



See the Future

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

Preparatory Year Implementation Update October 2004

Welcome

Welcome to the new look October update on the Preparatory Year: part of *Queensland the Smart State Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper* released in November 2002.

These updates will provide information on the preparatory year and progress towards full implementation in 2007.

Changes to early education in Queensland

The Queensland Government has announced that it will:

- implement a non-compulsory, full-time preparatory year before Year 1 in 2007; and
- raise the school starting age for Year 1 in 2008.

This means that:

- all 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.
- the current part time, state preschool program will not be provided in state schools from 2007.

Ninety-six schools will be offering a prep class in 2005. In 2006, 20 more state and up to five non-state schools will offer a preparatory year.

New Look for Prep 2007

Minister for Education and the Arts Anna Bligh has launched a new campaign to increase parent understanding about eligibility in 2007 for the Prep Year.

A television commercial featuring a new logo gives prep distinctive look. An eye-catching logo to raise awareness of the prep year was the idea of Craigslea State High student André Vernez as part of a persuasive writing project.

André used children's building blocks to symbolise the play-based curriculum in the Prep Year, with the blocks arranged to form the shape of the state of Queensland.

The ad features the mothers of toddlers Emily and Josh chatting about the new Prep Year and the benefits it will bring by giving their children a smarter start at school.

Watch out for the ads screening in October and November and again in January 2005.

Viewers are advised to contact their local primary school principal or visit the website: education.qld.gov.au/etrf/prep.html

Prep Year Professional Development

Principals and teachers at schools offering prep for the first time in 2005 will have the opportunity to expand their skills and knowledge in early childhood education. A two-day professional development workshop is scheduled for 11 and 12 November 2004.

The informative program includes:

- an introduction to the draft Early Years Curriculum Guidelines and Learning and Development Framework.
- opportunities to network
- discussion of operational issues to get prep up and running at their school.

Children With Disabilities

The Preparatory Year in state schools will be offered to all children of eligible age, including children with disabilities and children with special needs.

Education Queensland offers a range of programs and services to support students with disabilities in schools.

These include advisory visiting teacher services, special education developmental units/centres and special education units. These services will also support students in the preparatory year.

A number of schools phasing-in prep will include students with disabilities. For more on EQ's disability policies and services, go to education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/learning/students/disabilities/

PREP KIDSMART TRIAL

Four prep state schools will join the IBM KidSmart program, which helps schools integrate ICTs into teaching and learning for early childhood students in a fun and interesting way.

The schools involved are Richlands East, Regents Park, Thornlands, and Highfields State Schools

They will receive their own 'Young Explorers' learning centres and participating teachers will access expert training from specialists within the Australian National Schools Network.



Schools throughout the world have joined the IBM KidSmart program to gain the latest hardware, software and educational materials for early childhood learners.

In Queensland, the program is a partnership between Education Queensland, IBM and the Australian National Schools Network.

The program has been operating in Logan, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast since 2002. The four new schools join 20 other state schools currently involved in the program.

Prep Stories from Education Views Now Online

Schools offering a preparatory class regularly contribute articles to *Education Views*, the fortnightly newspaper published by Education Queensland. These articles are in one convenient location at education.qld.gov.au/etrf/news.html

Check out the articles in editions dated 27 Feb, 12 March, 16 April, 28 May, 18 June, 20 August and 1 October.

For more information

- Email etrfimplementation@ged.qld.gov.au
- Visit the website at: www.education.qld.gov.au/etrf (click on the Preparing for School link) or
- Subscribe to Education Queensland's email updates at: education.qld.gov.au/community/service/news/
- Call your local school or Education Queensland District Office or Diocesan Office, details can be found at education.qld.gov.au/schools/directory/
- Phone 1300 650 220