


<p>Name</p>	<p>Jennifer (Jen) Gill</p> 
<p>How long have you been an advanced paediatric occupational therapist for?</p>	<p>12 years</p>
<p>What inspired you to be paediatric occupational therapist?</p>	<p>I initially wanted to be a nurse, as I always believed myself to be caring and compassionate and that nursing was the profession for me. I spent a summer volunteering at a hospital on the stroke ward to gain some experience nursing, but I found myself spending more time with the occupational therapists (OT).</p> <p>The OTs spent a lot of time with the patients working on their chosen goals and you could see the difference grading activities that were purposeful and meaningful to that person had such an impact in re-gaining and re-learning skills I knew OT was the profession for me. The OTs were still caring and compassionate, but they were able to enable people to live life to their full potential.</p>
<p>What does your role involve?</p>	<p>Paediatric occupational therapists support children and young people to engage and participate as fully as possible in childhood occupations (activities) such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play • Eating and drinking • Self-care e.g., washing, cleaning your teeth, toileting • Dressing • School and life skills e.g., writing and alternatives to recording information and using scissors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing at school e.g., getting around the class / school, supportive seating, specialist toilet seats • Hobbies and leisure activities <p>We provide specialist assessment, advice, and treatment, where appropriate, to reduce the effects of difficulties and disabilities; and optimise a child or young person's functional skills.</p> <p>We also provide assessment and recommendations with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom seating where additional postural support is required. • Access to the school curriculum, i.e., the ability to participate in lessons or move around the school, written recording and carrying out practical lessons
<p><i>How did you get into this career? What steps did it take since leaving school?</i></p>	<p>When I left school I went to college, I completed A-Levels in Health and Social Care, ICT and Biology.</p> <p>I volunteered at a hospital and spent time with the therapy teams which included occupational therapists.</p> <p>I went to a careers fair at my local hospital and talked to different AHPs, and occupational therapy was definitely the best fit for me.</p> <p>I applied for university, completed the entrance interview, and was offered an unconditional offer to study occupational therapy at Teesside University.</p>
<p><i>Can you tell us a bit about the training you undertook for your role?</i></p>	<p>I studied BSC (Hons) Occupational Therapy at Teesside University for three years. The course was split 50/50 between theory and clinical placement.</p> <p>I completed both exams and written assignments as well as completing clinical competencies whilst on placements. I also completed a 15,000-word dissertation on a subject of my choosing.</p> <p>My placement settings included, elderly rehabilitation, in patient mental health, community rehab team and palliative care.</p>

	<p>I was able to also complete mini courses on hand therapy, splinting, equipment, and end of life care.</p> <p>At university there were also volunteering opportunities and I took advantage of volunteering at a local care home for dementia patients to build memory boxes.</p>
<p><i>What has been the highlight of your career so far?</i></p>	<p>The highlight of my career has been working with such a supportive and nurturing team and having access to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) that has enabled me to progress through my career.</p> <p>Due to this I am able to be the best therapist I can be which impacts upon my therapy as I know I am doing my best for children, young people, and their families.</p>
<p><i>What do you like most about your role/career?</i></p>	<p>I love working with children and young people to reach their full potential and seeing them make progress following assessment advice and recommendations.</p> <p>It's always rewarding when a child reaches their goals, and they're able to complete the activities they reported as difficult.</p> <p>I also love working with students and developing their clinical skills within occupational therapy.</p>
<p><i>What is the most challenging part of your role?</i></p>	<p>The most challenging part of the role is working with children and young people with life limiting conditions and seeing them deteriorate. However, this is also extremely rewarding as we're able to support the child/young person to engage in functional tasks and play through adaptations and grading of activities.</p>
<p><i>What is a typical day like for you in your role?</i></p>	<p>I start work at 8am and spend about 1 hour checking emails, doing general admin, and prepping assessment and review checklists.</p> <p>I then complete assessments, reviews, equipment assessments, access visits, treatment sessions either in clinic, by telephone or within the educational setting.</p>

	<p>After lunch until 17:15 I spend time completing admin, doing referrals, making telephone calls, writing reports, advice, and recommendations, triaging referrals, attending MDT meetings, and working on projects such as our universal service information and if there is time, I will try to squeeze in a telephone review or two.</p>
<p><i>What are the main skills needed to do your role?</i></p>	<p>My top five skills needed to be a Paediatric OT are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpersonal and communication skills. The ability to talk, listen, read body language, connect, empathise, and read between the lines all at the same time. 2. Patience. It can sometimes take a child or young person a long time to develop their functional skills, patience is required to give them time to learn and develop and to see change as this can be a long process. 3. Enthusiasm. Being enthusiastic and proactive in your role to learn and develop will make your role more enjoyable. 4. Good teamworking skills. Being able to work as part of a team is an important part of being an OT, it helps to build clinical skills and confidence which is always a benefit for the child or young person you are working with. 5. Ability to find solutions to problems. The ability to think creatively to problem solve and grade activities so they're accessible for the child or young person in different environments.
<p><i>Do you have any advice for someone considering your career?</i></p>	<p>Volunteer your time in a variety of health and social care settings to build skills and confidence when interacting with people.</p> <p>Ask if you can shadow an occupational therapist for a few days to learn more about how diverse the role is and have the opportunity to ask an OT what the role is really like.</p> <p>You can also visit the Royal College of Occupational Therapy website for more information: https://www.rcot.co.uk/</p>

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