

Teaching and Learning

Schemas



"A schema is a pattern of repeated actions. Clusters of schemas develop into later concepts" (Athey, 2007).

Schemas are often described as children's fascinations. There are many different types. Sometimes the activities may seem a little strange or even irritating to adults, but to the child, it's a necessary step in their understanding of the world and themselves.

Each child is different, and some may display more than one schema while others show none at all.

Schemas can be observed, identified and understood by you as an early years practitioner and give you a better awareness of each child's current interests and ways of thinking.

Task 1

Here is a list of some of the most common schemas. Working in small groups or individually, take a schema and research it in more detail. What may you observe a child do? How could you support a child displaying this schema? Do you have any children you are working with that present this schema?

- **Trajectory** - creating lines in space by climbing up and jumping down. Dropping items from up high.
- **Positioning** - lining items up and putting them in groups.
- **Enveloping** - covering themselves or objects completely. Wrapping items up or placing them in containers.
- **Rotating** - enjoys spinning items round and round. Likes to run around in circles or being swung round.
- **Enclosing** - adding boundaries to play areas e.g. fences around animals. Adding borders to pictures.
- **Transporting** - carrying or moving items from one place to another; carrying items in containers or bags.
- **Connecting** - setting out and dismantling tracks, constructing, joining items together with tape or glue.
- **Transforming** - exploring the changing states of materials, transforming them from a solid to liquid state and back again.
- **Orientation** – looking at objects from different angles and perspectives i.e., sitting under the table, swinging upside down on apparatus.

Task 2

Explore the video link example [The Orientation Schema | How Children Learn - YouTube](#) and discuss how this could be used to make parents aware of schemas and how important they can be in supporting the home learning environment.

- How could you share this with parents?
- How could you involve parents in getting them to understand schemas?
- How could you involve the parent's knowledge of the child's schema into the setting?
- How can you celebrate a child's schema with the parents?