

What is a Schema...?

Schemas are patterns of repeatable behaviour that children demonstrate when they are exploring the world and trying to find how things work.

Here are the most observed schemas in early years.

Enclosure/Containment

Do they have an interest in hiding or climbing into spaces, build structures with different materials to form an enclosure for something? Have they made borders around their creations, or built walls and fences to play in or to place objects inside?



Midlothian 



Children develop schemas by behaving like honey bees, moving from experience to experience to gather further ingredients to encode; in that way they build a fuller understanding of that schema.

Anne Meade

For more information on Schemas and how to support them, contact:

a.leask@midlothian.gov.uk

Schematic Play



Transporting

An interest in moving objects from one area to another, do they carry items to a special person, load a buggy or trolley with lots of items, want to be transported in a buggy or bike themselves?



Enveloping

Do they hide under blankets or inside boxes, wrap things up, paint over pictures, fill up bags with bits and pieces, fill buckets with sand, put objects inside things, dress up in hats, shoes and belts?

Orientation

Children have a natural play urge to climb up high, be upside down, crawl under, or stand on top of anything they can get access to. Children may turn things upside down to look at them, examine the underneath of objects,



Connecting/Disconnecting

Do they have an interest in tying knots, take things apart, join train tracks, fasten ropes to furniture, glue or nail materials together? Once children have explored the idea of connecting they often move on to disconnecting things.

Rotation

Do they have an interest in wheels or cogs, circular movements, spinning and drawing circles? Rotation Schema can start as early as six months when babies drop balls and watch them roll away.



Positioning

Do they line objects up, place objects by size from smallest to largest, produce paintings with ordered lines or dots? Collages or constructions may display a sequence of objects.

Trajectory

The urge to throw, drop and other actions that are all part of the trajectory schema. Some other trajectory actions are like climbing up and jumping off, putting your hands under running water and the classic throwing and dropping.



Transformation

Change in form, appearance, nature and character: this schema holds the most fascination for children. Do you notice children mixing things together.....again, then again and again?



Heaping/Scattering

Children take great delight in moving a collection of objects and either pile them up in a heap or scatter them around, they may take boxes and tip the contents into the middle of the floor and they may use their hands and legs to scatter the objects.