

# CLAIRE FERRIS

## DISABILITY SERVICES TRAINEESHIP INTERCHANGE

**Why did you decide to undertake a gap year traineeship?** I decided to undertake a gap year traineeship for two main reasons. These reasons were; firstly to have a rest from full-time study and enter the workforce to gain experience prior to university and secondly to cement my idea that disability was definitely the field I would enjoy working in in the future.

**How did you find out about the traineeship and what was the application method?** I had been volunteering at Interchange for approximately 12 months prior to the traineeship being advertised. After deciding that I would like to apply for the traineeship, I was required to send in my CV outlining the key selection criteria required for the job. I was then contacted with a time for a formal interview with myself and two lead staff from the program where they asked questions relating to my personality, interests and the job role to determine whether I would be suitable for the position.

**What do you typically do on a day to day basis in your job?** Day-to-day tasks include reports of activities, updating client profiles, working on study requirements. Then after school finishes, participants and volunteers join us for activities and fun play before parents pick them up at around 5:30pm.

**What are the great things about your traineeship?** There are many great aspects of my traineeship including learning so many new skills, being able to develop as a support worker, being hands-on and actively participating in the activities. The environment of the workplace including the other staff members, volunteers and participants is also a great aspect of my job as I get to learn how to work as part of a team to achieve the most positive outcome possible.

**What key skills have you developed through your traineeship?** I have developed so many valuable skills during my year including better communication skills, organisational skills, learning new strategies to work with a variety of people with a disability and improving my interpersonal skills through working in collaboration with other workers in the field, parents/family/guardians of participants and the participants themselves.

**Has completing this traineeship strengthened or changed your career/course choice for 2018?** Being able to be so hands-on in my position and being offered so many amazing opportunities has definitely strengthened my choice of completing a degree in Occupational Therapy and specialising in the disability sector.

**Why should current Year 12 students consider applying for 12-month traineeship after school?** A 12-month traineeship is a great opportunity to have an introduction into the workforce and life outside of school/university. It also allows for students to gain more experience and insight into different fields prior to university study. A traineeship also enables an individual to save some money prior to university study which is great if moving is required for a chosen course.

