



See the Future

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

Preparatory Year Implementation Update June 2005

Welcome

Welcome to the June update on implementation of the Preparatory Year.

Additional information about the preparatory year is available from the ETRF website at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/prep.html>

Changes to early education in Queensland

Queensland's early childhood education is changing. The changes aim to better prepare children for school by:

- implementing a non-compulsory, full-time preparatory year before Year 1 in 2007; and
- raising the starting age for compulsory schooling (Year 1) in 2008.

This means that:

- children born on or after January 2002 will be eligible for the new non-compulsory preparatory year before enrolling in Year 1;
- children must turn five by 30 June in the year they begin their preparatory year; and
- the current part time, state preschool program will not be provided in state schools from 2007.

Ninety-six schools across the state are currently offering a preparatory program.

More schools to offer prep in 2006

Twenty-five more schools across Queensland will offer Prep from 2006 as the State Government gears up for full implementation in 2007.

Premier Peter Beattie and Education Minister Anna Bligh announced at Community Cabinet in Ipswich the names

of the new 20 state and five non-state schools.

These 25 new schools will join the 96 schools already providing Prep to more than 1900 students across both state and non-state sectors.

The new sites include Silkstone State School at Ipswich, Bwgcolman Community School and St Michael's School on Palm Island and Thursday Island State School in the Torres Strait.

A range of other sites have been chosen across the State, including two new schools; one in the Drewvale area on Brisbane's southside and one in the Caloundra West area on the Sunshine Coast.

A full list of schools is available on the web at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/ecsite04.html>

2004 Evaluation report on the web

The summary report for the evaluation of the 2004 *Preparing for School* trial has been completed and is available on the ETRF website at:

<http://www.education.qld.gov.au/etrf/prep.html>

The time that principals, preparatory year teachers and teacher aides took to provide detailed and timely feedback about implementing the preparatory year in their school context to compile this report is appreciated.

Professional Development for 2005 phase-in schools

In May, two successful professional development events were held for teachers

and teacher aides of state and non-state school phasing in the preparatory year for the first time in 2005.

This day was part of a range of strategies to support the schools' involvement in the preparatory year phase-in.

The program focused on supporting teachers and teacher aides in furthering their understanding of the draft *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* including the importance of play to support children's learning.

As well, it provided opportunities for the participants to share issues and to access interest based workshops provided in response to participants requests.

Feedback has indicated a great enthusiasm for the day. Participants appreciated the opportunity to extend their thinking and understanding of the curriculum as well as the opportunity to further access information relating to their interest areas.

Refining the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines

When the preparatory year is introduced statewide in 2007, Queensland schools will be using the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* to provide students with a play and inquiry-based curriculum that will ignite a desire to learn.

The guidelines developed for the *Preparing for School* trial by the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) are being refined as prep is phased-in at additional schools during 2005 and 2006.

Carolyn Harrod, Principal Education Officer, Syllabus Services, QSA, said the Early Years Curriculum team drew heavily on current research in the area of early childhood education.

"The research included longitudinal studies, international reviews of early years curricula, brain research, critical analysis of programs, indicators of readiness and successful transitions between settings," she said.

Ms Harrod said that these studies suggested that early years education should not be limited to academic preparation for school, but should focus on children:

- making decisions
- solving problems
- developing thinking processes
- developing effective communication
- developing collaboration strategies
- developing positive dispositions towards learning
- developing a positive sense of self.

"Also highlighted was the importance of building on children's prior learning and providing opportunities for children to learn by using all their senses," she said.

"It is also important at this stage of children's development for adults to support them and their learning, rather than over-directing them."

More information on the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* is available at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/eccurric.html>

For more information

Responses to *Frequently Asked Questions*

- Website: <http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/faq-prep.html>

Department of Education and the Arts

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- Phone: (07) 3228 1515
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Catholic schools — Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC)

- Phone: (07) 3336 9306
- Website: www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au

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