



**Starting
Prep at
Peregian Springs
State School**

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

We look forward to your child starting our school. It is a time of change and great excitement and parents often ask what they can do to assist the educational progress of their child. This guide has been prepared to give you some ideas. It accompanies our general Parent Handbook which you will find on the Enrolment Page at www.peregianspringssss.eq.edu.

It is important to teachers that positive contact with parents is established and maintained early in the year and we are happy to initiate this partnership with parents in this guide.

Please do not hesitate to call on your child's teacher or myself at any time you have a question or concern about the educational progress or development of your child.

I hope you will find the information in this package useful.

Regards

Gwen Sands

Principal

Peregian Springs State School

PREPARATORY YEAR - Curriculum

It is widely accepted that the early years of learning are among the most significant periods of growth for children. Experiences during this time not only affect cognitive, social and physical development, but deeply influence dispositions to learning and children's view of themselves as learners.

The **five key components** of the Prep year are:

1. Understanding Children: Prep teachers provide children with a holistic curriculum, based on understanding how children learn and develop and how they interpret responses into learning experiences. Prep teachers respond to each child's interests, ideas, needs, concerns and support their future learning.

2. Building Partnerships: Effective partnerships exist between children, with families, with communities and with other professionals. Effective partnerships include the formal and the informal relationships and processes in which people or groups participate to support children's learning and development.

Effective partnerships in Prep are characterised by the sharing of common goals and expectations, communicating openly and treating each other with respect.

3. Flexible Learning Environments: Prep teachers organise the physical, social and temporal environment in collaboration with children and other partners to provide a high quality learning environment. Effective learning environments are designed to:

- promote co-construction of learning through interactions with others and the environments.
- enable children to actively engage socially and intellectually in their learning.
- support learning through the 5 learning contexts (play, investigations, real life situations, focus learning and teaching, routines and transitions).
- facilitate the integration of learning experiences across the 5 early learning areas (social and personal learning, health and physical learning, language learning and communication, early mathematics understanding and active learning processes).
- promote aesthetic awareness by providing children with opportunities to engage in sensory experiences.

4. Contexts for Learning: Prep teachers purposefully create five main contexts for learning and development:

PLAY - through play children develop thinking and problem-solving strategies. They use and extend oral language capabilities, learn literacy and numeracy practices, explore a range of ways to symbolise experiences and develop imagination and creativity. Play provides meaningful opportunities for children to explore learning from a range of learning areas and transfer learning from one situation to another. Play also provides valuable contexts within which teachers can monitor and assess.

REAL LIFE SITUATIONS - these situations allow teachers to take into account and draw on social and cultural diversity and local community priorities and/or needs. Real Life learning situations enable children to build connections between their home, community and classroom experiences.

INVESTIGATIONS - generally investigations involve children interacting with people, objects and representations as they enquire, explore and test ideas. Investigations in Prep provide opportunities to explore ways to communicate; investigate social, natural and built environments; and experiment with artistic, scientific, technological and mathematical ideas and processes.

ROUTINES AND TRANSITIONS - routines include regular organised events as well as major teaching and learning strategies that form regular parts of the Prep program. Organisational routines are valuable for developing independence and personal identities while transitions times are used to introduce concepts, provide meaningful practice of skills, recall information, and make connections between classroom discussions and share knowledge.

FOCUS LEARNING AND TEACHING - whether planned, child or adult initiated or occurring spontaneously, focus learning and teaching provides opportunities in which teachers purposefully and skilfully make learning explicit.

5. Exploring What Children Know: The Prep Curriculum encompasses the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Science, Technologies, Health and Physical Education and The Arts.

Prep classrooms at Peregrin Springs State School are lively, colourful, dynamic and ever changing. Within our Prep classrooms you will find passionate professionals and actively engaged children, who together will produce a year of exciting education! Prep classes operate under the same policy and procedural guidelines as the rest of the school, so please consult the relevant areas of the Parent Handbook for any questions you may have regarding Prep.

BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

WE SUGGEST YOU:

- Introduce the school. Drive past many times. Talk about what will happen. Show your child over the school so they know where the toilets are, where you will pick them up, where the buses arrive, etc
- Visit your family doctor or clinic to get complete physical examinations, including speech, hearing and vision, and let us know if there are special circumstances we need to cater for. Early identification of these issues can save a lot of angst in the future.
- Check that all relevant vaccinations are current.



HELPFUL HABITS:

Encourage your child to develop helpful habits. Please take the time to mark off the things you know your child can do, then practise or discuss the others.

- Can put on and fasten own shoes (laces, Velcro, etc)
- Can put on and fasten own clothes (buttons, zips, etc)
- Cooperate and share with others
- Use Common Courtesies. The school has a list of Common Courtesies that are encouraged by all staff. Some important ones are:
 - asking to go to the toilet politely
 - not interrupting adults
 - using names when speaking to people
 - saying 'please' and 'thank you'
- Be responsible – help with household chores, etc.
- Be safe – able to use a road crossing, etc
- Be a good listener – give your child simple instructions to follow.



- Be organised and tidy – have a regular tidy up time at home.
- Persist with a task to completion, seeking help if needed
- Have a regular home routine – medical advice recommends that Prep and Year 1 children have 10-12 hours of sleep each night.
- Organise their school bag each night before a school day.
- Be responsible for their own belongings as this will be necessary to organise their home reading later in the year.
- Be able to use the toilet and wash hands independently. This includes routines such as paper use and hand washing. Children need to be able to monitor when they need to use a toilet and should not need reminding. Parents are asked to talk with their children about the signs that tell them when they need to go.
- Manage his/her own lunchbox (i.e. take off lids and unwrap food) and drink bottle.

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO BE SAFE

Your child should know the following and should be able to answer clearly:

- Full name – **first and surname**
- Phone number **and** home address
- Method of getting home, and where to wait within the school grounds if being collected by an adult or older sibling
- Traffic rules, i.e. crossing the road, using the school crossing
- Discuss **some protective behaviours** with your child, i.e. who to go to for help, appropriate touching.



FOOD AND EATING AT SCHOOL

Eating is a big part of Prep routines at school. It is essential that children have a **nutritious** meal at morning tea and lunch breaks – a meal that helps get them through the busy day. There have been many studies on child nutrition and we are bombarded with what is best for our children. Water is so important, and in Prep we ask children to drink water constantly through the day. Juices and cordials are not encouraged and we ask that water be the only drink sent to school or milk as a treat in the lunch box. Fresh foods such as fruit, cut up vegetables, yoghurt and cheese are terrific lunch items. 'Packaged' foods such as rollups, muesli bars, chips and sweets are discouraged. Due to the severe allergies of some children in the school we also discourage children bringing nuts and eggs to school.

At Prep and in Year One students eat their main meal such as a sandwich, salad, pasta or meat selection at morning tea. This is when children are most hungry. Often breakfast is eaten early in the morning and is rushed as busy house holds start their day, so children can be quite hungry by morning tea. It is also a lovely time to sit and talk about important issues, just like you might sit at a dinner table and share your day at home.

Eating times are very important learning experiences in the lower school as good independent eating habits are started.

SHOW THAT LEARNING IS FUN

Show your child that learning is fun. Do not force learning on your child but enjoy these activities together.



PRE-READING AND PRE-WRITING

- Encourage climbing, jumping, running, skipping
- Cut and paste pictures – make an 'animal' book, a 'flower' book, a 'car' book etc.
- Sew up pieces of paper or material
- Model with dough or clay
- Put jigsaw puzzles together
- Draw shapes/pictures. Display and discuss these.
- Trace over patterns, letter, child's name.
- Provide a blackboard and chalks.
- Finger painting
- Play word games such as Memory and Concentration, simple card games.

- Play rhyming games and word games like 'I Spy'.
- Learn Colour names.
- Read and discuss story books daily.
- Read and discuss alphabet books.
- Correct 'baby' speech patterns by encouragement,
eg. t.b. = T.V.
fank you = thank you
wolly = lolly

PRE-MATHEMATICS

- Sort shells, buttons, etc into:
 - different shapes, eg. circle, square, rectangle, triangle
 - different sizes, eg. big, little
 - different colours, eg. red, blue, green, yellow
 - different thickness, eg. thick, thin
 - position eg. behind, between etc.
- Count actual objects up to 10
- One to one correspondence – touching, pointing, crossing out when counting
- Help with cooking – discuss measuring, temperatures, time.
- Recognise and draw basic shapes – triangle, square, circle, rectangle, diamond
- Recognise coins – e.g. 5c, 10c, 20c, \$1, \$2

GETTING READY FOR THE FIRST DAY CHECKLIST

- Make full payment of School Resource Scheme by the end of February.
- Purchase required items on the booklist for Prep. Cover and name all books and stationery.
- Give your child a few practice lunches. They will need practice at opening new lunchboxes, drink bottles, yoghurt containers, unwrapping plastic wrappers, etc. on their own.
- Ensure your child has a school bag large enough to accommodate all items required each day – including a foolscap-sized reading folder, lunch box, drink bottle, hat, spare clothes, library bag, jumper in Winter, etc
- Have your child in the habit of wearing a hat and shoes outside – **No hat - No shoes – No play** is one of our school rules.
- Clearly name all items of clothing – hats, jumpers, also school bags and library bags. Have a change of underclothes in a named plastic bag left permanently in their school bag.
- Discuss travel/pick up arrangements beforehand. Don't wait until the first morning to give your child important details about where to wait/who'll be meeting them, etc.
- Discuss coming to school often, and in as positive and enthusiastic a manner as possible. Highlight the fun and interesting aspects such as making lots of friends, learning new things. Don't reinforce unrealistic expectations, e.g. learning to read or write in a day or two!
- Discuss problem solving skills to help social interaction with other students.

THE BIG DAY HAS ARRIVED

Some points to remember for your child's first day at school:

- Arrive on time, but not too early, as a long wait may add to the strain and tension – about 10-15 minutes before the first bell is suitable.
- Tell your child that you will be back to collect them from school at finishing time. Ensure you have made arrangements for transportation and meeting your child. Make sure your child understands these instructions clearly.
- Leave cheerfully – letting go may be hard, but don't let your doubts or nervousness dampen your child's enthusiasm. Please don't remain at school unless the class teacher invites you to. This only prolongs uncertainty for your child and may start a habit which may be difficult to break. The school will always make contact with you if your child is upset or unsettled for an extended length of time.

- Name **ALL** clothing (including underwear) books, pencils, lunch boxes and drink bottles. It is helpful to have a bright picture or patterned contact on books to make it easy for your child to distinguish his/her books.
- Provide your child with a clearly named hat - remember **'No hat – No shoes – No play'**.
- Let the teachers know if anything is happening in your family that might upset your child at school.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILD

During the first week of school you can expect your excited child to be telling you about many things. These are very important to your youngster. Please find time to talk about what is happening at school with your child. She or he will:

- meet teachers. Say 'Hello' each morning.
- discover the wonders of the classroom environment.
- be very aware of the 'big kids'.
- learn some of the rules of his/her classroom and school.
- have his/her own place in the classroom.

Some children, when they first start school, find it so stressful they don't want to go. They may get tummy aches or be tearful in the mornings. If this happens to your child listen to their fears. Try not to let them see you are worried. Let them know that you believe that they can manage to go to school and you will help them. Ask them what they think would help, for example, going with a neighbour instead of you may help. If the worries don't get better, talk to the teacher about the best way to help your child.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We are keen to have you in our classrooms to help with some activities. It is, however, necessary that this takes place in an organised manner rather than a drop in situation, which can be unsettling for children and for successful classroom management. We will send home notices early in the term for you to complete, stating times when help is required.

There are many areas of the school that parents can be involved in. There's a lot to do in a school's first years! Ask at the office for more information.

Parent volunteers are asked to read and complete an agreement before working in classrooms. This is to ensure safety and confidentiality of all children.

BECOMING SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS

To become successful learners children need:

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|---|--|
| • Love, kindness and friendship | • Interested adults and communication between home and school. |
| • Regular routines for meal and bed times, and also for screen time | • Realistic expectations |
| • Good health, including plenty of sleep and nutritious food | • Discipline and firmness |
| • Encouragement and legitimate and genuine praise | • Rules and guidelines |
| • Appropriate teaching techniques and committed teachers. | • Desire to learn and purpose for learning |
| | • Regular attendance at school |

WHEN THEY LEARN: People learn all their lives. Children learn best if they are safe and secure, if they are loved, healthy and happy.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY: Play helps a child learn how to:

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|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| • Meet new people | • Share toys, books | • Adapt and cop |
| • Make friends | • Give and take | |
| • Get along with others | • Take turns | |

HOW TO ESTABLISH AN INTEREST IN READING

- Read to your child each day
- Discuss books and story characters with them
- Encourage them to talk about the books
- Ask questions about the book and really listen to the answers given
- Borrow books from the local libraries
- Show your child that you enjoy reading for your own pleasure. One of the reasons given for the high incidence of reading difficulties in boys is that men rarely model reading behaviour to their sons. It is very important that **both** parents be seen as **READERS**.
- Teach children to care for books
- Encourage correct pronunciation when speaking. Baby talk or poor speech patterns make reading and writing difficult. Insist on initial sounds being clear. Reading and Spelling depend heavily on speech and hearing. Do your utmost to help in this area.
- Join a local library



Note: Reading books doesn't happen on the first day. Remind your child of all the things they can read such as stop signs, food packets, etc

ALPHABET

These are the letters that your child will be learning to write. Please use these letters to model hand writing for your child. Using all capitals to write names is to be discouraged as it is a very difficult habit for children to break.

a b c d e f g
h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u
v w x

NUMERALS

REMEMBER

- Everyone is unique. Every child has special interests, certain strengths and particular learning styles
- Everyone develops at different rates. (Age is not a determinant of ability!)
- Everyone needs to have success, to feel good and to have confidence to tackle new tasks.
- Everyone needs to enjoy learning in order to learn.

For further ideas and information please see us. We are willing to assist in any way we can.

The early years are the most receptive time in a child's life for learning. The time you put in now will reap valuable rewards in later years always. Keep it a fun filled exciting experience. If children resist any activities don't pursue them, try something else. Children simply may not be ready or the activities may not suit their particular learning styles.