

Summary of Schema Explorations

When children are exploring schemas, they are growing brain connections as they build understandings of abstract ideas, patterns, and concepts. Once you start looking, you will see them everywhere in children's play. Observe for schemas to meet up and plan for children's lively minds and amazing capacity for learning.

Transporting

With earnest intention children regularly take up the work of moving objects from one place to another. Often, once they get the object to a destination, they do nothing with it. Using vehicles like trucks and wagons, large and small containers, bags and purses, cups and pitchers, children are absorbed with the pure joy and satisfaction of moving objects and themselves.

Transforming

Children engaged with the transforming schema almost always have a mesmerized look on their faces. They slow down to study the powerful changes they can produce when exploring paint, water, sand, clay and building with open ended materials.

Trajectory

Children find endless ways to propel objects and themselves. They are exhilarated when running, swinging, pushing, pulling and launching themselves through the air. They love to make balls fly, cars zoom and blocks crash, and even babies delight in watching their bottle fall as they drop it to the ground from their highchair.

Rotation and Circularity

Children delight in spinning till they are dizzy, rolling down hills and joyously running and dancing around. They also have a strong interest in exploring wheels, balls, knobs and anything else that can be rolled, turned, twirled, twisted, or spun. They enjoy seeing and creating curved lines and circles..

Enclosing and Enveloping

Children seem to have a spiritual quest to fill a hole or build and climb into a cozy space. It is impossible to count the number of times children fill cups, bowls, and purses with nearby objects; or climb into boxes, cupboards, tents or other small spaces.

Connecting and Disconnecting

Adapted from: Children's Lively Minds: Schema Theory made Visible, Deb Curtis and Nadia Jaboneta, Redleaf Press June 2019

The essential strategies children use to try out ideas and consolidate understandings as they investigate the world is to study how materials can be linked and their relationship to one another. They do this by putting things together and taking them apart, connecting and disconnecting, scattering, assembling and disassembling.

Positioning and Ordering

Young children are constantly noticing similarities and differences and sorting and classifying everything. They are doing this with people, other living creatures, as well as objects. You will observe children spend time carefully placing objects in lines, patterns, sequences and putting them in groups.

Orientation and Perspective

Children continually seek to view the world from many perspectives. They place themselves in interesting positions by climbing up high, laying on the floor, seeing the world sideways, hiding under furniture, hanging upside down and peering through translucent objects or at mirrors.