



Learning in the Prep Year

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



**Catholic
Education**
Diocese of Cairns

Learning with Faith and Vision



"Children are strong, rich and capable. All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity and interest in constructing their learning, negotiating with everything their environment brings to them."

– Leila Gandini 'Fundamentals of the Reggio approach to early childhood education' *Young Children*, Vol 49, no 1 pp 4-8

What is Prep?

The Preparatory Year of full-time schooling (Prep) was introduced into all Queensland schools in 2007. The non-compulsory program is for children who turn five by June 30 in the year they start school. Queensland children start compulsory schooling (Year 1) at about the same age as children in other states of Australia.

About Prep

All Queensland children are eligible to attend full-time Prep from the beginning of the school year in which they will reach the age of 5 years by 30 June. Children whose birthday is in July through to December commence Prep at the beginning of the school year after their 5th birthday.

Prep is the first year of school and provides the foundation for your child's education. It is a full-time program held in primary schools. Children attend Monday-Friday for the full school day.

Prep teachers use the Foundation Year of the Australian Curriculum—to guide children's learning. The Foundation Year in the Australian Curriculum refers to the year before Year 1.

In Queensland this is called Prep. For further information visit the Australian Curriculum Website at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

When children start Prep they move to a more structured learning environment, but they continue to learn through play. During play children make decisions, solve problems, develop thinking and teamwork skills, communicate, and develop a positive sense of themselves.



Developing the whole child

Families starting their child's schooling in the Catholic tradition know that Catholic schools are committed to the growth of the whole child by offering developmentally appropriate programs which address children's needs – spiritual, intellectual, physical, cultural, social and emotional. Faith, spiritual and values development is integrated into the Prep curriculum in keeping with the ethos and values of Catholic education.

The Prep program promotes the development of independence and acknowledges that children arrive at school as competent and capable learners who have been learning since birth. The year builds on your child's learning at home and in other places like kindergarten and child care.

Facilities

Our Catholic schools provide quality, specialised learning areas and equipment to accommodate Prep classes. Flexible learning environments are designed to complement Prep's play based program and encourages an active investigative approach.

A safe and caring environment

Catholic schools aim to provide special care and attention to all students, staff and families in the school community.

Each child's unique beauty and gifts are fostered. Child protection matters are taken seriously, and practices and protocols are in place to ensure Catholic schools are safe places that not only comply with regulations but move beyond mere compliance to prevention.

Prep classrooms in Catholic schools nurture right relationships. Through social emotional learning, children are supported in the development of life skills of confidence, getting along, persistence, organisation and emotional resilience.

In close partnership

Our schools see education as a partnership between schools and families. Parents are welcomed as members of the school community and opportunities are provided to share in the school experience. Close communication between school and home is a priority. Prep teachers value partnerships with families, carers, communities and professional colleagues in order to develop supportive learning environments for students.

What will children learn?

In Prep children learn in many different ways including play, organised games, and investigation. They develop important life skills by working with other children and adults. Prep makes connections between school and what your child learns at home and in early childhood education and care.

Prep helps your child develop:

- a positive approach to learning
- independence and confidence
- thinking and problem-solving skills
- language skills
- early literacy and numeracy
- physical abilities.

What will they do?

- investigate interests and plan with their teacher about the things they might do
- make choices while designing and making things
- sing, dance and paint
- listen to stories
- play games indoors and outdoors
- use computers to draw pictures, make signs
- take part in everyday experiences like gardening, cooking and tidying up
- write and copy signs during their play
- learn about size, shape, weight and measurement as they construct things indoors and outdoors

How can I get involved?

- share information about your child with the teacher (always treated confidentially)
- chat with your child about what they're doing at school
- visit the classroom for a brief chat or to take part in daily activities or special events
- read together and talk about story books, factual books and rhymes as well as about everyday items such as signs, notices, letters, catalogues, magazines, TV guides, food packaging and bills
- involve your child in family activities that investigate mathematical ideas, e.g. cooking, setting the table, matching socks, sharing a meal
- encourage your child to use 'junk' materials for drawing, making patterns, and building things

"I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." ~ Jeremiah 29:11

When is my child eligible for Prep?

Birth date	Eligible for Prep Year in:
Child born 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011	2016
Child born 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012	2017
Child born 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013	2018
Child born 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014	2019

Early entry to Prep

An amendment to the Education Act has allowed for the possibility of early entry for some students who will turn five by July 31st in the year they are in Prep, however that entry is conditional on the Principal also being satisfied that they are ready for schooling in terms of:

- aptitude and ability; and
- social and emotional competence; and
- physical development; and
- level of knowledge and understanding.

This is not a change for all children born in July and it is certainly not compulsory to send your child to Prep if he or she turns five during July.

Delayed entry to Prep

Delayed entry to Prep is an option which may be considered in specific circumstances and where it is in a child's best educational interests.

Parents may delay their child's entry to Prep (and subsequently Year 1) if they feel that the child is not ready to start school. For example, the child is not ready to cope with the social and emotional demands of schooling, or has delayed development.

No formal documentation or approval is required for delayed entry to Prep.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's readiness for Prep you can speak with your child's Kindergarten teacher or the Principal of the school where you plan to enrol your child for Prep.



What do I need to do now?

Calculate from the table in this brochure when your child can attend Prep.

Do things together with your child to prepare them for Prep such as reading, talking, playing, gardening, fishing and helping each other around the home.

For further information about enrolling your child in Prep contact your nearest Catholic School (see below), or Catholic Education Services.

Primary Schools in the Cairns Diocese

Cairns Region

Bentley Park	St Therese's School	Ph 4055 4514
Earlville	Our Lady Help of Christians School	Ph 4054 2566
Gordonvale	St Michael's School	Ph 4056 1614
Manunda	St Francis Xavier's School	Ph 4037 9900
Mount Peter	Mackillop Catholic College	Ph 4045 5262
North Cairns	Mother of Good Counsel School	Ph 4053 6133
Parramatta Park	St Joseph's School	Ph 4051 4041
Redlynch	St Andrew's Catholic College	Ph 4039 5200
Trinity Park	Holy Cross School	Ph 4057 6920
Woree	St Gerard Majella School	Ph 4054 4805

Northern Region

Mossman	St Augustine's School	Ph 4098 1631
Thursday Island	Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School	Ph 4069 2203
	Hammond Island campus	Ph 4069 2955
Weipa	St Joseph's Parish School	Ph 4069 9500

Southern Region

Babinda	St Rita's School	Ph 4067 1467
Innisfail	Good Counsel Primary School	Ph 4061 2994
Silkwood	St John's School	Ph 4065 2193
South Johnstone	St Rita's School	Ph 4064 2153
Tully	St Clare's School	Ph 4068 1527

Tablelands Region

Atherton	St Joseph's School	Ph 4091 4211
Dimbulah	St Anthony's School	Ph 4093 5319
Mareeba	St Thomas's School	Ph 4092 1570
Ravenshoe	St Teresa's School	Ph 4097 6173

130 Lake St, PO Box 5296, Cairns Q 4870

Tel: (07) 4050 9700

Fax: (07) 4051 2859

Email: enquiries@cns.catholic.edu.au

Web: www.cns.catholic.edu.au



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