



Westfield Nursery School 'Schemas' - A Parent's Guide

Involving Parents

At Westfield Nursery School we strongly believe in involving parents in their children's learning. Parents are a child's first and enduring teachers. They play a crucial role in helping their children learn. Where parents are involved with their children's education and learning both at home and in partnership with the school, their children do better and achieve more. These benefits can be long-lasting and extend to better health, relationships and improved employment prospects. The more a parent understands about how their child thinks and plays the better for both. We made this book entitled 'Schemas- A Parent's Guide' following a consultation process with parents. Previous parents have found it very useful, we hope you do too. If you have any comments please speak to your child's key worker. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the creation of this book.



'Schemas- A Parent's Guide'

Schemas are a way of describing common behaviour patterns. They help to describe the way in which a child is approaching and following through a self-initiated activity. This helps us to understand children's play better and to provide appropriately for each child. Schemas are cross cultural and operate on different levels. They are a learning mechanism, a useful tool which adults can use to develop children's thinking. If we can identify a child's schema we can provide a wider range of experiences and materials which will extend their play and learning.



There are many different schemas. The most common are described next.

The Experts View

Chris Athey defines schemas as "a pattern of repeatable and generalised action which can be applied to objects or events" Athey 1990





"Schemas are patterns of linked behaviours, which the child can generalise and use in a whole variety of different situations. It is best to think of schemas as being a cluster of pieces which fit together." Tina Bruce 1997

Each schema can be considered under four headings

- Motor level
- Symbolic level; graphic, action and speech representations
- Functional dependency relationship; exploring cause and effect
- Thought level; anything children can talk about without a reminder-internalised actions

Schemas- Finding out more



If you want to find out more about schemas then you can

- Google 'schemas + children' where there are some useful sites
- Read a book on the subject such as

'Extending Thought in Young Children- a parent teacher partnership' Chris Athey

'Early Childhood Education' Tina Bruce

'Time to Play' Tina Bruce

'Threads of Thinking- Schemas and Young Children' Cathy Nutbrown

We hope you find this interesting- it's good to understand at last why your child lines everything up or hides everything!

Transporting



Here children move objects from one place to another. For example

- Carrying bricks all the bricks from one place to another in a bag
- Carrying sand from the sand tray to the home corner in a bucket
- Pushing a friend or toys around in a buggy

Preferred toys may include bags, buggies, trailers

Positioning

Here children put emphasis on the careful placing of objects. For example

- Putting objects on their head
- Preferring sauce next to, not on top of their food
- Lying on the floor or under the table
- Careful positioning of marks in painting and drawing



Preferred toys may include small world toys, mark making tools

Orientation

Here children may turn objects or themselves upside down.

For example

- Hanging upside down from bars at the park



Enclosure (Containing)

Here children create a structure with construction materials or circles/ lines around elements in paintings. For example

- Filling and emptying containers (water, rice, sand)
- Climbing into large cardboard boxes
- Building enclosures with bricks or blocks



Preferred toys may include containers, boxes, bricks or blocks

Enveloping

Here children may cover objects or themselves with varying materials.

For example

- Wrapping a doll or cuddly toy with a blanket
- Covering their painting with one colour
- Covering themselves with a blanket



Preferred toys may include dressing up clothes, envelopes, dens, boxes, wrapping presents

Trajectory: Diagonal, Vertical, Horizontal

Here a child works in lines; diagonal, vertical or horizontal. For example

- Building slides or ramps
- Climbing up and jumping off furniture
- Bouncing, kicking or throwing a ball
- Lining up all the cars



Preferred toys may include ball games, playing with running water, large play equipment, woodwork



Transforming

Here children showing an interest in how materials can change; shape, colour or consistency. For example

- Adding sand to the water tray, or water to the sand tray
- Making play dough
- Planting seeds and observing changes
- Cooking/ melting ice/ making jelly
- Dressing up
- Paint mixing



Preferred toys may include sand, water, food, seeds/ plants, dough



Rotation

Here the children show an interest in things which turn or go around and around.
For example

- Being fascinated by the washing machine
- Playing with wheeled toys, such as cars or tractors
- Rolling their own body in a forward roll, sausage roll or rolling down a hill
- Spinning around or enjoying being spun around

Preferred toys may include circle games, wheeled toys, roundabouts, spinning tops, kaleidoscopes, keys, taps and knobs

Connection

Here children enjoy joining things together. For example

- Joining wood at the work bench
- Joining boxes at the 3D model making area
- Joining paper at the 2D collage area
- Joining train or road tracks
- Collecting and distributing objects



Preferred toys include model making using glue, string, sellotape, construction sets, train or road tracks

Disconnection is part of this schema and involves taking things apart

Dab- A graphic schema seen in dabbing marks and in paintings to represent eyes

Radial- Graphic representations with line marks i.e. eye lashes, spiders, suns

Thank you for reading this book and learning about how your child plays!

