

Frequently Asked Questions

How will the new preparatory year change the school starting age?

From 2008, the compulsory school starting age will increase by six months. Children must be six by 30 June in the year they enrol in Year 1. Now, children can start Year 1 if they turn six any time during that year. Research shows that children who are older when they begin compulsory are more likely to engage with and enjoy, and will have greater success throughout their education.

When can my child enrol in the preparatory year and Year 1?

Children will need to be five by 30 June in the year they start in the preparatory class.

Will all children be able to access a preparatory year?

All children of appropriate age will have access to the preparatory year. There are no waiting lists for the preparatory year as it will be available to all children attending state primary schools.

Community kindergartens and other child care providers will continue to provide programs for children prior to the preparatory year. You may choose to use these programs for your children before or instead of the preparatory year. Children born in the second half of the year will be able to access these programs or childcare until they are eligible to start their preparatory year.

Why have a preparatory year?

All other Australian states and territories offer a full-time year of education for children prior to Year 1.

National and international research highlights the importance of quality full-time early education and smooth transitions to formal schooling to aid children's long-term educational outcomes.

Research shows that providing a quality full-time year of schooling prior to Year 1 has benefits for children, teachers and families. Preparatory programs improve children's social and problem-solving skills, and encourage a greater interest in learning. For teachers, there is more time to expand and individualise the curriculum, and for parents, a full-time option better suits many families' needs.

Will my child be disadvantaged if they do not attend a preparatory year?

The preparatory year is designed to provide children with a solid base to the early years of education and make the move to Year 1 easier. The preparatory year has been developed to link with the early phase of learning – Prep to Year 3.

How will I get my child enrolled in the preparatory year?

Enrolment in the preparatory year will be the same process as currently exists for Year 1. Contact the school for an enrolment pack.

If Prep is non-compulsory, does my child have to attend five days a week?

Yes. Children enrolled in the preparatory year are expected to attend full-time, to obtain maximum benefit from the program.

How formal will the preparatory year be?

The preparatory program is child centred and play-based. During play children learn as they engage socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually with people, objects and symbols. For example, children are developing their physical skills by daily sessions on an obstacle course or building their literacy skills through language games.

Will preparatory students have to wear a uniform?

At Caboolture East State School, the Parents' and Citizens' Association have determined that students in the preparatory year will wear a school uniform. This will give children the sense of belonging to the whole school.

Who will teach my child?

At Caboolture East State School the Prep teachers are Mrs MacMahon, Mrs Searle and Mrs Barrow.

Will the children in the preparatory class be able to have rest time?

Our Prep teachers will respond to the needs of children by providing rest time where appropriate.

What will children be learning in the preparatory year?

The Queensland Early Years Curriculum has been developed by the Queensland Studies Authority. It focuses on the factors that help children to be successful in school including:

- Social and emotional competence
- Health and physical wellbeing
- Early literacy and numeracy
- Active learning processes

• Positive attitudes to learning

Will children learn to read and write in the preparatory year?

The Early Years Curriculum Guidelines provide scope for teachers to address the specific learning needs of children in their classes. Those children showing an interest in and a readiness to participate in early literacy and numeracy experiences such as early reading and writing will be supported.

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.

What are children 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.

How will the 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

What will Prep classrooms look like at Caboolture East State School?

The Prep classroom is a fun and exciting place for children to learn and will generally consist 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 will also include a kitchen and preparation area and access to an outdoor learning space.