

## **SCHEMAS - THE POWER OF REPETITIVE PLAY**



**Our early years experts explain the value of repetitive play and behaviours to look out for and encourage at home.**

### **What is a Schema?**

A schema is a repeated pattern of behaviour. Some children display very clear schemas, and some children may have more than one. There are around 36 different recognised schemas.

### **Have you ever watched your child at play and wondered why they are continually repeating certain actions?**

Maybe you can recall watching your child continually drop toys from their highchair, line up objects or fill up bags and move things around different parts of your home.

If so, it is possible that your child is engaging in schematic play. These patterns of behaviour are called schemas. They can vary from child to child, and some children may never display schematic play or behaviours.

### **Why do we look for schemas?**

Schemas can help us understand why children do certain things. By watching how your child plays, it can help you plan activities, provide games and resources that really interest them, engage them in their play and help their learning and development.

Here are some examples of the schemas to look for that you can then use to create further engaged play moments for your children:

## **Trajectory – straight lines, arcs, or curves**

- Jumping off the climbing frame
- Playing with running water
- Bouncing or throwing balls
- Helping mop, sweep
- Pushing cars along
- Drawing, or painting lines
- Making lines of toys, cars, animals, people

## **Transporting – moving objects from one place to another**

- Putting lots of things in bags and taking them to another place
- Moving planks and crates about outside
- Taking sand or dough to the role play area
- Pushing their friend in a buggy
- Packing up role play foods and plates for a picnic

## **Connection - joining things together**

- Connecting the train track and carriages
- Connecting furniture (or people) together with string
- Using sticky tape to join things up
- Playing with construction toys
- Doing jigsaws and puzzles

## **Scattering - tipping out and spreading around**

- Tipping out the toy box
- Emptying food from their bowl
- Using their arms and legs to scatter things
- Sprinkling sand or water
- Throwing leaves in the air
- Emptying objects from containers

## **Enveloping - covering or wrapping**

- Wrapping up dolls and other toys
- Covering themselves in blankets or scarves
- Putting letters in envelopes
- Keeping things in boxes
- Hiding in small places, dens, under tables
- Dressing up
- Painting their hands
- Covering over their pictures with a wash of colour

## Rotation - turning, spinning and rolling

- Watching things that rotate – washing machine, wheels
- Playing with wheels or cogs
- Playing with wheeled toys
- Rolling balls and cylinders
- Rolling themselves – roly poly
- Stirring and mixing