Resources & Activities
to support Play Schemas

Children’s Play Schemas

In case you need a recap on Play Schemas then I highly suggest you head to our blog ‘What are Play Schemas?’ before reading ahead. As a very quick recap, the repetitive action of a schema allows a child to practice and construct meaning until they have mastered the understanding of the schema.

Being aware of play schemas helps in two ways:
1. It helps parents and educators to differentiate between ‘behaviour’ vs ‘natural urges’ which move past the belief that a child is just being ‘difficult’
2. It helps parents and educators to plan learning environments that support the development and mastery of schemas

In summary it is our job as parents and/or educators to support play schemas through learning and play.
At Growing Kind we focus on the 7 most evident play schemas in the early years. Please note there are many more:

Growing Kind
Resources / Activities to support schematic play

The following is a list of resources and activities that can help you at home (or in educational settings) to support play schemas in children 0-5 years.

**Trajectory** (trajectory or trajecting) involves dropping, throwing, kicking, swinging items; perhaps the most problematic schema of them all. A child experiencing this schema may drop their food at the table, throw toys, kick objects or people, enjoy swinging, or dropping things into containers. We can support this schema and shift undesirable behaviours (such as throwing food) into constructive play by providing children with opportunities to traject in a safe environment.
Positioning involves lining up toys, position things into order, ordering books, turning cups upside down or obsessing over items being in an exact place. Many parents worry that this stage of development is abnormal, though in an atypical child ‘positioning’ is very healthy. Allowing your child to move through this schema and have outlets for ‘positioning’ supports them without placing any of our own fears or insecurities onto them.
Connection involves putting objects together. It might involve taping things together, connecting blocks or lego or joining train tracks. This can mean a process of connection then disconnection also, such as building a castle then knocking it over. We can provide resources that connect and join, and safely break apart to help support the connection schema.
Rotating involves spinning, twisting, rolling or turning. Children exploring this schema are generally attracted to, and may benefit from, things with wheels, spinning, playing ring-a-rosey, riding a bike in circles or using screwdrivers.
**Enveloping** is a highly evident schema; involving the children covering themselves or objects. This might look like wrapping toys in paper, laying fabric on top of dolls, playing peek a boo with silks, climbing into boxes or kitchen drawers, or hiding your keys in a cupboard. The big difference with the ‘Enveloping’ and ‘Enclosing’ schema is that enveloping is completely covered and out of sight, whereas enclosing is more of a fence /enclosure.
Enclosing (enclosure) involves drawing or creating a barrier or enclosure. It may involve connecting items to build a fence or drawing circles around objects. At dinner time this might look like moving food to the edge of the plate. Children may be seen building a toy barrier all the way around themselves, whilst playing in the middle.
Transporting involves moving objects from one place to another. A child may like to move objects using baskets, wheelbarrows, buckets, pockets, boxes or their hands. Transporting becomes problematic for adults when children take everything off the shelves and place inside a cupboard or in a different room of the house. By setting up ‘transporting’ activities you can support your child’s urge to transport items without the mess.

As a parent or educator, one of the best things about having an understanding of these urges is that we are able to recognise and support them in our children as soon as possible; meaning less stress for all.

Schema graphics created especially for Growing Kind by @inspire.learn.teach