

Early Entry to Prep Guideline for Principals



This Guideline is designed to assist principals in the decision-making process to determine if a child is eligible for early entry to Prep.

The Department of Education and Training aims to ensure that children who are eligible for Prep enrol in school. For children who are younger than the prescribed age for Prep, there are legislative provisions for principals to approve early enrolment into Prep if they are satisfied that the child is ready for school.

Principals are required to make decisions about early entry to Prep based on available evidence and using their professional judgement to determine if the applicant has the attributes as described in the legislation and it is in their best educational interests.

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. In the year before Prep, all Queensland children are encouraged to complete a quality kindergarten program.

Who is eligible for early entry to Prep?

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.

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

A July birthday or previous enrolment in another country, state or territory does not guarantee Early Entry to Prep.

What does the Regulation mean by attributes?

The Regulation defines attributes as:

- (a) aptitude and ability; and
- (b) social and emotional competence; and
- (c) physical development; and
- (d) level of knowledge and understanding.

How is an application for early entry to Prep made and decided?

This is a seven step process:

- Step 1 Communicate information to the parent
- Step 2 Receive application
- Step 3 Check OneSchool registration
- Step 4 Collect and assess evidence
- Step 5 Make a decision
- Step 6 Record the decision
- Step 7 Notify the parent

More detail about each step is provided below.

Step 1 Communicate information to the parent

A parent who is interested in early entry to Prep for their child should be provided with information to make an informed decision about whether to make an application.

The parent will need to contact the principal (or nominated staff member e.g. school leadership team member) to discuss the early entry to Prep process in more detail.

When contacted by a parent who is considering making an application for early entry to Prep, the principal (or nominated staff member) should discuss with the parent why they think their child may be eligible for early entry. Meeting in person with the parent and the child at this stage would be beneficial.

The following information should be discussed with the parent:

- the expectation that a child should have a positive start to schooling;
- the range of attributes required for early entry to Prep;
- the requirement for evidence of the child's capabilities against all of the attributes to assist the principal to make an initial decision;
- the potential impacts on children when they start school before they are ready;
- the process if a parent has already applied for early entry at another state school; and
- the application process, including that the lodgement of an application does not guarantee approval for early entry.

The [Considerations and application process for Early Entry to Prep](#) and [Early Entry to Prep Frequently Asked Questions](#) documents are available to support the communication process.

Step 2 Receive applications

Following discussion about the attributes and process, the parent may wish to proceed. The principal (or nominated staff member) will provide the [Application form for Early Entry to Prep](#) on request by a parent.

Note: If an application for early entry to Prep has been made to another Queensland state school, a principal may delay processing the application until a decision has been made by the other principal. The principal can take into account the evidence collected and the decision made by another principal to inform their own decision. Unless new information has been provided, or there has been a significant period of time since the previous decision, it would be expected that decisions made using the early entry to Prep decision-making tool would be consistent across schools.

Note: If a parent submits an application to a school with an Enrolment Management Plan (EMP), the school should also explain the requirements of that EMP.

Step 3 Check OneSchool registration

Parent provides School A with a completed *Application form for Early Entry to Prep*.

Student enrolment officer completes the '*For school use only*' section on the Application form.

The student enrolment officer checks OneSchool to determine if the child's details have been recorded by another school (School B) and, if so, their current registration status.

(Student> Enrol student> enter criteria> select search)

If any matching records are returned in the search, review to identify if a record for the child already exists in OneSchool.

Child has a record on OneSchool.

YES

The child's OneSchool registration status is:

- 'non-attendee' with a reason of 'Early Entry to Prep application not supported' (i.e. School B has assessed the Early Entry to Prep application and determined the child is not yet ready for school); **or**
- 'future', (i.e. School B is either in the process of assessing the child for Early Entry to Prep, OR has assessed the child and determined that the child is eligible for Early Entry to Prep at School B).

School A contacts School B to determine the status of the assessment. If a decision is yet to be made, School A may delay processing the application until School B has made a decision. Once a decision has been made, School A may request relevant evidence from School B to assist in its decision-making process.

NO

If there is no OneSchool record about the child, record the child as a 'future student' enrolment on OneSchool (by creating a new record for the child).

The Principal begins the assessment process to determine the child's eligibility for Prep.
Go to Step 4.

Step 4 Collect and assess evidence

In making a decision about a child's early entry to Prep, principals must consider what is in the child's best interests in order to achieve a positive and successful start to school.

The principal should invite the parent and relevant staff to discuss the child's attributes and share relevant evidence that will support their transition to school. The parent is not required to provide any formal assessment, although they may provide this if it is available, at their own cost.

The extent to which the child demonstrates the required attributes should be assessed using the *Early Entry to Prep decision-making tool* (Appendix 1). This tool, once populated, will be retained by the school as a formal record of the principal's decision and a copy provided to the parent.

Principals should consider evidence provided by the parent to support the application and discuss the child's attributes with relevant school staff such as Heads of Curriculum, Prep teachers, guidance officers and/or support staff in regional offices where appropriate.

The principal may arrange for a school staff member to informally interview the child and/or observe them involved in classroom/outdoor activities. This may occur as part of a transition day in the Prep class, visits to the early childhood education and care service where the child is enrolled (if applicable), or interacting with the child while they engage in age appropriate activities.

It should be recognised that each child is unique and development varies between individuals. Each of the indicators and attributes should be considered collectively to form a view of the child's capacity to participate fully in Prep.

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

Principals may need to make reasonable adjustments for early entry to Prep applicants with disability to allow a child to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or competencies. For example, a child with physical impairment may be advanced in all attributes with the exception of physical development. With reasonable adjustments made to address the barriers associated with the physical impairment, the child may demonstrate their attributes across all other required areas. For further information, refer to [Inclusive Strategies: What are they? Catering for diversity using the Australian Curriculum](#).

Once evidence of the child's capacity has been determined for each attribute, the principal can make a decision regarding an application for early entry to Prep.

Step 5 Make a decision

The principal will make a final decision to determine if the child is ready for education in Prep.

Using the results recorded in the *Early Entry to Prep decision-making tool*, consider the following in making a decision:

- If the outcome is 'Yes' on all four attributes, the child would be considered eligible for Prep.
- If the child is considered 'possibly' ready for Prep in any attribute, gather more advice and evidence to make a determination that the child is, or is not yet, ready.
- If the outcome is 'No' for one or more of the attributes, the child would not be considered ready for Prep.

If there is insufficient evidence to make a final determination, the principal may arrange further assessment of the child using a standardised screening assessment tool, with parental agreement. The

school's Guidance Officer or Senior Guidance Officer in the region will be able to support school decision-making about the most appropriate tool for this purpose.

Step 6 Record the decision

6.1 Recording the decision on hard copy documents

Enter the decision on the Early Entry to Prep decision-making tool.

6.2 OneSchool recording

Enter the decision into OneSchool as follows:

- (a) if accepted, retain the child as 'future enrolment'; or
- (b) if **not** accepted, make the child's registration 'inactive' and enter the code 'Early Entry to Prep application not supported'.

Please note, as this decision may affect other schools, it is recommended that it is recorded in OneSchool as soon as possible after a decision has been made by the Principal.

Step 7 Notify the parent

Principals will notify the parent in writing of the decision regarding the application. Principals may choose to populate the relevant template in *APPENDIX 2: Letter to parent regarding the Principal's decision* and may also meet with the parent to discuss the decision in person.

If the principal determines that the child:

- is NOT ready for Prep based on the evidence, the parent should be informed of the decision and advised to continue with early childhood education and care options to allow the child additional time for development; or
- is accepted for early entry to Prep, standard school enrolment processes will be completed as per the [Enrolment in State Primary, Secondary and Special Schools](#) procedure.

APPENDIX 1: Early Entry to Prep decision-making tool

1. List below the evidence gathered to assist in the decision-making process to determine the child's level of readiness for early entry to Prep. Examples may include the child's work samples, conversations with the parent, observations of the child, formal assessment, or other evidence as determined by the school.

2. Based on the evidence gathered, complete each of the tables below by:

- (i) ticking the most appropriate box for each of the indicators;
- (ii) tallying the frequency of indicators; and
- (iii) making an overall determination for each attribute.

2.1 Attribute – Aptitude and ability

Application form reference	Indicators	Frequency			
	The child:	The available evidence indicates that that child displays the indicator:			
		not at all	some of the time	most of the time	always
4.1 a, m	1. uses appropriate vocabulary to engage with learning and speaks with some fluency				
4.1 b, c, f	2. confidently engages in simple conversations with familiar and unfamiliar children and adults				
4.1 e	3. shows the ability to actively seek and accept help from familiar and unfamiliar adults				
4.1 g	4. demonstrates listening and responding to simple oral questions, instructions or requests				
4.1 h	5. demonstrates the ability to follow class routines/timetables without reminders				
4.1 i, l	6. demonstrates confidence in making choices/decisions and acting upon them				
4.1 d, j, k	7. demonstrates persistence and problem-solving abilities				
	TOTAL NUMBER				

Based on the available evidence, the child displays a level of readiness in aptitude and ability suitable for early entry to Prep.	No	Possibly	Yes
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2.2 Attribute – Social and emotional competence

Application form reference	Indicators	Frequency			
	The child:	The available evidence indicates that that child displays the indicator:			
		not at all	some of the time	most of the time	always
4.3 a, b, g	1. is able to play cooperatively at an age appropriate level e.g. taking turns, sharing				
4.3 d	2. is able to follow rules and instructions				
4.3 c, e, k	3. shows respect for their own and other's property				
4.3 c, h, i, j	4. demonstrates self-control and resilience e.g. waits for assistance, can manage disappointments, deals with conflicts appropriately				
4.3 c, g	5. initiates interactions with adults and children and attempts to include others				
4.3 c, f	6. shows respect for others e.g. shares with others, takes turns, includes others in play				
4.3 d, h, i, k	7. demonstrates independence at an age appropriate level e.g. selects and completes an activity before moving to another task, makes independent decisions, separates easily from parent				
	TOTAL NUMBER				

Based on the available evidence, the child displays a level of readiness in social and emotional competence suitable for early entry to Prep.

No

Possibly

Yes

2.3 Attribute – Physical development

Application form reference	Indicators	Frequency			
	The child:	The available evidence indicates that that child displays the indicator:			
		not at all	some of the time	most of the time	always
4.5 a, b, c, d	1. demonstrates fine motor skills e.g. some mastery over hand-eye coordination, pencil hold, construction skills, manipulating objects				
4.5 e	2. demonstrates some mastery of gross motor skills e.g. has general muscle tone, postural control, coordination, balance				
4.5 f	3. shows independence in toileting and dressing				
4.5 g	4. demonstrates sustained active involvement in challenging activities				
4.5 h	5. demonstrates evidence of sustained energy and endurance for the equivalent of a school day				
	TOTAL NUMBER				

Based on the available evidence, the child displays a level of readiness in physical development suitable for early entry to Prep.

No

Possibly

Yes

2.4 Attribute – Level of knowledge and understanding

Application form reference	Indicators	Frequency			
	The child:	The available evidence indicates that that child displays the indicator:			
		not at all	some of the time	most of the time	always
4.7 a, b	1. shows interest about learning new things and an interest in problem-solving e.g. engages in new activities; recognises a simple problem and ways to solve it				
4.7 c	2. shows awareness of familiar rhyming verses, chants and songs				
4.7 d, e	3. demonstrates beginning reading skills e.g. word identification/knowledge skills, identifies some letter names; identifies words that start with the same initial sound				
4.7 f	4. demonstrates beginning writing skills e.g. scribble, symbols or strings of letters, attempts to write own name				
4.7 g, h, i	5. demonstrates early numeracy skills e.g. can compare, contrast, classify and sequence objects; demonstrates one-to-one correspondence when counting and recognises some numerals				
4.7 j	6. demonstrates an understanding of spatial position and direction and some use of this language				
4.7 k	7. demonstrates accessing and applying prior knowledge to new learning situations				
	TOTAL NUMBER				

Based on the available evidence, the child displays a level of readiness in knowledge and understanding suitable for early entry to Prep.

No

Possibly

Yes

OVERALL DETERMINATION

Based on the assessment of each of the four attributes, is the child ready for early entry to Prep? Insert the overall rating for each attribute to make a final determination.

Attribute	No	Possibly	Yes
Aptitude and ability			
Social and emotional competence			
Physical development			
Level of knowledge and understanding			

Additional comments (Optional):

Record and communicate the decision

- *Complete the Principal's Decision in the space below.*
- *Update OneSchool with the decision (either future enrolment if satisfied or coded as 'Early Entry to Prep application not supported' if not satisfied).*
- *Advise the parent. (Templates are available in Appendix 2.)*

Principal's Decision

- ☐ I am **satisfied** that the child meets the criteria for early entry to Prep.
- ☐ I am **not satisfied** that the child meets the criteria for early entry to Prep and is therefore not ready for education in Prep.

Principal _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 2: Letter to parent regarding the Principal's decision

To provide the parent with a formal written response to their early entry to Prep application for their child, use the results recorded in Appendix 1 to select and populate the relevant letter template below.

3.1 Application supported

<Insert date of notice>

<Insert name of parent>

<Insert address>

Dear <insert name of parent>

Thank you for applying for early entry to Prep for your child, <insert child's name>.

Following analysis of available evidence, I am satisfied that <insert child's name> meets the criteria for early entry to Prep under Section 15 of the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006*.

As such, I am pleased to advise that <insert child's name> has been accepted to enrol in Prep for <insert year> at this school.

Please find enclosed the school enrolment form for you to complete. Once completed, please contact the school office to finalise the enrolment process for your child.

I look forward to welcoming <insert child's name> as part of our Prep cohort.

Yours sincerely

<insert name of principal>

Principal

<insert name of school>

Enc: Appendix 1: Decision-making tool and School enrolment package

3.2 Application not supported

<Insert date of notice>

<Insert name of parent>

<Insert address>

Dear <insert name of parent>

Thank you for applying for early entry to Prep for your child, <insert child's name>.

I have decided not to grant your request to enrol <insert child's name> for early entry to Prep at this school.

In arriving at my decision, I considered the following information:

- <list relevant information from Appendix 1>
- XXX
- XXX.

On the basis of this information, I found that while <insert child's name> demonstrates <insert examples of positive attributes evidenced>, <insert child's name>:

- <list examples of indicators which the child is still developing>
- XXX

- XXX
- XXX.

Following the analysis of available evidence, I am not satisfied that <insert child's name> meets the criteria for early entry to Prep under Section 15 of the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006*. As such, I wish to advise that <insert child's name> has not been accepted to enrol in Prep for <insert year>.

As <insert child's name> is still developing their <select relevant attribute/s from - aptitude and ability, social and emotional competence, physical development, level of knowledge and understanding>, it would be in <insert child's name>'s best educational interests to commence schooling with their age cohort as normal.

I encourage you to consider continuing <insert child's name>'s education through a quality early childhood education and care program, to help your child to prepare for their transition to school.

I look forward to welcoming <insert child's name> to Prep when they meet the age eligibility requirements.

Yours sincerely

<insert name of principal>

Principal

<insert name of school>

Enc: Appendix 1: Decision-making tool