

Understanding Behaviour through Play Schemas

Thinking about Schemas supports our understanding of behavioural indicators in the development of play. Sometimes what a child does in play can look like 'inappropriate behaviour'. However, when we observe the play and behaviour patterns over time we begin to recognise the 'urge', enabling us to provide appropriate resources and redirect the child towards productive developmental play opportunities.

Trajectory		Positioning		Connecting	
To explore how things and themselves move		To place objects in lines, patterns or sequences		To join things together	
Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running Throwing Pushing 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Soft balls ✓ Bubbles ✓ Bikes ✓ Slides ✓ Water play 	Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stacking Lining up Balancing Layers 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Collage ✓ Peg boards ✓ Puzzles ✓ Junk modelling 	Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tie things Construction Pulling apart Drawing lines 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trucks/trains ✓ Beads/string ✓ Tape ✓ Jewellery making
Rotation		Scattering		Orientation	
To explore things that are circular		To tip things out		To look at themselves, and objects, from angles	
Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spinning Rolling Play with cars/wheels Watching washing machine 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bikes ✓ Mixing activities ✓ Windmills ✓ Cars ✓ Drawing 	Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emptying boxes Scattering Swiping with arms 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pasta/rice ✓ Ball pool ✓ Bean bags ✓ Building bricks ✓ Large space 	Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hanging upside-down Turning objects climbing 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Binoculars ✓ Magnifying glass ✓ Mirrors ✓ Climbing frame ✓ Coloured acetate
Transporting		Enveloping		Enclosure	
To move objects from one place to another		To wrap themselves in objects		To create enclosed spaces	
Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting Using bags Put sand in buckets Trolley/pram play 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bags ✓ Boxes ✓ Trucks ✓ Pushchairs ✓ Treasure hunts ✓ Small objects 	Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making parcels Wrapping themselves Cover hands and work in thick paint 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Blankets ✓ Dressing up ✓ Newspapers ✓ Water-based paints 	Looks like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sorting Hiding Getting in or putting things on boxes Drawing circles round work 	Provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pots ✓ Containers ✓ Boxes ✓ Tents ✓ Sorting materials