Ormeau State School

Getting Ready For Prep
WHAT IS PREP?

Prep is recognised as the first year of school in Queensland and with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, full-time attendance in Prep gives students the foundation they need for successful learning in Year 1. To be eligible for Prep a child must turn 5 years old by 30 June in the year they start Prep.

Prep provides the foundation for your child’s success at school by developing:
- a positive approach to learning
- independence and confidence
- thinking and problem-solving skills
- language skills
- early literacy and numeracy
- physical abilities, including gross and fine motor skills.

Prep programs are based on the following principles for the early phase of learning:
1. Children are capable and competent and have been learning since birth.
2. Children build deep understanding when they learn through all senses and are offered choice in their learning experience.
3. Children learn best through interactions, active exploration, experimentation and by representing their learning through a variety of modes.
4. Children’s positive dispositions to learning, and to themselves as learners, are essential for success in school and beyond.
5. Children learn best in environments where there are supportive relationships among all partners in the learning community.
6. Early childhood programs are most effective when they recognise, value and build upon the cultural and social experiences of children.
7. Building continuity of learning as children move through school provides foundations for their success.
8. Assessment of young children is an integral part of the learning-teaching process and is not a separate activity.

The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.

~ Denis Waitley ~
We feel very privileged that you have chosen Ormeau State School to help set the foundations of your child’s education. Together, with your support we believe we will be able to start your child on the right journey for life-long learning and show him or her how to have fun whilst enjoying what he or she learns.

At Ormeau State School, Prep is a **full-time program** and students attend from **Monday to Friday from 8:50am – 3:00pm**. It is expected that your child attends every day unless there is a legitimate reason to be away, such as illness.

Our Prep curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum for **English, Mathematics, Science, History** and **Geography**; and the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines for **social and personal learning, health and physical learning**, and **active learning processes**. Your child will get to experience the curriculum through a range of learning situations including real-life situations, focused learning and teaching, investigations, routines and transitions, and play.

At Ormeau State School we believe that all students are individuals and therefore have different needs and develop their skills and knowledge at different rates. For this reason, prior to commencing school, we will assess your child using the Brigance Early Childhood Screen. This gives us information about your child so we can better plan for his or her individual needs from his or her first day of Prep. Once your child has started school, his or her classroom teacher will continue to assess and monitor your child’s progress and adjust his or her learning programs to cater for his or her needs.

At the end of each semester your child will receive a report card outlining his or her achievements. Parent/Teacher interviews are also offered twice a year. Of course you are welcome to speak with your child’s teacher at other times to discuss your child’s progress and needs.

Prep is integrated fully into the rest of the school and Prep students and their teachers have access to all school facilities (e.g. oval, computer labs, resource centre, Science lab) and resources. However our Prep students do have a **separate playground area**. To develop a sense of belonging Prep students wear the same school uniform as the rest of the school. However to help us to identify our Prep students, they do wear a different coloured hat.

We trust that you and your child will enjoy your time at Ormeau State School. Please help us to get to know you and your child by becoming an active part of our school community and keeping in touch about your child’s progress and wellbeing.
IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR SCHOOL?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READINESS QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Is your child usually happy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child accept correction and suggestion without becoming upset?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child socialise well with other children?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child respond positively to adults other than family members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child contribute to conversation appropriately?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is your child confident when speaking in front of people?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is your child’s speech clear?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child have a fairly wide vocabulary?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child perform daily routine tasks alone?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child take care of personal belongings?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child dress independently – such as doing up buttons, shoelaces, etc.?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child go to the toilet and wash their hands independently?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child share and take turns?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child generally finish tasks?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child work alone without being distracted?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child work well in a group?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child use scissors correctly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child hold a thick pencil or crayon correctly and draw in bold lines?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child copy a circle, square, cross, rectangle and triangle?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child recognise colours and shapes, and correctly name these?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child remember and follow instructions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READINESS QUESTIONS (continued)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child express their ideas fluently?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child retell a simple story in correct sequence?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child discriminate visually between similar things?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child discriminate between similar-sounding words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child rhyme simple words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child tell a story based on a picture or sequence of pictures?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child enjoy books, stories and rhymes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child show an interest in the printed word and hold a book in the correct position for reading?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child have the correct pencil grip? (Refer the following pages.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child tell the difference between letters and words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child know his/her first and last name?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child recognise his/her name?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child know some of the letters in his/her name?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child attempt to count?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child recognise his/her own school bag, hat, lunchbox, jumpers etc?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can your child unwrap and undo items that you will be providing in their lunch?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your child talk about starting Prep and seem excited to begin school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has your child seen and walked through the school grounds?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you answer “YES” to most of the questions, your child should settle in to the Prep day and various routines readily and happily.

If you didn’t answer “YES” to most of the questions, don’t panic...there is still time for child to become more prepared and ready for school. Remember also that the teachers and other school staff will be able to assist your child in settling in to school routine.
GETTING YOUR CHILD INTERESTED IN
~ READING ~

Ready Aloud to Your Child – Reading aloud to children is the best way to get them interested in reading. Before long they will grow to love stories and books. Eventually they will want to read on their own.

Talk to Your Child – Oral language is the foundation for reading. Listening and speaking are a child's first introduction to language. Talking and singing teaches your child the sounds of language, making it easier for him or her to learn how to read. You could play rhyming games; sing songs, such as the alphabet song and reciting nursery rhymes; get your child to tell you what he or she thinks or feels; or ask your child lots of questions.

Make Reading Fun – Reading aloud can be a lot of fun, not just for parents but for all family members. To get the most out of reading to your child try reading with drama and excitement (e.g. use your child’s name instead of a character’s name); re-read your child’s favourite stories; read stories that have repetitive parts and encourage your child to join in. Remember, the more you enjoy the reading experience, the more your child will enjoy it.

Read Every Day – Children love routine, and reading is something that you and your child can look forward to every day. By taking the time to read with your child, you show him or her that reading is important and fun to do. Keep reading to your child even after he or she has learned to read. By reading stories that will interest your child but that are above his or her reading level, you can stretch your child’s understanding and keep alive the magic of shared reading.

Set an Example – As a parent, you are your child’s most important role model. If your child sees you reading, especially for pleasure or information, he or she will understand that reading is a worthwhile activity. You can also share many daily reading activities with your child. Daily reading activities include: reading recipes, food labels, schedules, maps, instructions, brochures, traffic signs, signs in stores and restaurants, greeting cards, letters, e-mail messages, information in cookbooks, manuals, phone books, atlases, and dictionaries.

Talk About Books – Talking about the books you read to or with your child is just as important as reading them. Discussing a story or a book with your child helps your child understand it and connect it to his or her own experience of life. It also helps enrich your child’s vocabulary with new words and phrases. You could also encourage your child to ask questions and to comment on the story and pictures in a book – before, during, and after reading it.


For further ideas you could try looking at the following websites:
• www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/earlyreading/index.html
• www.education.qld.gov.au/literacyandnumeracy
• www.letsread.com.au
GETTING YOUR CHILD INTERESTED IN ~ WRITING ~

✓ Make sure your child sees you writing for many reasons (lists for shopping or chores, letters, survey returns, diary notes, journals, etc.)

✓ Have plenty of paper around for scribbling on – backs of printed matter, roll of butcher paper, used notebooks, etc.

✓ Encourage your child to write along with you, as you are writing (on a different bit of paper, of course!) Say, “I’m going to write out my shopping list now; why don’t you make one, too!”

✓ Praise and encourage attempts, regardless of misspelled words.

✓ A small desk with butcher paper taped to it, and a can of crayons makes a busy workstation.

✓ Ask your child to write you a story and read it back. Make sure you “ummm” and “ahhh” at all the exciting bits, even when you know they have only written strings of letters or squiggles.

✓ Get your child to copy designs, shapes and patterns that you make for them.

✓ Write your child’s name in prominent places, and teach them the names of the letters. Write their name for them, and ask them to copy.

✓ Ask your child to make signs for things around the house – “Jack’s Bed”, etc.

✓ Colouring books and copybooks from supermarkets and educational shops are always heaps of fun.
PENCIL GRIP

✓ Pencil should be held against the index finger, on, or just behind the first knuckle.

✓ Pencil rests on the middle finger on the nail fold.

✓ There should be a distance of approximately 2-2.5 cm (right-handed writers) or 3-3.5cm (left-handed writers) from the writing point of the writing instrument to the tip of the index finger.

✓ Pencil should not rest in the 'web’ between the thumb and the index finger.

✓ The side of the little finger and hand form a shape similar to a question mark (in mirror image for left-handed writers). This creates the hand support.

✓ Support the pencil between the thumb and the index finger. Try to use the tip of the thumb, not the ’pad’ underneath.
QUEENSLAND BEGINNERS SCRIPT (continued)
GETTING YOUR CHILD INTERESTED IN ~ MATHEMATICS ~

• **Count everything!** Count toys, kitchen utensils, and items of clothing as they come out of the dryer. Help your child count by pointing to and moving the objects as you say each number out loud.

• **Sing counting songs and read counting books.** Every culture has counting songs, such as "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" and "Ten Little Monkeys", which make learning to count – both forwards and backwards – fun for children. Counting books also capture children's imagination, by using pictures of interesting things to count and to add.

• **Discover the many ways in which numbers are used inside and outside your home.** Take your child on a "number hunt" in your home or neighbourhood. Point out how numbers are used on the television set, the microwave, and the telephone. Spot numbers in books and newspapers. Look for numbers on signs in your neighbourhood.

• **Measure items found around the house.** Have your child find objects that are longer or shorter than a shoe or a string or a ruler. Fill different containers with sand in a sandpit or with water in the bath, and see which containers hold more and which hold less.

• **Identify shapes and sizes.** When playing with your child, identify things by their shape and size: "Pass me a sugar cube." "Take the largest cereal box out of the cupboard."

• **Hide a toy and use directional language to help your child find it.** Give clues using words and phrases such as *up*, *down*, *over*, *under*, *between*, *through*, and *on top of*.

• **Create patterns using your body.** Clap and stomp your foot in a particular sequence (clap, clap, stomp), have your child repeat the same sequence, then create variations of the pattern together.

• **Sort household items.** As your child tidies up toys or clothing, discuss which items should go together and why. Encourage your child to sort other household items – crayons by colour, cutlery by type or shape, coins by denomination.

• **Play games.** Play games in which your child finds objects of particular colours and shapes around the house or in the neighbourhood as you drive. (e.g. I spy something that is green...) You can also play games that involve numbers (e.g. *Fish, Snap, Memory, Bingo*).


For further ideas you could try looking at the following websites:

GETTING YOUR CHILD INTERESTED IN
ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP
FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Fine Motor Skills
• **Encourage your child to play with play dough.** Show your child how to knead the play dough to soften it. Mould the dough into figures of people or animals. Use rollers and biscuit cutters to roll out and cut the dough into different shapes. Play dough is a fun way to strengthen the muscles of the hand that will be used for writing.

• **Give your child items to thread.**

• **Give your child old magazines or newspapers to cut up,** or allow him or her to **make a collage** of the things he or she likes by cutting them from magazines and gluing them to a piece of paper.

• **Give your child several different writing options** (coloured pencils, crayons or markers) to help keep her interested in writing and drawing.

• **Purchase a good pair of child-safe scissors and let your child practice.** (If your child is left-handed, be sure to get left-handed scissors). Cutting with scissors takes a great deal of finger dexterity and so can be frustrating for young children.
  - Show your child how to hold scissors, how to open and close them, and how to hold and turn the paper while cutting.
  - Draw short horizontal lines on the edge of a piece of paper with a texta.
    - Have your child cut along the lines to make a fringe.
  - Give your child simple shapes to cut out.

Gross Motor Skills
• **Practise walking and hopping skills on a line of masking tape.** Use masking tape on the floor to make a straight line. Say, “Walk on tiptoe on the line.” Demonstrate. Or ask your child to hop along the line on one foot.

• **Demonstrate running** in your backyard or in a nearby playground. Encourage your child to follow along. You might say, “Run from the swings to the fence”. Set up timed races and simple obstacle course to make it fun.

• **Play catch with your child and make it fun.** Start with soft rubber balls, wool, beanbags or foam balls and move up to larger, firmer balls. Start slowly, tossing the ball gently into the child’s midsection to make it easy to catch. Encourage him or her to toss it back. Keep it short; 10 to 15 minutes is usually the maximum time younger children want to play catch.

• **Play a game of kickball.** Like catching, start in a small area, quite close together. Your child might begin simply rolling the ball with the tip of his foot. You can kick the ball back to your child and enjoy a game of “kick the ball”.

• **Set up a bowling game with your child.** You can use milk cartons, shoeboxes, blocks or yoghurt containers. Set up a few “pins” and have your child knock them down by tossing or rolling a ball from a reasonable distance.
PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

Starting school can be an exciting but stressful time for you and your child. For some children it may be the first time that they have been away from their parents. They may be going into a strange environment with unfamiliar people and things around them.

There are some simple steps you can take to help make your child’s time at school more enjoyable and relaxed.

Encourage your child to be independent by helping them get used to:
• being away from his or her parents (organise times for them to be left with family and friends)
• putting on and doing up his or her shoes
• eating and drinking without help (opening lunchboxes, wrapping and unwrapping school lunches and drinking from drink bottles)
• caring for and putting away play things
• using a handkerchief or tissue
• going to the toilet independently
• using playground equipment safely
• carrying his or her own bag
• identifying his or her own belongings
• cleaning up and putting his or her own toys or belongings away.

Work with your child to develop his or her communication and social skills. Help your child to:
• make his or her own needs known
• use appropriate greetings
• respond verbally when spoken to
• share toys and items with other children
• take turns and wait patiently
• follow directions
• play appropriately with and care for all equipment.

Familiarise your child with the school environment and routine by:
• attending the interview with your child prior to him or her commencing (as part of the interview your child will be assessed using the Brigance Early Childhood Screen)
• showing your child where to put his or her things, such as a school bag and hat
• making sure your child knows how to get home from school safely or where to wait for you in the afternoon or where to go for after-school care
• introducing your child to other children in the neighbourhood who will be attending the same school
• purchasing the required equipment and materials such as school bag, library bag and hat (as per the booklist). Make sure all possessions are clearly labelled with your child’s name
• purchasing the school uniform and shoes and allowing your child to wear them for short periods of time
• encourage children to understand that teachers are at school to help.
ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

There are some simple steps you can take to make your child’s first day at school more enjoyable and relaxed. Be prepared. The best thing you can do is to make the first day as stress-free and relaxed as possible.

The day before write a list of all you’ll need to organise, such as food and a change of clothing. Stick the list to the fridge and tick each item off with your child as you complete it.

On the day:
• leave plenty of time to get ready
• make a nutritious breakfast — this is essential for sustained energy and concentration
• make sure your child has all the equipment (as per the booklist) and that items are clearly named
• all your child pack his or her own bag
• talk through the daily routine — start, lunch and finish times (Remind him or her of the arrangements for leaving and collecting: “Once we get to school, Mum/Dad will stay a little while, and then we’ll have to go. We’ll be back at 3:00 and will meet you ______.”)
• talk through a few simple self-help ideas — for example, asking teachers for help or directions
• be positive and encouraging about your child’s attendance at school
• avoid a rush (Leave home on time and allow time to say goodbye. At first you may stay a while to ensure your child feels secure. Once your child has settled in, a short and reassuring goodbye encourages independence.)
• be flexible in the early days of school, children may take a little while to settle in.

Packing the school lunch
Being at school is hard work, so by lunchtime your child will be hungry and thirsty. They will need a nutritious and filling lunch.

When packing your child’s lunch:
• provide healthy food and drink in realistic quantities for morning tea and lunch
• ensure that your child can open and unwrap their lunch — plastic film wrap and other food wrappers can be very difficult for little fingers
• avoid ring-pull cans as these can be difficult for children to open
• provide a variety of smaller items rather than one or two large items
• include an ice pack if items need to be keep cold (e.g. yoghurt) – the school does not provide refrigerators to keep lunches cold
• provide a water bottle every day and encourage your child to drink from it
• keep sweets, chips and other party food for parties or special occasions.
**ONCE SCHOOL STARTS**

- Continue to let your child do his or her own tasks:
  - get the uniform ready the night before
  - pack/unpack bag
  - carry bag and put on bag rack
  - get equipment and water bottle out for the day
  - take resources and notes into the classroom and put in correct places.

- Be available if your child wants to talk to you – encourage positive talk about their day at school.

- Visit your child’s classroom:
  - Meet other parents.
  - Your child can show you their room, activities and displays.

- Keep in contact with our child’s teacher:
  - Foster the school-home link
  - Write notes, phone, and drop in before or after school (but make an appointment if you need to discuss something as teachers are very busy in that time just before and after school).
  - Attend parent information sessions and parent/teacher interviews

- Become a classroom helper:
  - Respond to requests
  - Help with activities, small group play, excursions
  - Offer to help with making things at home, if you work outside the home and can’t come in to school

- At home, value your child’s creations and awards – have a special display space, book, etc.

- Note special days or needs for particular days – library, music, PE, excursions, etc. Help your child to become independent in remembering these as well.

- Attend events and performances.

- Help at the Tuckshop.

- Attend P&C meetings and assist organising events.

- Make the office aware of current phone numbers, address and medical conditions, and advise immediately of any changes. Also, make sure your emergency contacts are up-to-date.

- A child may face initial difficulties in the first few weeks of Prep, but most are quickly overcome. Stay positive, even if there appears to be some difficulty.
It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings.