

Biography



Carol Barron, is a lecturer in the School of Nursing and Human Sciences at Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland. Her professional background is in children's nursing and her academic background is in health and medical anthropology. She has extensive experience teaching within the child health field and has over 20 years' experience conducted research about children's play worlds in both urban and rural settings in the UK and Ireland and has published book chapters and journal articles in these areas as well as multiple conference presentations internationally. Dr Barron is especially interested in participatory research methodologies with children and is currently conducting folkloric archival research on children's play, games and toys. She is also working with local authorities to develop county play policies in partnership with children and young people. Dr Barron is also the Chairperson of Súgradh – the Irish national charity promoting the child's right to play and has inputted into Dublin City's Play Policy.



Angharad Beckett, is Associate Professor of Political Sociology & Deputy Director of the Centre for Disability Studies, University of Leeds, UK. The Centre for Disability Studies is an internationally renowned centre for excellence in research and teaching in this field (see: <http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/> or on Twitter @CDSLeeds). She is programme leader for the Masters programmes in interdisciplinary Disability Studies and Disability Studies (Distance Learning) at the University. Her primary research interest is 'disability politics' and the struggle to build enabling and inclusive societies. She has undertaken UK Research Council (ESRC) funded research into citizenship for disabled people and disability activism and has published a book on this topic entitled 'Citizenship and Vulnerability: disability and issues of social and political engagement', published by Palgrave Macmillan. She has also undertaken research in the area of Inclusive Education (again ESRC-funded), exploring the approaches educators use and might use to teach children and young people about disability and the need to challenge discrimination and prejudice towards disabled people. Extending her work in this area, she has recently been working in the area of Inclusive Play as part of a Leverhulme Trust-funded project in collaboration with colleagues in Engineering/Design. She is keen to explore the 'politics' of play, seeking to understand the barriers and facilitators of inclusive play for disabled children and the potential of such play for improving self-esteem amongst disabled children and encouraging positive interactions and friendships between disabled and non-disabled children.

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Marieke Coussens, is master in Occupational Therapy with expertise in working with young children and their parents with developmental disabilities.

She is junior researcher (PhD student) and Ghent University and a teacher at the Artevelde University college (occupational therapists)

At Ghent University she is attached to the research group Learning Disabilities of the Department of Experimental-Clinical and Health Psychology Developmental Disorders and to the faculty of Medicine (Rehabilitation Science). The research group Developmental Disorders and association research group Learning Disabilities of Ghent University have extensive experience in research in early characteristics of learning disabilities. In addition she is conducting research on participation (as defined by the ICF-CY) of young children with Attention Deficit disorders, Autism and Developmental Coordination disorders. She is also a clinician working with these young children and their parents. At Artevelde University college she is promotor of the research and advice center 'Learn+' where studies on atypical learning are coordinated with an interdisciplinary approach.



Annemie Desoete, is master in education with expertise in learning disabilities (especially dyscalculia and dyslexia).

She is senior researcher (full professor) and Ghent University and at the Artevelde University college (speech therapists)

At Ghent University she is attached to the research group Learning Disabilities of the Department of Experimental-Clinical and Health Psychology Developmental Disorders. The research group Developmental Disorders and association research group Learning Disabilities of Ghent University have extensive experience in research in early characteristics of learning disabilities. In addition she is conducting research on serious gaming, metacognition; executive functioning, time related problems and the learning of fractions in children with learning disabilities. She is also promotor of PhD studies on ASD and on number sense in young children. At Artevelde University college she is head promotor of the research and advice center 'Learn+' where studies on atypical learning are coordinated with an interdisciplinary approach.

More information : <http://www.ekgp.ugent.be/index.php?position=5x1x0&page=ADES>
<https://biblio.ugent.be/person/801001505476>

She was the promotor or copromotor of 14 PhD studies.

Currently she is promotor of

- PhD Elke Baten The role of motivation, communication, self-compassion and well-being in (a)typical numerical skills – since 1.10.2015
- PhD Ehud Fries 'the influence of software on accelerating reading/math abilities for children with learning difficulties in Hebrew' since 18.11.2014



Nan Cannon Jones, During my teaching career I have worked in mainstream infant/junior schools, in specialist provisions, from birth to 5 years, and as an advisory teacher for children aged 5 to 18 years. Firstly for Children with an Autism Spectrum Condition and latterly for children with a Physical and Neurological Impairment.

I studied for a Certificate in Education, for Infant and Junior Children at Hockerill College and for a Master's Degree in Special Education at the University of Birmingham. My studies, at university, focussed on Children with Autism and my Action Research project explored sensory perceptual issues for pre-school children with Autism Spectrum Conditions. The research was part of regular and routine activities already established in a pre-school specialist provision for children with a range of disabilities. The research was carried out through working in close partnership with parents, carers and other involved professionals. My research enquiry analysed the reactions and responses of pre -school children to environmental stimulation. The enquiry indicated that practitioners need to focus on the sensory abilities of children with autism rather than their sensory difficulties. The results showed that children with autism do sense the world in the same way as those following a typical pattern of development but that their reactions and responses are not always seen to be purposeful. With this research in mind sensitively structured play routines were developed to help children to make sense of and give meaning to everyday experiences.

As an independent specialist, I plan and deliver parent workshops and staff training, based on the National Autistic Societies SPELL framework and have also planned and written a series of workshops for a National Charity. At present my independent outreach work involves supporting parents, Early Years settings, after school clubs and church groups.

I have been included in and supported a research project with Hertfordshire University developing the use of KASPAR, a childlike humanoid robot, to develop Social Interaction and Social Communication for children with autism through collaborative play. Interactions with others can be unpredictable and frightening, KASPAR acts as mediator for the children who first, with adult support, interact and play with the robot, this happens initially on a 1:1 basis until the children are ready to play with KASPAR in a small group (2/3 children).

As part of this project I designed an assessment document that fits with both the Early Years Foundation Stage (<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk>) and the World Health Organisation International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF WHO 2001) document. This has been well received by a range of local professionals. I am delighted to be a member of the Ludi research project investigating play for children with disabilities.



Helen Lynch, is an Occupational Therapist and an Occupational Scientist who has worked to enable children participate in the world through engaging in occupation, especially play. Helen worked as an occupational therapist for 20 years with families and children with special needs in many different services in Ireland: for children with cognitive, sensory and physical disabilities. She, specialised in environmental access, sensory integration, and occupational development and

service development. Since 2003, she has focused her work on research and teaching. She joined the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy in University College Cork as full-time lecturer and Director of Brookfield Clinic and of the graduate studies programme in the department. She teaches modules related to children, research and service delivery and effectiveness, and supervises student research for undergraduate, and postgraduate students related to children and family-centred practice.

Helen gained a Diploma in Montessori Education and completed a master's degree researching time-use (occupation and environments) of children in middle-childhood (2007). In 2012, she completed a PhD in social sciences exploring physical play environments in the homes of infants under two. Her research has continued to focus in particular on play and early childhood, including home, community and school playspaces. Using inclusive approaches in research, Helen has worked with children to design their outdoor play spaces, to inform us about play and play occupation, and has worked to enable play through design and the development of tools to support practitioners. Through this work so far, there is support for the need for further work in identifying children's play occupations that are culturally and contextually relevant. In turn this will inform practitioners when using play-based approaches in early intervention for children with disabilities and will also strengthen family-centred practices. We have a lot to learn from the children and families we work with!



Maria Prellwitz, is a senior lecturer with a PhD in Occupational Therapy at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. In 1999 she joined the division of Occupational Therapy as full-time lecturer. Maria co-ordinates the Occupational Therapy program third year, focusing on teaching scientific research methods. Her other main area of teaching is within pediatrics. She supervises several undergraduate research projects mainly related to children and accessibility issues.

Maria's main research focus is to elucidate the children's own voices on different issues. Her current research has a focus on: Play for children with disabilities and accessibility and usability of different environments for children with different abilities. Her main focus has been on playgrounds. Another focus is to elucidate children with disabilities experiences of play within their rehabilitation.

She is also involved in a research project together with the department of civil engineering regarding a laser navigator that complements the white cane and helps persons with visual impairment to orientate. This is a unique solution to how persons with visual impairment can find and experience direction and distance to objects in the environment. She also runs several projects regarding the development of e-learning at the University.

Currently Maria is Vice-chairman of the board of the faculty of humanities and social sciences and Associate Dean of the faculty of arts and social sciences.



Deborah Fenney Salkeld, I completed my PhD exploring disabled people's access to sustainable lifestyles at the University of Leeds in 2015, in the School of Sociology and Social Policy. My broad research interests are disability equality and sustainability, as well as related issues of policy and activism. As access to the natural environment is a significant part of access to sustainable lifestyles, however, this is also a particular interest. I currently work in the healthcare sector.

