



Early Start PhD Scholarship

The University of Wollongong (UOW) is a research-intensive university with a vision of being a leader in ideas and solutions, a community of campuses and partners where discovery, learning and technology connect to transform people and the world we live in. Early Start Research is part of UOW's \$44 million Early Start initiative that unites cutting-edge research with higher education programs and community engagement. Early Start is one of UOW's Research strengths and home to more than 100 academics and research students undertaking interdisciplinary research focusing on children's learning, development, health and well-being. Our purpose is to help children flourish and realise their potential, be active learners, and become engaged members of our society. Early Start also has a specific focus on vulnerable children in regional and remote areas.

A large proportion of the research in Early Start involves children and staff in the 41 *Early Start Engagement Centres* – early childhood education and care services mostly located in regional and remote communities in NSW and the ACT. These long-term partnerships allow innovation to be pioneered in the areas where it is most needed and aid the transformation of research into best practice.

Early Start's research over the next three years is clustered around four research themes. These are:

- **Food and Movement Behaviours (Theme Leader, A/Prof Bridget Kelly)**
This research focuses on wellness, early intervention, and population-level approaches to promoting healthy eating and movement behaviours. Enabling healthy food and activity behaviours in children through individual, community and policy initiatives is important both in terms of healthy, potential-enhancing growth and also as a 'best buy' for future prevention of non-communicable diseases. These behaviours are complex, and driven by an interrelated web of societal, environmental and biological factors. This research theme draws on interdisciplinary perspectives and is well situated for exploring and answering big questions related to how society influences children's physical wellbeing and how we can best intervene to support children to flourish.
- **Play, Pedagogy and Curriculum in Contemporary Theory and Practice (Theme Leader, A/Prof Lisa Kervin)**
This research theme examines critical perspectives of the relationships between and among play, pedagogy and curriculum for learning. It is a leading research group for sociocultural theory and qualitative methods as they examine play, pedagogy and curriculum (particularly with technology) in the early years both in Australia and beyond. The collective research programs in this theme span a range of contexts: the transition from early childhood to primary learning, formal learning settings to virtual environments and diverse locations. Members of the theme bring experience working with a range of industry partners including education systems, professional associations and community groups with many international connections.
- **Self Regulatory and Cognitive Development (Theme Leader, Prof Marc de Rosnay)**
Our research theme examines the ways in which children regulate and manage their activity and attention, how they come to do that effectively in various domains (i.e., cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional) and contexts, and the long-term consequences of these abilities for their learning, development and wellbeing. Despite the central position of self-regulation in

developmental psychology, it remains one of the most difficult domains to assess meaningfully in the early years, and the cognitive components of these capacities are relatively poorly understood and measured in relation to children's later educational and developmental outcomes. Our research group is focused on better understanding children's development in these important domains through collaborative fundamental and translational research.





- **Interactive Processes in Development (Theme Leader, A/Prof Jane Herbert)**

This research theme focuses on the critical role of parent-child interactions in children's social, emotional, and cognitive development during the early years. Our researchers combine together expertise in developmental psychology, child and adolescent clinical psychology, and education, to develop approaches for understanding and fostering the development of typically developing children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage. We address research questions on attachment, social learning, theory of mind, parent-child conversation, parental mental health, the home learning environment, and the role of fathers. Our approach is to use longitudinal and experimental research designs and we seek to translate our findings into prevention and intervention programs.

Three PhD scholarships are currently being offered within Early Start. Each scholarship will align with one or more of the four key research themes.

Applicants are expected to commit to full-time research for the three years of their project and will be based at the University of Wollongong's main campus. As the projects may involve the Early Start Engagement Centres, applicants may be required to commit to travelling as part of their scholarship (travel costs will be covered as part of the scholarship).

Eligibility

Open to Australian and International applicants who meet UOW PhD entry requirements (Hons I or Masters) in the following fields: education (eg specific domains such as language and literacy, curriculum, policy, technology), health, psychology, child development, or language and linguistics.

Stipend

- **Scholarship stipend is \$26,288 per annum for 3 years (tax-free and indexed annually)**
- **An additional allowance is available to cover project-related costs such as travel**

Dates

- **Closing date: 31 January 2018**
- **Commencement date: Autumn Session 2018 (Must commence by 30 April 2018).**

Inquiries

Please direct all inquiries to Julie Sherring: jsherrin@uow.edu.au. If you have a specific question relating to one of the research themes, please contact the relevant theme leader:

- **A/Prof Bridget Kelly, bkelly@uow.edu.au**
- **A/Prof Lisa Kervin, lkervin@uow.edu.au**
- **Prof Marc de Rosnay, marcd@uow.edu.au**
- **A/Prof Jane Herbert, herbertj@uow.edu.au**

How to apply

- **All potential candidates should send their CVs (including academic transcript) and a statement of alignment to a research theme (one-page maximum) to Christine Cairns (ccairns@uow.edu.au) by the closing date of 31 January 2018.**

