

Every student succeeding  
State Schools Strategy 2014–2018

# Guide for Queensland state school principals for early entry to Prep in 2016

Principals are best placed to make decisions about early entry to Prep based on information available and using their professional judgement. They have the authority to decide which children will be accepted for early entry to their school. The principal's decision is made in the best educational interests of the child and is not subject to internal review.

## When do children start Prep in Queensland?

Queensland children are eligible to attend Prep if they reach the age of 5 years by 30 June in the year they propose to attend Prep. All Queensland children are encouraged to complete a quality kindergarten program in the year before Prep. Kindergarten remains the best education option for all children, regardless of their ability prior to commencing school.

## Who is eligible for early entry to Prep?

Early entry to Prep is an exception and should only be considered where it is in the best educational interests of a child.

Section 15 of the *Education General Provisions Regulation 2006* allows early entry to Prep for a child who:

### EITHER

- 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 on or before 31 July); **AND**
- is considered 'ready for education in the year of schooling considering the child's attributes';

### OR

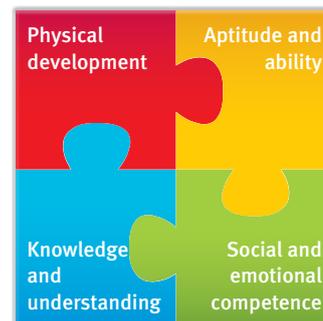
- had started education in another state or country that is equivalent to Prep; **AND**
- is considered ready for education in the year of schooling considering the child's attributes.

A July birthday does not guarantee early entry to Prep.

## What does the regulation mean by attributes?

The regulation describes attributes as:

- apptitude and ability; and
- social and emotional competence; and
- physical development; and
- level of knowledge and understanding.



## How is an application for early entry decided?

### Step 1

- When approached by a parent considering early entry to Prep, the principal will engage with the parent and discuss the impacts on children when they start school early.

### Step 2

- If the parent wishes to make a formal application for early entry to Prep, the principal will provide the parents with the application form for early entry to Prep.

### Step 3

- Principals will determine a child's readiness for school considering the child's attributes. In making the decision, principals can use the decision-making matrix overleaf. Principals may consider evidence provided by the parent to support the application and discuss the

child's attributes with relevant school staff such as Prep teachers, guidance officers and support staff in regional offices where appropriate. The principal may invite the parent and child to meet to discuss and observe the child's attributes and readiness for school. Parents are not required to provide any formal assessment conducted by a psychologist or other professional.

#### Step 4

- Principals will notify the parent in writing of the decision regarding the application.

#### In assessing a child's attributes, what specific skills and abilities should be considered?

In making a decision about a child's early entry to Prep, principals must consider what is in the child's best interests for achieving success throughout their schooling. While a child may be extremely capable in certain areas of knowledge or have high levels of skill, they might not have developed the social or emotional maturity required for early entry to Prep and success at school.

The *Early entry to Prep decision-making matrix* can be used to assist principals in the decision-making process.

Principals can use the matrix to indicate a child's level of readiness according to each of the four attributes described in the regulation. Once a level of readiness has been determined for each attribute, the principal can make a decision regarding an application for early entry to Prep considering all the attributes required for success at school.

When making a decision as to where a child fits on the matrix, the indicators detailed overleaf should be considered by the principal.

It should be recognised that each child is unique and development will vary between individuals. Each of these indicators and attributes should be considered collectively to form a view of the child's readiness for Prep.

This list of indicators is a guide only and is not exhaustive. In making a decision, principals should apply their professional judgement.

### Early entry to Prep decision-making matrix

Level of readiness	Attributes			
	Aptitude and ability	Social and emotional competence	Physical development	Knowledge and understanding
Displays very few or none of the indicators – early entry into Prep is not in the best educational interests of the child				
Displays only some of the indicators – it is unlikely that early entry into Prep is in the best educational interests of the child				
Displays many of the indicators but there are still significant gaps – it is unlikely that early entry into Prep is in the best educational interests of the child				
Displays most of the indicators – early entry to Prep may be in the best educational interests of the child				

## Attribute – *Aptitude and ability*

### Indicators

The child:

- confidently makes choices/decisions and follows through
- makes several attempts to complete a new or challenging experience before seeking help
- talks confidently, including expressing feelings and ideas, to familiar and unfamiliar people
- attempts to resolve conflict by suggesting modelled strategies
- actively participates in familiar and new group learning experiences
- recognises a problem and ways to solve it
- actively seeks and accepts help from familiar and unfamiliar adults
- is willing to contribute thoughts, ideas and solutions
- has awareness of and attention to routines, roles and responsibilities
- responds to ideas using imagination and in a range of ways
- recalls past experiences, events, or discussions.

## Attribute – *Social and emotional competence*

### Indicators

The child:

- applies awareness of their own and others' rights in familiar situations
- observes, asks questions and explains simple changes in their environment over time
- engages positively with familiar and new experiences, and manages unexpected situations and changes
- eagerly contributes to new and challenging experiences
- cooperates with others in a range of social and learning situations. For example, the child can play and show self-control
- shows respect for others
- demonstrates coping skills and resilience when things don't go to plan
- interacts appropriately with other children and adults
- self-manages own belongings and activities with independence
- shows responsibility such as helping to tidy up after activities
- uses language to communicate ideas, knowledge and feelings (oral language/augmentative language); and can express their own needs.
- behaves appropriately in situations (e.g. rarely or never shows aggressive behaviours, is able to demonstrate helping behaviours)
- copes well with separation from parent/s for the duration of a school day.

## Attribute – *Physical development*

### Indicators

The child:

- confidently uses fine and gross motor skills to complete tasks
- sustains active involvement in challenging experiences
- monitors and manages own physical needs (e.g. toileting)
- sustains energy and displays endurance across the learning and routine expectations of a school day.

## Attribute – *Level of knowledge and understanding*

### Indicators

The child:

- listens, observes and communicates with others in a range of learning contexts
- applies knowledge from past learning to a new learning situation
- applies some modelled or familiar thinking routines to help solve problems
- independently maintains focus when engaging in a range of familiar experiences
- willingly engages in creating and using different types of texts
- experiments with copying and forming letters and assigns a meaning to their writing
- uses letter names, if in a familiar context
- uses a variety of vocabulary when classifying, sorting, sequencing and comparing everyday materials and objects
- shows understanding of spatial positions and directions, and uses language to support these
- is familiar with printed material (e.g. can handle a book and can recognise some letters, numbers and symbols).

## Useful resources

There is a range of resources available to assist a principal in making a decision about early entry to Prep. A principal may consult with relevant school staff such as Prep teachers, guidance officers and support staff in Regional Offices where appropriate or use the resources available to these personnel such as assessment or testing to assist in their decision making.

The following documents can also be used as reference points for the attributes of children's learning and development and may assist in informing the early entry to Prep decision-making process:

[Being, Belonging and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#)

[Continua of learning and development – Queensland kindergarten learning guideline companion](#)

Department of Education and Training – [Information for parents and carers](#)

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) – Kindergarten curriculum

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) – [Continua of learning and development – Queensland Kindergarten learning guideline companion](#)