



**Ready  
for Prep?**



**STAINES**  
MEMORIAL COLLEGE  
*transforming lives*





# Ready for Prep?

Choosing the right time for your child to start Prep is a significant decision and should be made with their long-term educational success in mind. Prep is the first year of formal, compulsory schooling, rather than simply a transition year between Kindy and school.

Recent updates to the Australian Curriculum have increased the academic expectations of Prep, making it more structured and rigorous than in previous years. It is essential that children are developmentally ready to begin in a formal schooling environment, so they can thrive from the start.

Recognising that all children grow and mature at different rates, Queensland offers a flexible two-year entry window for Prep. Children can start Prep in the year they turn five by June 30, or the following year, as long as they begin before reaching the compulsory school age of 6 to 6½. There is no need for formal assessments or documentation (such as from a doctor or paediatrician) to delay entry. This allows families to make the decision that best supports their child's individual readiness and learning journey.

# What will I see if my child is ready for Prep?

When your child is ready for Prep, they will be able to do most of these things confidently:

## Fine Motor Skills

1. Holds a pencil with an appropriate grip
2. Draws recognisable pictures of people and talks about them
3. Copies simple shapes (circle, triangle, square)
4. Cuts along a 10cm line and cuts simple shapes with scissors
5. Completes interlocking puzzles (8–10 pieces)
6. Manages small tasks like opening/closing containers and packing away items
7. Demonstrates control and coordination in hand movements (e.g. sorting, tracing)

## Gross Motor Skills

1. Moves confidently around kindy and new environments
2. Understands spatial directions (up/down, next to, under/on top of)
3. Joins group movement (lining up, transitions)
4. Plays imaginatively inside and outside
5. Throws, catches, kicks a ball, jumps, hops and balances on one foot for 10 seconds





### **Cognitive Skills**

1. Recognises and writes own first name; recognises letters and begins to know their sounds
2. Understands basic reading conventions (e.g. tracking left to right)
3. Identifies colours (primary and secondary) and geometric shapes
4. Sorts and classifies objects by colour, size, and function
5. Understands and uses basic concepts (big/small, more/less, under/over, etc.)
6. Counts groups of 10+ objects, recognises numbers, and begins basic problem-solving
7. Listens to stories, answers questions, identifies rhymes, and retells parts of stories

### **Independence Skills**

1. Uses the toilet without help and follows hygiene routines
2. Dresses self, including shoes and socks
3. Manages own belongings (jumper, hat, bag, lunchbox, drink bottle)
4. Opens/closes lunchboxes and packs them away
5. Follows basic routines and safety rules independently

### **Communication Skills**

1. Speaks clearly and confidently to adults and peers; talks in sentences
2. Engages in reciprocal conversations and group discussions
3. Answers inferential questions and retells stories or rhymes
4. Follows three-step directions and seeks clarification if needed
5. Describes experiences and understands requests
6. Participates actively in conversations and listens attentively
7. Focuses in social situations such as carpet time for 5–10 minutes

### **Social Skills**

1. Follows instructions and stops activities when asked.
2. Separates from parents calmly
3. Shares, takes turns, and plays cooperatively for 20+ minutes
4. Seeks and accepts help; begins tasks independently
5. Engages in imaginative play and tries new activities confidently
6. Understands others' feelings and interacts positively with a range of people
7. Manages emotions and frustration without hurting other people or things



## What a day in Kindy is like:

Kindy is a play-based learning environment guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines (QKLG). It focuses on supporting children's growth across five key learning and development areas:

Identity, Connectedness, Wellbeing, Active Learning, and Communication.

The program blends child-initiated, guided, and adult-planned experiences, all designed to prepare children for school while fostering social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Teachers observe each child's interests and developmental needs, using these insights to plan meaningful learning experiences that promote curiosity and independence.

A typical day in Kindy follows a consistent yet flexible routine. In warmer months, the day often begins with outdoor play, where activities are intentionally set up based on teacher observations and reflective planning. Children then gather for group time, where music, stories, and games are used to support learning in early literacy, numeracy, and social development.

Following group time, children engage in table-top activities that extend their learning. They then take a bathroom and hygiene break, followed by their first eating break, where self-help and fine motor skills are developed.

After eating, children explore self-selected indoor and outdoor activities, with resources tailored to their interests and needs. Teachers continue observing and assessing during this time to inform future planning. The day includes a second break, rest time, and more learning through supported activities and free play.

Every aspect of the day supports a child-led and strengths-based approach, recognising each specific child's individuality, needs and interests, aimed to foster their love of learning.

## Differences between learning in Kindy and Prep

The key difference between Kindy and Prep is in how learning is planned and delivered. In Kindy, teachers closely observe each child's interests, strengths, and developmental needs, using these observations to plan individualised,

play-based learning experiences. The program is child-led and flexible, allowing teachers to adapt the day's activities to suit the specific needs of each child. In contrast, Prep follows the Australian Curriculum, a standards-based framework

## What a day in Prep is like:

In Prep, learning is guided by the Australian Curriculum, which tells us what content must be taught and when. Students engage in a broad range of subject areas each week, including English, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Health, Physical Education, Languages (Spanish), and the Arts. The program is also regulated by the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board, which governs how learning time is allocated. As a result, the daily schedule is structured, and all students are expected to participate in the planned learning experiences.



While the curriculum is formal, teachers aim to make learning fun, engaging, and developmentally appropriate for young children. The focus is on building foundational literacy and numeracy skills while also encouraging social, emotional, and physical development.

Each school day is divided into morning, middle, and afternoon sessions, separated by breaks for food and play. The day begins with Devotions, including Bible stories and songs. They also learn about Character Strengths and how we can intentionally develop ourselves to be the best we can be. This is followed by a strong focus on English, where students develop their reading and writing skills through phonics, word building, and sentence writing.

The middle session typically involves Mathematics, covering number sense, counting, addition, subtraction, and pattern recognition. After a fruit snack, students return to more English-based learning such as reading, writing and grammar.

In the afternoon, students explore other subjects like Science, Health, and Technology, as well as specialist lessons in areas such as PE, Languages, and the Arts. Break times include eating followed by free play, where children develop motor, social, and exploratory skills in thoughtfully designed indoor and outdoor areas.

that outlines exactly what must be taught and when. Teachers in Prep have less flexibility, as each day is structured around set subject areas and time allocations, making it more difficult to tailor learning experiences to individuals.

While teachers in Prep still support and encourage each student, the focus shifts from personalised, interest-driven learning to ensuring that all students meet the same curriculum outcomes.

# Success in Prep and beyond

To succeed in Prep, children need to be ready. This means having a strong foundation in key areas (outlined in the table above), particularly in social, emotional and communication skills. It is especially important that they can get along with others, take turns, follow teacher instructions, and smoothly transition between activities. These skills are a key focus in the Kindy year and are vital for success.

When children begin Prep with these skills in place, they are more likely to thrive. However, if a child is still developing these foundational abilities, it can be difficult for them to fully engage with the academic learning. This can lead to feelings of overwhelm and lead to early doubts about their abilities as a learner, even though those doubts are not a true reflection of their potential.

We want every child to start school believing in themselves, knowing they are capable, and feel confident at school. Whether a child begins Prep at 4½ or closer to 6½ matters less than how they see themselves as a learner and how they feel about school. Our ultimate goal is to nurture children who enjoy learning and believe in themselves, setting them on a path to becoming enthusiastic, lifelong learners.





# Parent feedback

“Our own child was 5 years & 10 months on day dot of their Prep year... best decision to give a delayed exit out of C&K Kindy for a delay entry into Prep Year. A child learns through play - give them the freedom of play based learning as long as you can - as sitting at a desk for 13 straight years is a long time!!”

“Depends on the kid. I wish I had waited for my early June baby. She was “fine”, but cracks soon started to appear, and I think if she was older she may have coped better with some aspects, particularly in her older years. Now I worry that she’ll be 11 for the first 4 months of high school. My eldest turned 12 just before she started and even that seemed too young. **Giving them an extra year of actual play-based learning isn’t holding them back.**”

“Think of it this way, they have 13 years of school you are setting them up for, you need to look at long term effects and outcomes. Would you prefer your child to thrive or survive school. Many people who send at 4 turning 5 don't regret during the first few years but regret once they are older and reaching high school as the maturity and differences become more apparent. I delayed started my May baby and she is now in Year 1 and thriving. I was told by Kindy and daycare that she was fine to start at 4, but I didn't think she was. Would she have survived? Yes, but it's 13 years of school I want her to thrive. I wanted her to be a kid without pressures and demands of school and give her the best chance to thrive. You will find it is extremely rare for parents who delayed start to regret it, but you will find about a third/quarter of parents who sent them at 4, turning 5, regret it, especially once they hit high school.”

“Younger kids might be ok in primary school but once they get to high school there’s a lot more to deal with outside academics and that is where the extra year of maturity really shows. Also, [some] kindy and childcare teachers seem to underestimate the maturity needed for Prep. I think their opinions and school teacher opinions really seem to differ on that. Personally, if I even had the slightest doubt I would wait until they’re 5 turning 6.”



## Prep testing

At Staines Memorial College, we use Brigance testing to assess each student's development. The Brigance test is an internationally recognised set of assessments used mainly in early childhood and primary education but is also used by allied health professionals such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists and psychologists. It measures a child's general development and school readiness across key areas such as:

- Language and Literacy (vocabulary, reading readiness, writing)
- Mathematics (numbers, shapes, early operations)
- Motor Skills (fine and gross motor)
- Social-Emotional Development (behaviours, self-help skills)
- Adaptive Behaviour (daily living skills)



# Mission and Vision

At Staines Memorial College, our mission is to provide a distinctly Christian education, partnering with families to provide a holistic learning experience based on the Biblical worldview in which the hearts and minds of young people can grow and pursue their full potential for God. Our vision is that students grow in faith, learning and character.

The Prep year sets the foundation for students to thrive. When children begin Prep with the skills, confidence, and attitudes needed for learning, they are able to engage more fully in classroom activities, build positive relationships, and develop a love of learning. With these strong foundations, students are more likely to experience success; growing in their faith, learning, and character throughout their time at Staines.



