




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?

Prep is the first compulsory 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

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.

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 the Prep 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

When is my child eligible for Prep?

Under the Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006, a child is eligible for enrolment in the Prep year if they will turn 5 years of age by 30 June in the proposed year of attendance at school.

Birth date	Eligible for Prep Year in:
Child born 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013	2018
Child born 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014	2019
Child born 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015	2020
Child born 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016	2021

"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

Is there early entry to Prep?

There is early entry to Prep for a child who:

EITHER

- had started education in another country, Australian state or territory that is equivalent to Prep;

OR

- will be at least 5 years and 5 months on 31 December in the proposed year of attendance at school (i.e. a child who turns 5 between July 1 and 31);

A July birthday or previous school enrolment in another state or country, does not guarantee early entry to Prep in Queensland.

Parents seeking early entry are required to attend an initial interview with the school Principal to discuss the child's attributes in terms of:

- Aptitude and ability;
- Social and emotional competence;
- Physical development; and
- Level of knowledge and understanding.

Discussions will also focus on expectations for early entry to Prep and the best interests of the child. Parents will be provided with an 'Application for Early Entry into Prep' form at this time. Following an assessment of the Application, the Principal will advise parents in writing of the outcome of the process.

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 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.

Children must be enrolled in Prep from the beginning of the the school year in which they will reach the age of 6 years by June 30.

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' 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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