Kindergarten programs provide engaging learning environments that cater to children’s individual development, abilities, strengths and needs. Children who participate in a kindergarten program discover new learning experiences and establish relationships that create a strong foundation for their future education. Approved kindergarten programs are now provided in a range of settings, including long day care and kindergarten services.

In Queensland, children must be at least five years of age on or before 30 June in the year they attend Prep at school. Kindergarten programs offer play-based learning and development opportunities for children in the year before they start Prep.

In order to ensure children are the eligible age when starting Prep, approved kindergarten programs in Queensland are provided for children aged at least four on or before 30 June in the proposed year of participation in a kindergarten program.

While participation in kindergarten programs is not compulsory it is encouraged as it provides children with a smoother transition into Prep and full-time schooling. It is usual for children to progress to Prep after one year in a kindergarten program.

It is recognised that some children may benefit from starting a kindergarten program later (delayed entry) or by completing a second year of a kindergarten program (delayed exit).

If you have concerns about whether your child is ready to start a kindergarten program or is ready for Prep, you should discuss those concerns with your local kindergarten program provider and school.

For information about enrolling in Prep, contact the principal at your chosen school.
Suggested steps to take

Meet with your kindergarten program provider
Arrange a meeting with the kindergarten program provider to discuss your child’s development.

At the meeting:
- Find out how the kindergarten program can support your child’s particular needs
- Talk about why you think your child is not ready to start a kindergarten program or is not ready for Prep
- Ask what assistance is available to support your child
- Find out about the application and approval process for delayed entry to, or delayed exit from, a kindergarten program
  - What information do you need to provide in the application?
  - What other information can be useful for your application e.g. reports from other health and education professionals who support your child?
  - When do applications have to be submitted?
  - When will you be told of a decision?

Meet with the principal of your chosen school
Arrange a meeting with the principal of the school where you intend your child to attend Prep to discuss your child’s development.

At the meeting:
- Find out how the Prep program can support your child’s particular needs
- Talk about why you think your child is not ready to for Prep
- Find out about the implications of delaying Prep on your child’s enrolment at the school.

Meet with other professionals
Speak to and request written information about your child’s development from the health and education professionals supporting your child such as your family doctor, paediatrician, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and early childhood education teacher.

On completing this process you may feel your child is ready to start a kindergarten program or Prep after all. Alternatively, you may like to proceed with an application for delayed entry to, or delayed exit from, a kindergarten program.

How to apply
Each approved kindergarten program provider is responsible for managing applications for delayed entry to, or delayed exit from, their kindergarten program. They are guided by the Delayed Entry and Delayed Exit Enrolment Procedure for Approved Queensland Kindergarten Programs.

If you wish to go ahead with an application for delayed entry to, or delayed exit from, a kindergarten program, you will need to continue to work with your local kindergarten program provider to complete and submit the application.

For more information
The Delayed Entry and Delayed Exit Enrolment Procedure for Approved Queensland Kindergarten Programs and example application forms are available online at www.qld.gov.au/kindy

The Education Queensland policy Variation to School Age Entry Enrolment which details the delayed entry to Prep processes is available online at www.education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr007/