



Orla Wylie

**Paediatric
Occupational
Therapist**

Introduce yourself. Where do you work? What is your job role?

My name is Orla Wylie, and I work as a Paediatric Occupational Therapist in a special school.

What does your job entail?

Every day in my role as a Paediatric Occupational Therapist in a special school is different and filled with variety. The children I work with have diverse physical disabilities, and I also support children with autism. When working with children with autism, a significant part of my role involves assessing their sensory processing needs and developing personalized programs to help them regulate their sensory experiences, enabling their active participation throughout the school day. For children and young people with physical disabilities, my responsibilities can range from assessing their need for a new wheelchair to teaching them essential wheelchair skills. I also explore ways for them to access information and communication technology (ICT) to facilitate their engagement with schoolwork. Additionally, I create upper limb splints and conduct group sessions to teach independence skills. With younger children, I focus on developing their fine motor skills, play skills, and strategies for them to engage in play.

How did you get into this line of work?

I have worked in this area for years, once I got into the area I didn't want to leave.

Outline your career to date

Hospital and schools based rotation. School based post for Band 5 and Band 6.

Tell us about your qualifications and training

I have a BSc Hons Occupational Therapy degree and various courses and training relating to my current post – sensory processing, wheelchair assessment/prescription and splinting.

What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

Flexibility, no day will go as planned in your diary! Patience, progress can be slow at times. Creativity, in order to engage the children. Energy and enthusiasm, the ability to work in a team. Ability to prioritise and time management skills. Organisational skills and the need to be physically fit.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

In life, don't accept criticism from someone who you wouldn't go to for advice. Also keep the child and family at the centre of all you do.