



<p><i>Name</i></p>	<p>Fiona Loudoun BSc hon, MSc, MRCOT floudoun@ucc.ie</p> 
<p><i>Title of study</i></p>	<p>Exploring participation in play in digital spaces through childhood</p>
<p><i>Supervisor(s)</i></p>	<p>Dr Bryan Boyle (UCC) Professor Maria Larsson-Lund (LTU)</p>
<p><i>Background/Abstract (350 words max)</i></p>	<p>Play is acknowledged as fundamental in childhood to support children’s cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines that every child has the <i>right</i> to participate in play that is appropriate for the age of the child. In our digitalised and connected society, children are increasingly accessing digital and technological devices. Societal discourses suggest that the ‘toxic childhood’ children experience is influenced by this increase in the use of technological and digital devices which reduces the time allowed for ‘real play’. Current research in this area has tended to focus on the learning and educational benefits rather than focusing on the children’s right to play for play’s sake. However, by acknowledging that participation in occupation supports well-being these studies will explore participation in play in digital spaces across the trajectory of childhood using participatory approaches. An initial scoping review will identify and examine the literature focusing on how play in digital spaces is understood from different disciplines, aiming to extract an occupational dimension of play in digital spaces. An exploratory qualitative approach will be taken to understand the form, function, and meaning of participating in play in digital spaces.</p>

	<p>The research project aims to generate new knowledge and understanding of the occupation of participating in play in digital spaces throughout childhood.</p>
<p><i>Publications (e.g. articles, conferences etc)</i></p>	<p>Conferences</p> <p>(Poster presentation) “Little Scribblers”: a universal handwriting intervention. Royal College of Occupational Therapists’ Children and Young People’s Annual Conference (awarded best poster) November 2017</p> <p>(Poster presentation) “Little Scribblers”: impact of universal handwriting interventions. Royal College of Occupational Therapists’ Annual Conference June 2018</p> <p>Publications</p> <p>Fiona published an article in OT News exploring the delivery of play-based sessions with school staff and parents to support the development of handwriting:</p> <p><i>Loudoun, F. (2018) Little Scribblers. Occupational Therapy News. 26(5)</i></p> <p><u>Forthcoming papers:</u></p> <p><i>Loudoun, F & Breckenridge, J (in preparation) “The importance of play really”: A qualitative study of teachers’ experiences of, and opinions about, a universal handwriting intervention. Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early Intervention. Awaiting publication.</i></p>
<p><i>Link to Orchid Profile/ Research gate profile/Iris profile or website</i></p>	<p>https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3726-6681</p> 
<p><i>Biography e.g. qualification/training/work history (200 words max)</i></p>	<p>Fiona graduated from the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, Scotland in 2007. Since then she has predominately worked as an Occupational Therapist within the field of Child Health, providing specialist assessment and intervention. With the introduction of Ready to Act (Scottish Government, 2015), Fiona was</p>

	<p>actively involved in her local area in the provision of universal interventions to support whole groups of children, utilising the school context to facilitate this. This balance between specialist, targeted and universal interventions is critical in supporting whole populations as well as increasing awareness of the role and scope of the occupational therapy profession and was consequently the focus of her research for her MSc.</p> <p>Fiona has recently completed her MSc in Quality Improvement; developing research skills within clinical practice. As part of her MSc, a qualitative research project was completed exploring teacher's experiences of, and opinions about, a universal handwriting intervention. This research identified that the knowledge and skills gained by practitioners through their participation impacted positively on the experiences provided to children within early years' settings and their understanding of the role of occupational therapy as well as their will to collaborate. This research comprehensively explored teachers' perspectives which have largely been ignored in handwriting research to date and guided service improvement and delivery of evidence-based intervention within clinical practice.</p>
<p><i>Funding body (if relevant)</i></p>	<p>This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Grant Agreement No 861257 . The P4Play programme is a European Joint Doctorate programme in Occupational Science for Occupational Therapists and addresses four areas of play: People, Policy, Practice and Place. ESR4 will explore play in 'place' and specifically play within digital play spaces.</p>