

Schemas of Play



What Are Schemas?

Schemas are repeatable patterns of actions and behaviours that children follow or become fascinated in as they play, explore and find out about the world around them, figuring out how things work. Some common examples of schema behaviours are when children enjoy placing items in lines or transporting objects from one place to another.

It has been recognised by researchers and theorists that schemas start very early on in children's development and several schemas may be developing at the same time. Schemas represent current understanding and knowledge and as children develop, investigate and explore, new information will modify their schema play. Over time, children are likely to explore different types of schema more than once with their actions and behaviours becoming ever more complex and sophisticated.

By recognising, supporting and then extending patterns of behaviour and thinking, educators and caregivers can plan an exciting and challenging learning environment to support children's schematic interests and learning.

Connection



Children exploring the connection schema will be interested in how things join together and separate. They may enjoy taking things apart, putting them back together and linking items together.

Positioning



Children exploring the positioning schema will be interested in placing and aligning objects (or themselves) in an order or sequence.

Transforming



Children exploring the transforming schema like to change and combine materials. Children will explore changing the appearance of objects or themselves and transform substances.

Enclosing



Children exploring the enclosing schema like to contain things using borders and enclosures, often creating enclosures around objects, themselves or during mark-making activities.

Rotation/Circular



Children exploring the rotation/circular schema will show fascination with things that move, spin, rotate and turn.

Transporting



Children exploring the transporting schema will be fascinated by moving themselves or objects and discovering how things around them can be transported from place to place.

Enveloping



Children exploring the enveloping schema enjoy the feeling of 'disappearing' and may like to hide themselves and objects so they cannot be seen.

Trajectory



Children exploring the trajectory schema will be fascinated by how things move and respond. They may be moving their bodies or objects in horizontal, vertical and diagonal movements.

Orientation



Children exploring the orientation schema will be interested in looking at themselves, objects and the world around them from different angles, places and positions.