At Cox College, we believe that evidence-based practice is vital to the field of occupational therapy. One way we teach and apply scholarship is through our research program. We value research topics and ideas that are relevant to a specific population and culture, meaningful to our students, and applicable to improving or expanding the practice of occupational therapy.

The American Occupational Therapy Association’s (AOTA) Centennial Vision states, “We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven, and evidence-based profession with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society’s occupational needs” (AOTA, 2016). Field research is a vital part of our MSOT program. It guides our

**Hippotherapy**

Cox College MSOT students research to discover the benefits and uses of hippotherapy. This qualitative study uses a Likert scale survey to collect data to investigate the use of hippotherapy related to the field of occupational therapy.

**Foster Care**

There are more than 400,000 children in foster care in the United States. Many of these children have developed difficult behaviors due to traumatic and unsteady experiences and lifestyles. This study focuses on providing parent training to address difficult behaviors and measuring the change in parent confidence to foster parent as a result of the additional training and support.
students through innovative projects and establishes foundational knowledge. The MSOT program at Cox College seeks to address the important concepts of qualitative and quantitative research including the theoretical assumptions, process, and procedures in the field. Our students lead the way for evidence-based research in cutting-edge projects impacting the Springfield area and beyond.

Cox College is committed to putting the student first. Take a look at our current projects. If you have another area of research that interests you, be sure to contact Dr. Amy Vaughan (Amy.Vaughan@coxcollege.edu). We are always expanding and welcome prospective student research ideas. Our research projects are designed around student interest and available community supports.

**Autism Park**

**Battlefield, Missouri Partners with The Cox College MSOT Program to Plan a Park for People of ALL Abilities**

MSOT students have partnered with the City of Battlefield to create a cutting-edge Autism Park project. The purpose of the park is to expand on current universal design concepts to expand supports for those with sensory processing difficulty. The purpose of universal design is to promote equal access for all individuals to a park that promotes therapeutic exercise, social participation, and provides a worry-free environment for all participants.

This park will feature sensory & interactive playground equipment that can be integrated with current therapy interventions. Students have analyzed the benefit of sensory designed parks and how they provide for individuals with...
disabilities across the lifespan. Students will also look for how universally designed parks provide opportunity for therapeutic growth and development. The design of this park is very unique and one of the first ever all-inclusive ‘Autism Friendly’ parks!

There will be future opportunity for students to partner in this project and continue to develop and implement this universal-design plan.

**Blueprint for Autism Friendly City**

The Autism Park Project is a part of a larger community project that promotes inclusion, specifically for those with autism. A copy of the Blueprint for the project in its entirety can be found at:


The City of Battlefield Autism Friendly Project is an award winning program teaching citizens and businesses to become aware of social and environmental barriers affecting people with autism. Other cities can follow this guide to modify communication and physical spaces to create a city free of social barriers. All citizens deserve full inclusion in city events and venues, and the team for STARS for Autism will lead you there. Your city can join Battlefield in understanding and acceptance of those with autism, the fastest growing developmental disability in the world today.

If you have any questions or would like to further discuss research opportunities, please don’t hesitate to contact Dr. Amy Vaughan at Amy.Vaughan@CoxCollege.edu.

This Autism Social Skills Project highlights a need for a playgroup for individuals with ASD in hopes to improve socialization skills. In the future, additional projects will be able to capitalize on this work in order to gather additional data related to the implementation of social-motor based social skill groups in the community and around the United States.