

## Prep and the Early Years at Brigalow State School

2008 saw the introduction of a full time preparatory year to Brigalow State School. The early years at school greatly influence how your child will develop and the perceptions they have of themselves as learners. This is a significant time in children's lives and the prep setting allows children to explore, investigate, imagine and experience knowledge in a play based setting.

Here at Brigalow the Prep students are a part of a multi-age class, with Grades 1, 2 and 3 combined. This provides an extensive opportunity for all children to learn from and work together with students of varying backgrounds, bring different prior knowledge and opportunities. The P-3 room has a high ratio of student to teacher/teacher aide time, and this ensures all children are guided and extended within their ability.

A large part of our Prep program focuses on social and personal learning. Within this all children participate in "Lets Play." This is a play-based context where children are encouraged to actively engage and explore their interests and make choices about their learning. This is a hive of activity and can take children on an interesting journey including creating a zoo, CD compilation, army boats, birthday parties and many other things of their choice.

Prep students are integrated into classroom activities that allow learning in language and communication. Routines and transitions such as calendar and weather activities, writing experiences, reading time, introduction to the THRASS phonics program and Lets Play give children the opportunity to expand their oral language and be emerged in a variety of meaningful text.

Children begin mathematical understandings by exploring such things as repeating counting patterns with class, playing number games, investigating and representing quantities, building with blocks and making patterns. The children have opportunities to inquire, investigate, challenge, predict and compare during many experiences throughout the day.

Health and Physical learning focuses on all children extending their fine and gross motor capabilities. This takes place in activities such as obstacle courses they have designed themselves, gross motor games, threading, tracing patterns, letters and numbers, drawing and painting and cooking opportunities. They also participate in PE lessons once a week, with a specialised PE teacher.

Children at Brigalow actively learn how to express their ideas, and display these in a variety of forms. Children use technology to create individual e-portfolios, take photos using the digital camera and play and use computer games and software.

Prep is a fantastic chance for children to discuss their ideas and develop shared understanding about themselves and the world around them. During their time here at Brigalow children will encounter friendly peers and staff who will work hard to promote a safe and enjoyable experience.