



All Saints' Pre-School

Schemas

Understanding your
child's pattern of play
- a parental guide.



What is a Schema?

- A schema is simply a repeated pattern of behaviour which is part of a child's natural way of learning.
- You may have noticed your child doing something over and over again which can often irritate or even worry parents.
- Why does Callum keep lining up everything?
- Why does Hannah keep hiding under the table?
- Why does Billy keep posting bricks in the DVD player?
- Babies and children are naturally curious and will repeat actions to understand how things work, which is all part of making sense of the world in which they live in. Children often become focused and concentrate during these rich learning times and may become upset if their play is upset or interrupted.



Common Schemas

Trajectory	Fascination with straight lines and movement in lines.
Rotation	Fascination with items that rotate and spin.
Enveloping	Covering, wrapping and hiding things.
Transporting	Moving objects or themselves from one place to another.
Connecting	Joining things together, tying things up making connections.
Scattering	Heaping and spreading items about.
Containing	Filling containers up with items.
Enclosing	Creating spaces and surroundings to put objects or themselves in.
On top	Being on top, placing and balancing objects on top.



Schemas

Babies and children can display schemas at any one time, some children show dominate schemas which are easy to spot, or others may show two or more schemas at once. It is not clear why children come up with schemas, however we do know that children use these schemas to test things out and come up with theories of why things work. All this is done through repetition. We all learn through trying things out and repeating ourselves, remember those rubix cubes! Instead of potentially stopping this behaviour join in with it and go on a journey of discovery with your child. This booklet will give you some ideas of how to go on that journey.

Trajectory (straight lines)

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Running water
- ▶ Jumping up and down
- ▶ Drawing straight lines
- ▶ Pushing toys along the floor
- ▶ Making lines of objects
- ▶ Pushing shopping trolleys, prams in straight lines
- ▶ Helping with sweeping mopping
- ▶ These children are active learners, they enjoy throwing and kicking. Sometimes this can appear as inappropriate behaviour, however with support you can guide children for example, throwing rolled up newspaper into a bucket, they enjoy working with pulleys and cogs. Interestingly your child may like to wear stripes.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: shapes, sizes, distances, weights and gravity and developing spatial awareness as well as developing their muscles and balance.**





Rotation (moving and creating circles)

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Spinning and rotating anything circular
- ▶ Wheels etc.
- ▶ Sitting and watching a washing machine, fan, spinning
- ▶ Drawing, painting and making circles
- ▶ Roundabouts
- ▶ Exploring cogs
- ▶ Children who are fascinated by spinning and things going round have rotational schemas. They love to watch things going round, they will go round themselves singing or dancing.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: rotation, spinning, speed, size, spatial awareness, movement, perception, hand eye co-ordination and cause and effect.**



Enveloping or wrapping things

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Closing doors
- ▶ Covering or hiding themselves
- ▶ Wrapping presents in toilet papers, newspaper
- ▶ Burying or hiding objects in sand or mud
- ▶ Painting and then covering again in paint
- ▶ Folding pictures into small parcels
- ▶ Children who enjoy hiding and covering things up have enveloping schemas. Their fascination lies in what happens when they or objects that are covered up and then re-merge.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: spatial awareness, light and dark, cause and effect.**





Transporting (moving things from one place to another)

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Being carried by adults
- ▶ Moving things from one to another
- ▶ Carrying bags and filling with items
- ▶ Carrying out imaginary play transporting things from one place to another
- ▶ Carrying containers of water and or sand
- ▶ Transport and vehicles
- ▶ Children who have this schema love to carry things no matter what, they will carry them in their pockets, re-arrange items and furniture is all typical of transporters.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: motion, distance, spatial awareness, quantity, number and position.**



Connecting joining things together

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Tying table legs up with string
- ▶ Tying door knobs together
- ▶ Putting the train track together rather than pushing the train
- ▶ Building with construction toys
- ▶ Sticking boxes together with sticky tape
- ▶ These children enjoy connecting things together, paper, train tracks, tape, string; they may create elaborate string creations between furniture.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: technology, managing tools, estimating size and space, problem solving, cause and effect, time and sequence.**





Scattering

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Emptying containers onto the floor and then walking away
- ▶ Splashing water
- ▶ Pulling tissues out of boxes
- ▶ Tearing pieces of paper into small pieces
- ▶ When digging in the sand pit throwing the sand out
- ▶ Scattering leaves
- ▶ This schema is potentially the hardest to cope with as they appear to be making a lot of mess. Yet they are learning a lot.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: weight, volume, spatial awareness, what happens to these objects when I do this, eye hand co-ordination.**



Containing

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Putting things into bags, pots, boxes etc.
- ▶ Enjoy sorting toys by shape into containers
- ▶ Climbing into boxes or other containers
- ▶ Filling up buckets with sand and water
- ▶ Continually filling - also enjoy emptying and refilling
- ▶ Transferring items from one container to another
- ▶ Children who become fascinated with putting things into containers are exploring different concepts.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: volume, weight, size and capacity, and hand eye co-ordination. These children will use different resources to explore this schema.**





Enclosure

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Hiding under furniture or covers
- ▶ Likes being in a tent or tunnel
- ▶ Dressing up in scarves, hats, glasses
- ▶ Wrapping dollies and teddies in a blanket
- ▶ Creating dens
- ▶ Drawing and painting shapes and filling them in
- ▶ Making enclosures with bricks and objects
- ▶ These children are fascinated with enclosing themselves or objects. Give them plenty of resources which will absorb their learning for hours.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: capacity, volume, size, colours, and perspective.**



Being on top or placing things on top schema

Is your child fascinated with:

- ▶ Climbing on top of furniture
- ▶ Climbing on work tops
- ▶ Climbing to the top of a climbing frame
- ▶ Balancing objects on top of each other
- ▶ A child's determination to be on top on place objects on top can prove to be challenging for adults. Children need boundaries and sometimes it is not always safe or appropriate for them to do this. Yet they also need to be challenged and take measured risks.
- ▶ **Your child is learning about: perspective, problem solving, spatial awareness, taking risks and knowing own limitations, developing muscle strength.**

