# What is a schema?

Does your child constantly line toys up, or insist on filling boxes and bags?

Do they love to hide under the table, or paint their arms instead of a picture?

These repeated behaviours can be completely normal and may mean they are experiencing a 'schema'.

> 0 to 19 TORBAY



- Schemas are patterns of play that children show whilst they are learning how things work.
- Children may 'test out' a schema on different objects, to see how it affects things. Children cannot be taught a schema, but may not always have the same schema.
- When they are involved in a schema it might seem like they are "obsessed" with doing things a certain way.
- There are several types of schemas and ways you can help your child whilst they are learning.

## Well-known schemas

- **O** Transporting
- 🔿 Containing / Enveloping
- Positioning
- Trajectory
- Transforming
- Rotation
- Connecting
- O Going through boundaries
- Enclosure

## Transporting



#### Things you might notice:

- O Carrying objects between places.
- $\bigcirc$  Pushing a buggy with objects in.
- Carrying buckets of sand or water.
- Putting everything in the bin.

- Taking toys outdoors.
- Train sets with carts.
- Putting items in shopping trolley.
- Using wheelbarrows or toys with wheels.

## Containing / Enveloping

#### Things you might notice:

- Climbing inside/putting things inside.
- $\bigcirc$  Painting over a whole picture or hands.
- $\bigcirc$  Dressing up in hats and coats.
- Pretending to wrap up presents.

- / Den building.
- Sock puppets.
- Pass the parcel (paper and sticky tape).
- Burying treasure in sand.
- Dressing doll or teddy.
- Putting teddy to bed.

## Positioning



#### Things you might notice:

- Painting around the edge of something.
- Putting things on their head.
- $\bigcirc$  Not wanting foods to touch.
- Playing under the table.

- Opportunities to sort objects
- Lining each other up, e.g. brother, sister, mummy, daddy.
- Making mosaics.
- Playing with pegboards.

## Trajectory



#### Things you might notice:

- ) Lining things up.
- Running back and forth.
- $\bigcirc$  Playing with sticks and swords.
- Throwing objects.
- Dropping things (e.g. from highchair).

- / Throwing games balls, beanbags, balloons.
- Kicking balls.
- Chasing bubbles.
- Paper aeroplanes.
- Dominoes.
- Cars and ramps.
- Blow-painting.

## Transforming

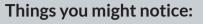


#### Things you might notice:

- Fascinated by mixing things, or objects that melt.
- Wanting to add water to things, e.g. sand, dinner.
- Rubbing cream or paint on themselves.
- Never staying clean!

- / Mud kitchens.
- Baking.
- Mixing paint colours.
- Freezing flowers/toysin a tray.
- Making play-dough.
- Blowing bubbles.

## Rotation



- Fascinated by turning taps on and off.
- Turning knobs on toys and play kitchen appliances.
- O Spinning toys.
- Winding objects up.

#### What can you do to help?

Play on park roundabout.
Toys with wheels to spin.
Jars and tubs with screw tops.
Mixing things - cake, sand, water.
Toys with cogs and gears.

## Connecting



#### Things you might notice:

- Sticking or tying things together.
- Enjoying construction toys.
- Sticking tape between objects such as tables and chairs.

- / Junk modelling.
- Make paper chains.
- Stapling and sticking with masking tape.
- Building blocks/magnets.
- Connecting train tracks or marble runs.

## Going through boundaries



#### Things you might notice:

- Crashing cars or toys into walls they have built.
- Putting objects or themselves through a tunnel.
- Squeezing toys through another object.

- Putting toys or water through pipes.
- / Marble runs.
- Threading toys.
- Making postboxes.
- Funnels.

## Enclosure



#### Things you might notice:

- $\bigcirc$  Playing with belts and bracelets.
- Drawing/painting objects with a beginning and end, e.g. circle.
- Putting objects inside boxes.

#### What can you do to help?

Building farmyard for animals.
Make a boat from a cardboard box.
Building dens.
Framing their pictures.
Putting things away in boxes.



## **Contact and social media**

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