



## Schemas

'Schemas are patterns of linked behaviours, which a child can generalise and use in a whole variety of different situations'.

A schema is best described as mental structures and patterns of behaviour. This is reflected as the biological development of the brain is in constant interaction with children's socio-cultural experiences and is the two important aspects of schemas. A baby uses their biological reflexes as they experience movement, texture, sound, light and pattern, tastes and smells. Having these experiences will enhance and alter any existing schemas a baby may have, becoming more complex as these actions are repeated and used in different contexts. As children's schemas become more co-ordinated, observing recognisable behaviour patterns in young children will enable us to better understand their needs and focus on their interests, building a solid foundation for their learning and development.

- Schemas should be observed and used in planning in the context of the child's all round development and experience.
- A child who appears to be 'flitting' from one activity to another may actually be exploring a particular idea or concept in some depth.
- Certain behaviours which may appear to be anti-social can actually be clues to a child's schematic preoccupation. By understanding this you it will allow you to provide for the child appropriately, it does not mean condoning anti-social behaviour.
- Schemas develop in clusters, sometimes they may be very obvious sometimes they seem to disappear.
- Children with SEN have schemas however additional help in applying them to a wide range of situations may be needed.
- Schemas are used at a sensory motor level, through a child's senses, actions and movements and at a symbolic level as they make something stand for something else.
- Children manifest their schemas dynamically through movements and actions such as dancing around, climbing up or crawling into, and configuratively in their drawings, paintings and models.
- Children who have similar schemas will play together more harmoniously than those whose schemas are different.

## Types of Schema

- **Transporting.**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

A child may carry all the bricks from one place to another in a bag, the sand from the tray to the home corner in a bucket, push a friend around in a toy pram. Exploring transporting can develop an understanding of quantity and number.

- **Enveloping.**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

A child may cover themselves with a flannel when washing, wrap a doll up in a blanket, sit in the sand tray and cover their legs with sand, cover their whole painting with one colour.

- **Enclosure/ containing**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

A child may put their thumb in and out of their mouth build tunnels or cages with blocks. They like to fill bags, dress up, bury things crawl inside tents, tunnels, play houses. Children often enjoy writing letters, folding the paper and using envelopes or filling and emptying containers with sand and water or anything else that will fit in. This schema can develop an understanding of space and size, volume and capacity.

- **Trajectory- diagonal/vertical/horizontal.**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

A young child may gaze at your face, drop things from their cot or highchair, make arcs in their split food or drinks with their hands. Children enjoy playing with the running water from a tap, climb up and jump off things, line up cars, bounce and kick balls, throw. Children interested in trajectories enjoy very active learning

- **Rotation.**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

A child may love anything with wheels, enjoy watching the washing machine, enjoy spinning round or being spun around. They enjoy playing with wheeled toys or with the water

wheels. They enjoy hoops, balls and spinning tops and are generally fascinated by things that go round.

- **Connection**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

A child may distribute and collect objects to and from others. Connectors enjoy construction and will spend time joining the train tracks together with different layouts. They enjoy using sellotape, staples, woodwork and tubes and funnels in water play. They also enjoy playing with kites and pull along toys. Children develop technology skills, managing tools and estimating size and space. Concepts of cause and effect, time and sequencing also developed.

- **Positioning.**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

Rather than having their custard on top of their cake, a child may prefer to have it placed beside it. They may put things on their head, lie on the floor or under the table or walk around the edge of the sandpit.

- **Transforming.**

**Description of possible behaviour:**

A child may enjoy adding juice to their mashed potato or put sand in the water or water in the sand. They may enjoy adding colour to the water or corn flour mixing paints or making dough.

When planning and meeting the individual child's interests it will be more appropriate if an occasional action or fleeting interest is not identified as a schema. A child's schema will be observed across a whole range of situations.

Ensure you refer to the book in the nursery focussing on schemas and child development.

