2010 Preparatory Year
Parent Booklet

Social and Emotional Competence

Health and Physical Wellbeing

Language Development & Communication

Early Mathematical Understandings

Active Learning Processes

Play

Real-Life Situations

Investigations

Routines and Transitions

Focused Learning and Teaching

Teachers 2010
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Assisi Catholic College Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred . . . let me sow love;
when there is injury . . . pardon;
where there is doubt . . . faith;
where there is despair . . . hope;
where there is darkness . . . light;
and where there is sadness . . . joy.

Grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis and St. Clare, pray for us that we
may be active examples of the peace and justice
of Christ.
Pray that we may embrace compassion.
Pray that we may break down the walls that
separate us.
Pray that we may be united in bonds of love, and
work to accomplish the kingdom of God.

Amen
The Preparatory Year or ‘Prep’ is about preparing children for formal schooling.

Research has identified the following indicators of preparedness for school which we aim to develop:
- Social and emotional competence with a focus on social learning and independence;
- Health and physical well-being, particularly in making healthy choices and gross and fine motor development;
- Language development and communication focusing on oral language and early literacy;
- Early mathematical understandings with an emphasis on early numeracy;
- Active learning processes with a focus on thinking, investigating, imagining and responding; and
- A positive orientation to learning.

These indicators have been used in developing the Early Years Learning Areas which describe the curriculum for the Preparatory Year. These areas are:
- Social and emotional competence
- Health and physical wellbeing
- Language development and communication
- Early mathematical understandings
- Active learning processes

Children have opportunities to learn within each of the five contexts for learning in both outdoor and indoor preparatory environments. The contexts for learning and development are designed to actively engage children, parents, teachers and teacher assistants as partners in learning.

The Five Contexts for Learning are:
- Play
- Real-Life Situations
- Investigations
- Routines and Transitions
- Focused Learning and Teaching
Play
Types of play includes make-believe, fantasy, exploratory, directed, extended free-play, physical games with rules, constructive, manipulative and information and communication technologies.

Real-Life Situations
Real-life situations include activities such as cooking, gardening, reading and writing texts for real life purposes. Other learning experiences that fall under this category include conducting experiments, making artworks, talking with our visitors, attending performances and searching the internet. This also includes involvement as part of the whole school community in assemblies, liturgies, lunch breaks, school uniform and hours of attendance.

Investigations
These are significant learning activities where, under the direction of the teacher, children can make meaningful and relevant explorations aimed at developing a broad range of life-skills such as planning, team-work, organising, comparing, reflecting, determining cause & effect, analysing and explaining, to name a few.

Routines and Transitions
Routines and transitions at school may differ from home routines. These are designed to assist the children establish familiarity with classroom and school cultures and practices. These include: lunch times, quiet times, toileting, tidy-up times, songs and stories, movement from one area to another, beginning and end of day practices.

Focused Learning
Focused learning includes planned, spontaneous and explicit learning experiences involving single child, small groups and the whole class. Focused learning is often planned to follow up on informal interactions and emerging interests. Learning is elaborated through modelling, discussion, questioning, researching, making plans, identifying and sharing ideas.
### Relationships between Learning Areas

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Belonging to the Brisbane Catholic Education community of schools, connected curriculum planning at Assisi Catholic College occurs within a ‘Learning Framework’ where children are encouraged in their roles as lifelong learners. Designed to empower learners, our Learning Framework incorporates specific values, as well as beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities. Methods of assessment and subsequent reporting to parents are appropriate, meaningful, and thorough processes.
The two and a half months between Prep Orientation and the beginning of school in January can seem like a lifetime to a child who may be nervous and/or excited about going to school for the first time. During these months, there are some simple things that you can be doing with your child to help him/her to be prepared for their adventure into a school setting.

By encouraging your child to develop independence and resilience, you are giving them a solid foundation for success and happiness at school. The following suggestions will help to familiarise your child with some routines that they will encounter at school, and will also help your child to develop confidence in their abilities and alleviate some anxiety they may have about starting school.

**Recognising Their Own Name**

Provide your child with many opportunities to ‘read’ or recognise their own name in many different contexts. Point out their name on books, papers, clothing and toys. It is important that any items your child brings to school are labelled, so involve your child in the process. Ensure that your child is familiar with where their name is on each item. You could turn this into a game! If your child has difficulty recognising their name, you could use pictures in addition to words.

**Tags On School Bags**

When your child puts on their bag for the first time it will seem like a very big bag for a very little person! As all of the children in your child’s class will have the same bag, it is important for your child to be able to recognise and find their own bag easily. Write your child’s name on the back of the flap on the bag. A key ring or bag tag is very helpful for little eyes to locate a bag amongst 26 identical ones! Once your child has started school, they will be expected to carry their own bag in order to assist them to develop their independence. Spend time before school begins assisting your child to put their own bag on their back and to practise carrying it with their lunch box and drink bottle so that they can get used to it.
Lunch Box Practise

At school your child will be responsible for managing their food throughout the day. Most children are used to a parent or carer providing them with particular foods at particular meal times. To suddenly be in charge of a lunch box full of food may seem daunting or exciting to little ones, and the temptation to eat it all at once can be very strong! Your child’s teacher will help your child to identify which foods are for each break, however you could ‘practise’ using a lunch box at home in this time before school begins. With your child, choose foods for three breaks during the day – Big Break (sandwiches), Munch and Crunch (fresh fruit or vegetables) and Small Break (snack). Talk to your child about what foods they might have at each break and allow them to choose from the lunch box during the day just as they will when they are at school. Packaging the foods in zip-lock bags inside the lunch box with a picture or a label might help your child to make appropriate choices for break times. Ensure that your child is able to open his/her own food packages. Once school begins, encourage your child to put left-over food back into their lunch box so that you can see what they have and haven’t eaten. In the first couple of weeks of school it is quite normal for children to be more interested in playing or talking to friends than in eating. This usually settles down when the children learn that once they have done the eating, they can do the playing!

Toilet and Drink Routines

For safety and supervision reasons, it is necessary for students at school to ask permission from a teacher before leaving the classroom to go to the toilet or to get a drink. Talk to your child about what they will do when they are at school and need to go to the toilet. If their class is having floor time together, it might be appropriate for them to put their hand up to ask to go, or if it is during a play activity, your child may be able to go up to the teacher to ask. Your child’s teacher will explain the procedures for their class however it is a good idea to talk about these things with your child so that they know what to expect. You could play games of ‘school’ at home and take turns to put your hand up to ask each other for things!

Drink Bottles

The best refreshment for your child at school is water. Students are encouraged to bring drink bottles to school filled with water so that they can remain hydrated during the day. Other drinks may be enjoyed at break times,
but only water is to be consumed during class or activity time. While at home, encourage your child to do the same. Spend some time before your child begins school showing your child how to open and close their drink bottle lids and perhaps how to refill their own bottle.

Gooodbye Routine

It is very normal for a child to become upset when it is time to say goodbye to Mum or Dad. Even a child who is very excited about going to school may still feel sad when it is time to begin the day and say farewell. For most children, it is the actual farewell that makes them feel sad and so naturally the longer the farewell takes, the longer the child will be upset. Most children who are teary when Mum or Dad says goodbye settle immediately into the activities that their classmates and friends are doing as soon as their parents have gone. It is very difficult to leave a child who is crying and holding on to you tightly, it is also heartbreaking to have to say goodbye and walk away. Take the time before school begins to establish a ‘goodbye’ routine with your child. This might be something fun such as a cuddle, a kiss and a high-five. You could even create a secret family handshake! Talk to your child about what this goodbye routine is and establish an understanding that once it has been done it is time for them to begin their day and for you to leave to continue with yours. Talk to your child about what you are going to be doing while they are at school so that they know where you will be and that you will be o.k. Remember the power of language - rather than telling your child that you are really going to miss them, tell them that you can’t wait to hear all about their day. Try to organise some play dates before school begins to enable your child to begin to establish independence and confidence being away from you.

Velcro Shoes

Prep play time often involves sand, and sand often involves mess! Children will remove their shoes at times whilst at school such as to empty large quantities of sand out of them! Your child will need to be able to put their own clothing items on relatively quickly and easy. Velcro fastenings on shoes are not only quick and easy, but also boost children’s confidence as they are able to dress themselves. Tying shoe laces requires many fine motor skills and good hand/eye co-ordination. Most children at Prep age are not ready for this. Keep practising tying shoe laces at home, however Velcro fastenings are the most appropriate choice for school shoes at this age.
Share your child’s Orientation experience with them. Encourage them to draw pictures about their time in their new classroom & perhaps ring relatives and friends to share the news! Remember to keep conversations about school positive to help your child keep the excitement that they are feeling today until they are back at school for their first day next year!
**When Your Child Begins Prep in 2010**

Here you will find an A-Z of information that will be helpful to you as a parent of a student in Prep at Assisi Catholic College. More information about policy, procedure and events is available on the Assisi Catholic College website.

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**Accidents/Sudden Illness**

For injuries of a minor nature, first aid will be administered at school. Should a serious illness or accident occur, every effort will be made to contact parents. However, it may be necessary to seek immediate medical service. It is therefore essential that school records are kept accurate. Parents are expected to keep the school informed of emergency contact numbers and all other pertinent medical information.

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**Attendance**

Although Preparatory is not compulsory, it is expected that children will attend regularly. Please advise the school office if your child will be absent for any reason. In the back of the Communication Book are Student Absentee Slips that must be filled in and sent back to school when your child returns after an illness or an absence.

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**Bags**

In order to encourage the development of independence, your child will be expected to carry his/her own bag to and from the classroom. It is important for children to develop responsibility for their belongings and the independence to be able to carry their bag and place it in the correct place in the bag rack. You are asked to support us in helping your child in this area by refraining from carrying school bags for them and to also minimise any heavy ‘extras’ that are put into your child’s bag.

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**Birthdays**

On this special occasion you may like to send along a simple iced cake or patty cakes for each student (which are much easier to share). Other ideas such as ice cream and cones, lolly bags or water ice-blocks, etc. are also fine, but please let us know a day in advance. If your child has allergies to any foods that may be shared at school, please ensure that this information is provided to the school.
and to your child’s teacher. If your child does have allergies that would prevent them from sharing in birthday celebrations at school, you may wish to send in a supply of something that they could have instead on these occasions.

Books and Stationery

Included in the booklist for the Prep students are items such as crayons, pencils and textas that will be placed into baskets and containers for the students to use whilst working in their groups. This is the best method of providing access to resources for the students in Prep and teaches them valuable lessons about sharing and co-operation. Please do not write names on these items as this can cause problems for some students when they are combined as a shared resource. To assist your child in identifying particular books, you are asked not to cover their books from the booklist. It is essential that all items from the booklist are brought to school on your child’s first day.

Car Park and Crossing

Our number one priority in the car park is the safety of our students. For this reason there are strict guidelines for the use of the car park and access to the College to which all parents and visitors must adhere. It is vital that you model these safe practices with your children of all ages whilst on College grounds.

1. When parking your car, you must ensure that you park in the designated parking areas, not in the drive-through or bus zones.
2. When walking your child from the car park you must walk along the median strips between the parking areas, and only cross the road at the designated crossings.
3. Between 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 – 3:55 p.m. there are crossing guards on duty to ensure the safe crossing of students and families. Please ensure that you follow any direction given by the crossing guards either as a pedestrian or as a motorist.
4. Students must only enter or exit cars either when they are parked in the car park, or in the designated drive-through area – not at any point along the footpath.
5. Students must not be collected from any of the streets surrounding the College. If you are collecting your child this must be done by either using the drive-through process, or by parking your car and walking across to collect your child from the pick-up area.

**Clothing**

It is essential that all articles of clothing are clearly labelled with your child’s name – including shoes and socks. This practice will help to ensure that items can be returned to the correct owner when they are temporarily misplaced. This is also important so that children can identify their own belongings and to develop independence in looking after their own things. The best method for writing names inside the College hat is to write with white liquid paper – this is easy to read and is long-lasting.

**Communication**

It is vital that the home/school relationship is a communicative one. Events in family life can cause concern or excitement for children such as illness, visits of family and friends, accidents or death of relatives, friends and pets, thus affecting their behaviour. We would appreciate the sharing of this information as it may help in understanding any changes in behaviour. Your child’s teacher’s email address will be available for you to use as a convenient form of communication, and the student Communication Book will be a vital tool in helping to maintain this regular contact.

Each Prep class has a page on the College website where news, activities for home and photos are available for you to share in your child’s learning. Paper copies of newsletters are not printed, so it is essential that you check the class web page regularly for information about what your child has been doing at school and important information for your child’s class. Details about accessing these pages will be made available when your child begins next year.
Curriculum Planning

Teachers of Preparatory use a Negotiated Curriculum approach, following the Early Years Curriculum guidelines. At times this may mean that each Prep class is learning through a different ‘context’ however by the end of the year they will have all covered the same curriculum content. Events and major activities are planned together to ensure that students in all of the Prep classes can share in these experiences together.

Handwriting

Correct letter formation is an essential skill to be taught when children are learning how to write. Incorrect letter formation and pencil grip can lead to difficulties with writing and hand discomfort in later years. Below is an example of the Queensland Script that your child will be taught at school. By following this letter formation when doing writing activities at home, you will help your child to consolidate the learning that is occurring at school and help them to correctly establish an essential life skill. A larger copy of this can be obtained from your child’s teacher.

Queensland Script

- The letters are sloped.
- Apart from little ‘e’ all letters start at the TOP!
- Only the first letter of a proper noun or first word in a sentence is a capital. Please discourage your child from writing all in capitals – the letters can be easier to write, however it can be a difficult habit to break if not addressed early.
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
LMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
Illness and Sick Children

In accordance with Health Department regulations, children with infectious diseases must NOT come to Preparatory for certain specified times (An Infectious Diseases list is available in the College Office). In cases of minor ailments, parents may use their own judgement about attendance. Children who become sick at school during the day will be allowed to rest quietly while parents are notified by telephone.

Medication

The following is a summary of the procedures for administering medication to children as outlined in detail by Brisbane Catholic Education.

1. The medical practitioner who has treated your child must provide written authorisation and information for administering the medication prescribed.
2. The parent or legal guardian must request in writing for school staff to administer prescription medications.
3. The medication must be in a container labelled by a pharmacist showing the name of the drug, the ‘use by’ date, the name of the child’s medical practitioner and the child, the dosage and the frequency of administration.
4. In the case where it is necessary for the child to keep medication in their possession (e.g. asthma puffers) the parent or guardian must include this instruction in their advice. All other medication is stored in the College sickbay.
5. Oral medication such as analgesics and over-the-counter medication that have not been authorised by the child’s medical practitioner will not be administered by teachers or other persons on the school staff.
6. Teachers or other volunteers will not give intravenous injections.

In order to ensure that all correct documentation is used, we ask that you use the “Administration of Medication” form that is available at the office.

Meetings

If you have concerns or queries, or just want to catch up with your child’s class teacher, you are very welcome to arrange a time to meet with them. Before and after school are very busy times for teachers when they are moving children from classes and preparing or packing up from lessons, and it can be difficult for them to give a quick ‘on-the-spot’ meeting without preparation. Please
avoid using this time to ask questions or to try to make appointments, and instead either write a note, an email, or use the Communication Book to contact the class teacher to make a mutually convenient time so that the teacher can be fully prepared for you and can give you their full attention. During the year you will also have opportunities for formal Parent/Teacher interviews to discuss your child’s progress and an information night for all parents of each class at the start of Term One.

Parent Helpers

Parents are vital assets to any class and parent helpers can contribute so much to the life of the classroom. If you are interested in assisting in your child’s class, or anywhere in the school, it is a prerequisite that you complete the Parent Volunteer Training course that is provided several times throughout the year by the College.

Class teachers will devise a roster for sessions in which parent helpers would be of most benefit to the class and you will be invited to add your name to the roster if you wish.

Pick Up and Drop Off

Due to the building and development that will be occurring throughout 2010, some pick-up and drop-off locations and procedures will need to be modified. Information about these changes will be provided closer to the time. The routine for Preparatory students for Term One will remain as follows.

Term One

• Before School - During Term One it is necessary for you to take your child to their classroom before 9:00 to help them to settle for the day. There will be activities such as puzzles available for the students to work on before classes start at 9:00. You are asked to stay with your child until it is time to say goodbye to your child and leave at 8:55 so that the class can start their day.

• After school - You will be required to collect your child from the classroom between 3:30 and 3:40. If you are going to be later than 3:40 you must ring the College to advise the class teacher, and your child will be signed in to OSHCare. When you are waiting to collect your child from the classroom, you are asked to wait outside of the Greccio fenced area to minimise
disruption to the Prep and Year One classrooms at a very busy time of the day.

- OSH Care: Any Prep students who attend OSH Care will be taken to their classrooms by a staff member at 8:55 a.m. and/or collected from the classroom at 3:30 p.m.

Terms Two and Three

- Before School – You will have three options as follows:
  1. You may bring your Prep child to the drop-off area (to be advised in 2010) in the care of the teachers on duty from 8:30 a.m. This time is used as conversation time for the students and provides an opportunity for them to chat with their friends and begin to settle in preparedness to start their school day. Your child’s class will be escorted up to the classroom at 8:55 a.m.
  2. You may take your child directly to the classroom and do an activity together from 8:40 a.m. until 8:55 a.m. Your child’s teacher commences active supervision of the class at 8:55 a.m. and the rooms are opened early for you to enjoy the classroom and activities with your child.

- OSH Care: Any Prep students who attend OSH Care in the mornings will be taken to their classrooms by a staff member at 8:55 a.m.

- After School - All Prep teachers will bring their classes down to the designated pick-up zone and will ensure they are sitting safely in their allocated area, ready for collection at 3:30. As the class passes OSH Care, any students who are booked in for OSH Care will be signed in at that time.

Term Four

- To transition the students to the procedures that they will follow when they are in Year 1, all Prep students will be collected by their class teacher from the designated drop-off area in the morning, and will be collected from there by their parents in the afternoon. This will be following the procedures that will be in place for all students from Year One to Year Six.

Toys at School

At times your child will be encouraged to bring items from home to assist them in sharing news with their class. At these times, the items from home are to be clearly labelled and will remain in a secure place in the classroom until it is time for Talk Time. Any toys or other personal items should not be brought to school as they can be easily lost or damaged. There are many resources available for the students to use both in class and at break times, so it is not necessary for children to bring in their own items from home.
Wet Weather

Raincoats are the best protection from wet weather conditions for students in Prep, both in terms of remaining as dry as possible, and for safety purposes. Please do not send an umbrella to school with your child as they are unsafe for students of Prep age. There are raincoats available at the Uniform Shop that have been designed to be worn to fit over the school bag to help keep bags and bodies dry.

What your child needs for Prep

1. Food for each day-
   - Big Break: a sandwich
   - Munch and Crunch: a small piece of fruit or cut up vegetables in a small container
   - Small Break: a small serving of 2 food choices e.g. muesli bar and biscuits, or a favourite snack and a muffin
   - A labelled drink bottle filled with water
2. Lace-up shoes are impractical at this age. Velcro leather school sports shoes are much easier for Prep children to manage.
3. A cushion labelled with name and a removable pillowcase for ‘Pillow Time’. The pillowcase needs to be easily recognised so your child can find his/her own. These will be sent home regularly for washing. As cushions can take up a lot of storage space, please consider the size of the cushion you send in with your child and keep the size to a minimum.
4. A paint smock that your child can put on independently. While old shirts and t-shirts can be handy as paint smocks, paint can still easily soak through these to stain clothing, so waterproof paint smocks are best.
5. A raincoat for wet weather. There are raincoats available for purchase from the uniform shop that have been designed to be worn over the school bag to help keep belongings dry. Please do not send your child to school with an umbrella.
6. Spare underpants, shorts and socks in the bottom of your child’s bag for emergencies.
7. A distinguishable key-ring/toy attached to the zipper of your child’s school bag for ease of recognition. Please write your child’s name clearly on the inside of the bag flap.
8. All items including your child’s bag, drink bottle, lunch box and all clothing (including shoes) must be clearly labelled with your child’s name.
Parents and Teachers

I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there.
The clay they used was a young child’s mind
And they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher, the tools she used
Were books and music and art.
One was a parent with a guiding hand
And a gentle loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled,
With a touch that was deft and sure.
While the parent laboured by her side
And polished and smoothed it over.

And when at last, time had passed,
They were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things that they had moulded into the child
Could neither be sold nor bought.

And they each agreed that they would have failed, if they had worked alone.
For behind the parent stood the school,
And behind the teacher, the home.