

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PREP

1. What does a Prep room look like?

The Prep classroom is a fun and exciting place for children to learn and generally consists of an open space for group and individual activities with a carpeted area for storytelling and singing, and a wet area for painting and construction. The classroom also includes a kitchen and preparation area and access to an outdoor learning space.

Prep classes may comprise of up to 25 students. In some schools, Prep children may be included in multi-age classes with Year 1, 2 or 3 students.



2. Who teaches Prep?

Registered primary school teachers and current state preschool teachers teach Prep. With their professional knowledge and expertise, these teachers are ideally placed to deliver the Prep curriculum.

3. Is Prep compulsory?

The Preparatory Year is not compulsory. However, the preparatory year will be your child's first year at school. Parents may choose to keep their children at home or to send them to an alternative early childhood education and care service. The Preparatory Year is available for those parents who want their children to participate in a full-time education program at a school.

4. Why is prep important?

Prep lays the educational foundations for all students to attain the skills required for success in later schooling. These skills include knowledge and application of language, early literacy and numeracy, sense of self, skills for relating to others and knowledge of the immediate world.

Prep programs offer rich opportunities for differentiated learning experiences to support all students. Through active and dynamic environments, Prep students learn to solve problems, to communicate and to build creative thinking skills.

5. What do children do in Prep?

Our curriculum is about improving the learning outcomes of our students. It allows community members, teachers and students to work together to ensure that the richness and relevance of students' academic and social growth is enhanced.

We are committed to ensuring that all students develop a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy in the early years. This foundation is built on in progressive years so that our students develop effective literacy and numeracy skills.

Children enter Prep with different levels of learning, capabilities, prior knowledge, interests and cultural backgrounds. Prep teachers understand how these characteristics impact on learning and have realistic but high expectations for all. Teachers identify student capabilities and then target their teaching to student learning needs. They differentiate teaching and extend the strengths of individual students while scaffolding those students requiring support.

When carefully planned and integrated, routines and transitions form a meaningful part of the Prep program. Morning routines involving attendance, calendars and timetables help develop numeracy concepts. Daily routines such as listening to stories; shared reading; recording ideas and events; and collaboratively writing plans, lists and notices help build language and literacy knowledge.

Focused teaching and learning should be a planned part of the regular Prep program to explore new concepts. It may also occur spontaneously in response to specific learning needs within other learning contexts. This explicit teaching may involve a single student, small group or whole class instruction.

6 What is inquiry-based learning?

An old adage states: 'tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand'. The last part of this statement is the essence of inquiry-based learning where children and teachers work together to explore, observe, ask questions, discuss observations and seek answers about everyday experiences.

By selecting topics to study that interest them, children build on what they already know and do. Answers are discovered by exploring resources such as books, and the Internet and talking to visitors to the school. Children are encouraged to think about what they have learnt and how best to communicate their findings.

7 What are students doing when they play?

When children play, they make decisions, solve problems, develop thinking skills, collaborate, communicate and develop a positive sense of self. There are many different types of play and these change as children grow older. In Prep, children participate in fantasy, exploratory, directed, educational and free play, as well as physical play and games with rules.

It also means that children will play in different ways at different times of the school day. Play can occur indoors and outdoors. What children learn during play will depend on the questions they pose and the way that they investigate. In this way, play develops social and personal learning, language and communication, early mathematical understanding, health and physical ability and active thinking processes.

Play forms an integral part of children's learning. The quality of play experiences has a direct impact on the quality of learning outcomes. The role of the teacher in early years learning contexts is paramount, and children must experience high levels of consistent cognitive challenge when engaged in free play. Carefully structured and facilitated play experiences promote critical foundational skills. Knowledge and vocabulary are developed as teachers work with Prep students, challenging their thinking and extending their play.

Explicitly teaching literacy, numeracy and higher-order thinking skills through structured play requires careful planning with clear goals in mind.

Real-life situations

Reading and writing for a purpose, using mathematics in practical everyday situations and talking with family and community visitors to learn about their lives are learning experiences that mirror real-life situations.

These activities enable students to make connections between home and school and provide authentic learning opportunities for Prep students.

Students also learn to take other perspectives and integrate new experiences into their world views when they explore the social and cultural diversity of the local community.

Investigations

The natural curiosity of young children provides a catalyst for learning. Child-initiated and teacher-planned investigations enable Prep children to inquire, seek information, make connections and test their ideas.

Investigations provide an ideal opportunity for emerging literacy and numeracy skills to develop as children question, describe, document and celebrate their inquiries.

8 How does Preparatory Year help children when they go to Year 1?

Prep is designed to provide the foundation that children need to succeed at school by developing:

- a positive approach to learning
- independence and confidence
- thinking and problem-solving skills
- language skills
- early literacy and numeracy skills
- health and physical development, including gross and fine motor skills.

9 Are children in the Preparatory class able to have rest time?

There is no requirement for Prep children to have a formal rest period. Teachers plan programs that respond to the needs of their children and this may involve periods of quiet activity at some stage during the day.

10 What is the Early Years Curriculum?

The *Queensland Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* were developed by the Queensland Studies Authority for Preparatory Year classes in schools.

The guidelines are intended to:

- provide a framework to assist teachers in planning, interacting, assessing and reflecting on an effective preparatory year curriculum
- focus on children initiating and engaging in reciprocal interactions with people, objects, representations and events
- value and highlight the contribution of early childhood education to lifelong learning
- explain cross-curricula priorities
- describe the relationship between assessing and learning
- illustrate developmentally, socially and culturally appropriate learning opportunities and outcomes which acknowledge equity and diversity
- establish essential connections between the Preschool Curriculum Guidelines and the Years 1 to 10 key learning area syllabuses.

Parents play an integral role in the education of their children and are central to the success of every child. They are active partners with teachers in supporting their child's learning and provide the link between school and the wider community.

Engaging the school community in the teaching and learning process promotes consistency and fosters a deeper understanding of the learning that occurs through a balanced Prep program.

We welcome you, we welcome your visits and your interest.

Please feel free to discuss your child's education at
Beerburrum State School



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