



A new Prep Year for all Queenslanders

Queensland schools are getting set to introduce the new Preparatory Year in 2007.

The new full-time, non-compulsory Preparatory Year and an increase in the starting age for Year 1 from 2008 will usher in an exciting new era for early education in Queensland.

The Preparatory Year will become an integral part of schooling and the starting point for the Early Phase of Learning, which spans Prep to Year 3.

It will provide an important link between school and what children learn at home and in early education and care services before they start school.

Prep classes are already available in a number of phase-in schools across the state and children attending these classes are reaping the benefits.

The evaluation has shown that these children are developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will set them on the path to become lifelong learners.

Along with changes to the middle and senior phases of learning, the new Preparatory Year is one way the Queensland Government is working to give every child, every chance for a better future.

Rod Welford MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for the Arts

What will Prep be like?

Prep is a specially designed educational program for schools offered on a full-time, non-compulsory basis.

The curriculum

The *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* are designed to better prepare children for school. The Prep curriculum is based on active learning, which includes inquiry, investigation and play. In Prep, children will be:

- constructing using blocks, collage and manipulative equipment to develop early mathematical concepts and skills
- initiating and participating in dramatic play to build an understanding of the world around them

- drawing and painting to encourage oral language, reading and writing skills
- writing stories and copying signs as part of their play, constructions and art
- playing and investigating independently, in pairs, small groups and as a whole class
- actively making choices about what and how they learn
- investigating and learning how to inquire about their interests
- planning collaboratively with the teacher using a plan-do-reflect model
- participating in music and language experiences.

These learning experiences will help children to:

- understand and use language to group, sort and describe objects and to communicate ideas, feelings and needs
- develop early literacy and numeracy skills
- become independent thinkers and problem solvers
- learn how to cooperate with others
- develop physical coordination skills
- listen, respond to and give directions
- become confident at taking risks in their learning
- make good choices.

The children

Children will need to be five by 30 June in the year they enrol in Prep. Target class size is 25 children. Where there are not enough children to form a separate class, children may be in a composite or multi-age class.

Prep will be available at all state primary schools to all children of eligible age and there will be no waiting list. It is anticipated that Prep will also be available at all non-state schools.

The teachers

Many of our current Preschool and early childhood teachers will teach Prep. In addition, the State Government will employ more than 100 new teachers, with first preference being given to early childhood teachers.

The classroom

The Government has allocated up to \$350 million to refurbish existing classrooms and build new classrooms where required in state and non-state schools.

The facilities and resources that support the curriculum will make the Prep classroom a fun and exciting place for children to learn.

Prep will become the first year in the Early Phase of Learning, which spans Prep to Year 3. Children attending Prep will have access to school resources and might participate in school activities such as sport and music. Being part of school life on a full-time basis provides a smoother transition to Year 1.



Who can go to Prep?

Birth date:	<i>Last year of preschool in Queensland</i> 2006	<i>Prep is introduced</i> 2007	<i>Year 1 starting age increases by 6 months</i>		
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Child born 1 Jan 2001 to 31 Dec 2001	Preschool	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Child born 1 Jan 2002 to 30 June 2002		Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Child born 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003**			Prep	Year 1	Year 2
Child born 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004				Prep	Year 1
Child born 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005					Prep

* Children born 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001 will start Year 1 in 2007. Enrolment in Prep will be considered if they are assessed and it is determined that they will not be ready to start Year 1 before 2008.

** Students born 1 July 2002 to 31 December 2002 would previously have been eligible for preschool in 2007. Preschool will finish at the end of 2006. In order to increase the school starting age by six months, these students will be eligible for Prep in 2008. Community kindergartens and other early childhood providers will continue to offer programs for children prior to enrolment in Prep.

In 2007

Children who turn five in the first half of 2007 will be eligible to attend Prep. This will align Prep with the six-month increase in the starting age for Year 1 from 2008.

Children who turn six in 2007 will start Year 1. However, some who turn six in 2007 may be eligible for Prep if an assessment of their educational need indicates they will not be ready to start Year 1. Educational need will be assessed by looking at the learning readiness and physical and social development of the child.

While the new Prep Year replaces preschool, community kindergartens and other early childhood education and care providers will continue to offer programs for children not enrolled in Prep.

In 2008

Children who turn five between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2008 will be eligible to attend Prep in 2008.

From 2008, children will need to be six by 30 June the year they enrol in Year 1.

What happens to Preschool?

Preschool will not be available in state schools after 2006. Until this time the current age requirements for Preschool will stay the same — that is, children need to be five by 31 December in the year they start Preschool. Children born in 2001 will be the last group to attend state Preschools.

What about other services?

As Prep is not compulsory, some parents may choose to send their children to an alternative early childhood care and education service. It is Government policy that the preparatory year is part of primary schooling and will be provided through state schools and accredited non-state schools.

Parents considering a pre-Prep service for their child are advised to consider the full range of early education and care options available to them and place their child's name on waiting lists if necessary.

The Department of Communities offers a free statewide Child Care Information Service that provides up-to-date information regarding centre based and home based child care services including kindergartens, child care centres, family day care schemes and school aged care services.

The Child Care Information Service can provide details of child care services and kindergartens in your area over the telephone, by email, fax or through the post.

Contact details for the Child Care Information Service are listed at the end of this brochure.

Alternatively, parents may choose to use Communities' web based map to identify conveniently located services:
www.communities.qld.gov.au/childcare.

Contact details

For more information about Prep and the changes to the school starting age contact:

- Your local school and Education Queensland District Office details can be found at: www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory/
- Department of Education and the Arts
Website: www.education.qld.gov.au/etrf/prep.html
Email: etrfimplementation@qed.qld.gov.au
Phone: 1300 650 220
- Independent schools — The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland (AISQ)
Phone: 07 3228 1515
Website: www.aisq.qld.edu.au
- Catholic schools — Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC)
Phone: 07 3336 9306
Website: www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au
- Subscribe to the Department of Education and the Arts' email updates at: www.education.qld.gov.au/community/service/news/

For more information about kindergartens and other child care service options for children prior to Prep contact:

- Department of Communities
Website: www.communities.qld.gov.au/childcare
- Child Care Information Service (CCIS)
Office hours are 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday
Phone: 07 3224 4225 or 1800 637 711 for callers outside Brisbane.
- Crèche and Kindergarten Association
Website: www.candk.asn.au/
Email: info@candk.asn.au
Phone: 07 3552 5333

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Queensland Government
Department of **Education and the Arts**