



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Step Up to Quality Child Care Providers Eligible for Fee Assistance in Expanded Military Child Care Program**

*Child care providers enrolled in Step Up to Quality can receive fee assistance on behalf of eligible military families.*

Nebraska childcare providers who continuously meet quality rating and improvement standards are now eligible to receive fee assistance following expansion of a federal childcare assistance program operated by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS (MCCYN-PLUS) is an expansion of a long-running program that provides fee assistance to eligible military families including Guard and Reserve on active duty, to offset the costs of child care when on-base child care is unavailable.

"Nebraska's military families contribute and sacrifice much for the sake of our country, and their children deserve a high level of care and education," said Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen. "I applaud the Department of Defense for investing in this vital program."

To qualify in Nebraska, child care centers and family child care homes must be enrolled in and continuously meeting the standards of [Step Up to Quality](#), Nebraska's Quality Rating and Improvement System operated by Nebraska's Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Fee assistance is provided to eligible providers on behalf of eligible families.

The decision to broaden the program's eligible providers was made to ensure military families have access to accredited child care providers, while also providing a pathway to qualify community childcare providers to participate in and receive fee assistance on behalf of eligible families.

"Nebraska is home to many exceptional child care providers who strive each day to meet the high standards we expect of those who care for our children," said Nebraska Commissioner of Education Brian Maher. "The expansion of the MCCYN program to include providers who are continuously meeting quality improvements is a win for Nebraska children, military families and care providers."

Of Nebraska's more than 2,300 eligible licensed child care providers, about 31% are enrolled in Step Up to Quality. By enrolling in Step Up to Quality, child care providers receive individualized coaching to improve quality, professional development and training, child care subsidy reimbursements and incentive bonuses.

"Enhancing quality child care across Nebraska has always been a goal for DHHS. We support MCCYN's efforts to ensure

child care for our military families is not only affordable but is of the highest quality,” said DHHS Children and Family Services Interim Director Tony Green.

Information about eligibility requirements to become an approved MCCYN-PLUS provider in Nebraska can be found on the Child Care Aware of America [website](#) and [MilitaryChildcare.com](http://MilitaryChildcare.com). Learn more about how to enroll in Step Up to Quality at [stepuptoquality.ne.gov](http://stepuptoquality.ne.gov).

### **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.

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