

Brilliant Brains earns Nebraska's highest child care quality rating

Omaha learning center receives Step 5, national accreditation designation after review of classrooms, teaching practices and family support

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Brilliant Brains Learning Center, located at 7076 Blondo St. in Omaha, has earned a Step 5 rating, the highest designation available through Nebraska's Step Up to Quality program, following a state review of the Omaha center's classrooms, staff development, curriculum and services for children and families. The organization has also earned national accreditation with The National Early Childhood Program Accreditation.

The designation took effect July 13, 2026, and remains valid through July 13, 2031. It recognizes the center's work in child development, teacher training, family partnerships, classroom practices, curriculum and program administration.

"I've worked with Brilliant Brains Learning Center for several years as the center worked toward a Step 5 rating. Tasha stayed focused on that goal, even when the process was challenging," said Mike Stiehl, Step Up to Quality coach. Reaching a Step 5 rating is a major accomplishment, he said. It reflects Tasha's leadership, her team's hard work and their commitment to providing high-quality care and education for children and families."

Brilliant Brains Learning Center is Nebraska's only independently owned, minority-owned early childhood program nationally accredited through NAEYC, NECPA or NAC, said Tasha McNeil, owner and director of Brilliant Brains Learning Center.



Tasha McNeil, owner and director of the Brilliant Brains Learning Center

"That's a substantially bigger distinction than being 'the only minority-owned accredited program in Omaha,'" McNeil said. "This process required us to examine every part of our program, strengthen our practices and remain focused on what children and families need. We are proud of this achievement, but we also see it as a responsibility to keep learning and improving."

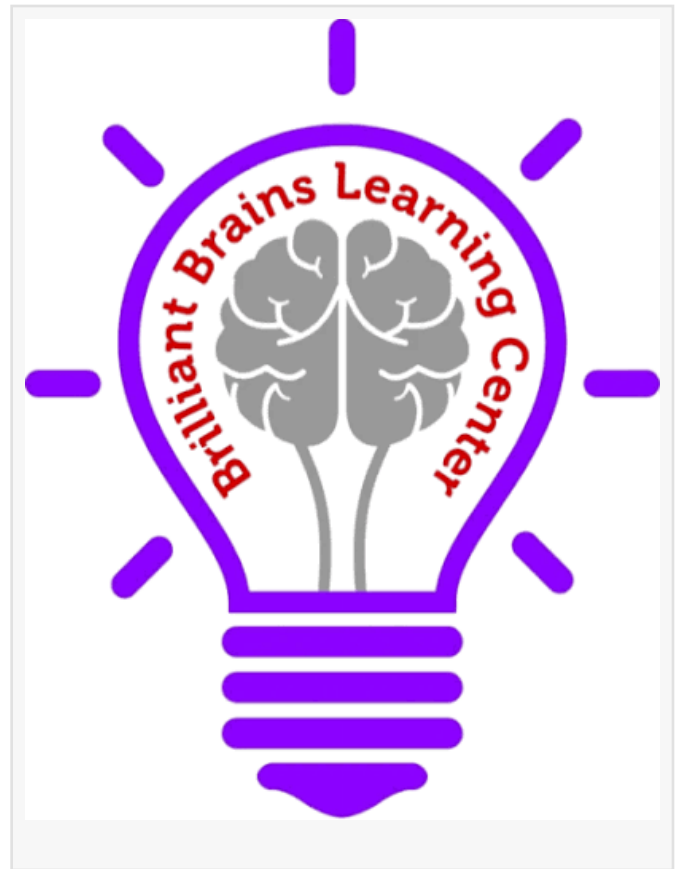
Nebraska's Step Up to Quality program helps early childhood education providers improve the care and learning experiences they offer. To receive the Step 5 designation, Brilliant Brains completed a review that examined staff development, child outcomes, family engagement, learning environments, curriculum and administrative practices.

The review documented the center's use of developmental screenings and ongoing assessments to monitor children's progress. It also highlighted collaboration in planning services for children with special needs and support for children preparing to enter kindergarten.

Independent observers evaluated the center's infant, toddler and preschool classrooms as part of the rating process.

"National accreditation should never feel reserved for programs with the largest budgets, the most resources, or the easiest circumstances," said Melody McGuire, National Accreditation Specialist and Founder & CEO of Early Childhood Educators Circle Time™. "I believe high-quality early childhood education must be achievable in every community, and that belief is at the heart of my work with Brilliant Brains Learning Center. Working alongside Tasha and her team has been about more than preparing a program to earn national accreditation. It has been about helping them recognize the quality already within their work, strengthening the systems behind it, and building the confidence and capacity to demonstrate that quality against national standards."

The evaluation observers were impressed with the staff activity they observed during the accreditation process, they said. In the infant classroom, observers noted consistent eye contact, close interaction, affection and responsive caregiving. The review found that infants sought teachers for comfort and were quickly soothed when they became upset. The toddler classroom earned the highest possible score, a 7, for behavior guidance. Observers cited clear expectations, positive redirection and an absence of yelling, threats or punitive control. The preschool



classroom showed strengths in emotional support and classroom organization. Observers reported that children sought teachers for help and comfort, educators were prepared for activities, and children had opportunities to participate in art, play, stories, music and movement.

Families may call (402) 453-2252 to ask about openings or schedule a visit.

About Brilliant Brains Learning Center

Brilliant Brains Learning Center provides child care and early childhood education for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children in Omaha. The center focuses on responsive care, early learning, family engagement and preparation for kindergarten while serving families who pay privately and those who receive child care subsidy assistance. Visit <https://www.bbcclc.com/> to learn more.

Tasha McNeil, Owner and director

Brilliant Brains Learning Center

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