Up to Quality offers many advantages to participating child care providers.



QUALITY INCENTIVE BONUSES

\$673,100 awarded program-wide since 2014



FREE TRAINING

(Numbers reflect participation between July 2025 through June 2026)

494 People have completed Step Up to Quality's orientation

218 People have completed the Whole Body Classroom training series

760 People have completed the Special Care training



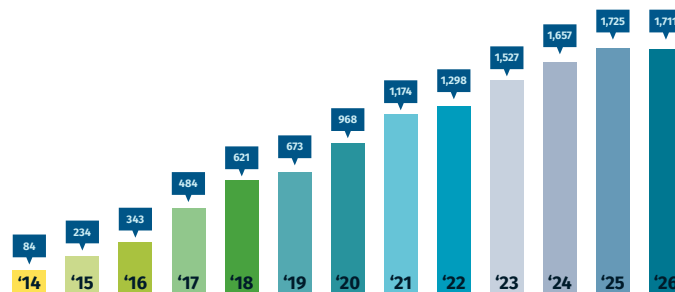
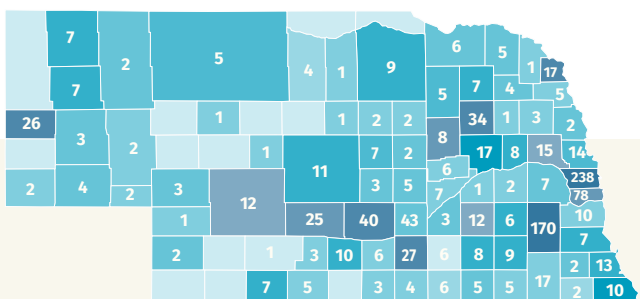
FREE COACHING

475 Programs have received guidance from a professional coach

155 Programs completed Quality Foundations coaching

Find providers in your area

Step Up to Quality providers can be found across the state of Nebraska.



Providers enrolled each year

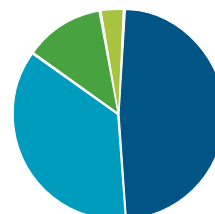
Step Up to Quality began in 2014 as Nebraska's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). Not all states had a QRIS at the time — now, nearly all do. More than 1,700 Nebraska providers are enrolled in Step Up to Quality today.

Every provider counts

High-quality child care can be found all over Nebraska — more than 1,000 child care providers throughout the state participate in Step Up to Quality.

Enrolled programs

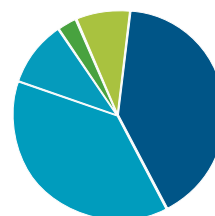
Step Up to Quality serves all types of early childhood education programs throughout Nebraska.



- 825** Family Child Care Homes
- 623** Child Care Centers
- 204** Head Start/ Public School Preschool
- 59** Preschools

Steps achieved

Every step is significant, and no matter where providers are in the process, they are congratulated for their commitment to high-quality care.



- 433** Step 1
- 405** Step 2
- 110** Step 3
- 31** Step 4
- 110** Step 5

1,089 Total participating/ rated programs

→ **65** programs submitted a rating request this past year



To learn more: Visit our website to sign up for our newsletter and follow us on social media for all the latest news!

844-807-5712 | stepuptoquality.ne.gov | [f](#) [@](#) [v](#) [in](#) [p](#)