



The Little Grove
LEARNING CO.

UNDERSTANDING SCHEMAS IN PLAY

Discovering the Hidden Patterns Behind Children's Play

*Play is often children's
way of exploring big ideas.*



NURTURING WONDER, CONNECTION & BELONGING
THROUGH NATURE-BASED LEARNING

What Are Schemas?

Patterns of Learning

Schemas are repeated patterns of behaviour that children use to explore ideas, test theories and make sense of the world around them.



Children often repeat behaviours because they are learning.

Repetition helps children explore, practise and deepen their understanding.



Repetition is purposeful.

Through repetition, children build confidence, develop skills and make connections in their own time.



Schemas support development across many learning areas.

They strengthen thinking, language, physical skills, creativity, social confidence and emotional wellbeing.

What looks repetitive to adults is often meaningful learning for children.



Why Schemas Matter

Understanding Today. Supporting Tomorrow

When we understand schemas, we gain insight into children's thinking, interests and needs. This helps us create environments and experiences that extend their learning and support their development.



They reveal children's interests and fascinations.

Schemas show us what captures children's curiosity and how they make sense of their world.



They guide our planning and environment.

Understanding schemas helps us provide resources and experiences that deepen learning and engagement.



They support individual learning and development.

By recognising patterns, we can extend children's learning, build skills and support their next steps.



They strengthen relationships and connections.

When children feel understood, they feel valued, secure and more confident to explore and learn.



*Observe with curiosity,
respond with intention
and watch learning flourish.*



Common Schemas

Patterns You Might Notice in Play

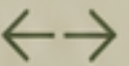
Children naturally explore the world through repeated patterns of play. Here are some common schemas you might observe:



Enveloping

Wrapping, covering, enclosing or creating spaces.

e.g. wrapping toys, building dens



Trajectory

Watching or making things move through the air.

e.g. throwing, swinging, dropping



Rotation

Spinning, twirling and turning objects or body.

e.g. spinning wheels, twirling



Positioning

Placing objects or self in different positions.

e.g. lining up, stacking, balancing



Connection

Joining, linking or gathering things together.

e.g. connecting train tracks, group play

Every child's play is unique.
Schemas may change,
evolve and often overlap.
Let's follow their lead.



How Schemas Support Learning

Building Strong Foundations for Lifelong Learning

Schemas are more than just play behaviours. They are powerful learning tools that help children make sense of the world, build skills and grow in confidence.



Support thinking and problem solving.

Schemas encourage children to explore, test ideas and find solutions.



Build language and communication.

As children act out experiences, they build vocabulary and express their ideas.



Develop physical skills.

Many schemas involve movement that strengthens coordination, balance and body awareness.



Encourage social and emotional growth.

Schemas often involve others, helping children build relationships, empathy and cooperation.



Foster creativity and imagination.

Through open-ended play, children create, imagine and make meaning in their own unique ways.



When we notice and nurture schemas, we honour children's natural way of learning and becoming.

Bringing Schemas to Life in Everyday Play

Simple Ideas. Powerful Learning

By understanding and supporting schemas, we can create rich play experiences that inspire curiosity, confidence and joy. Here are some ways to encourage schemas in everyday play:



Provide open-ended materials.

Loose parts, natural materials and recycled items invite exploration and endless possibilities.



Observe and follow their lead.

Tune in to children's interests and extend their play in meaningful ways.



Add language and connection.

Talk about what they are doing, ask questions and listen to their ideas.



Create rich, inviting environments.

Spaces that feel safe, beautiful and well-resourced support deep, sustained learning.



Celebrate and reflect.

Acknowledge their efforts, ideas and discoveries to build confidence and a love of learning.

When we nurture schemas,
we nurture the whole child
and their potential.



Schemas in Action

Seeing Learning, Supporting Growth

When we notice and respond to schemas, we empower children to explore, persist and thrive. Each repeated action is a step towards deeper understanding and lifelong learning.



Notice the patterns.

Observe what children do repeatedly and look for the schema behind their actions.



Value their learning.

Acknowledge their efforts and show that their learning is important and meaningful.



Extend and enrich.

Offer new materials, experiences and challenges that build on their interests and skills.



Collaborate and connect.

Work alongside children, listen to their ideas and build a sense of community and belonging.



Reflect and grow together.

Reflect on what you see, celebrate progress and continue to nurture each child's unique journey.



Every schema is a window into a child's mind and a pathway to their potential.

Reflection & Final Message

SCRIPT SUBTITLE

Looking Through a New Lens

REFLECTION PROMPTS



Which schema do I notice most often?



What repeated behaviours has my child been exploring?



How might I support these interests at home?

FINAL MESSAGE

- ♥ Children often show us what they need to learn through the play they choose again and again.
- ♥ When we slow down and observe these patterns, we gain valuable insight into how they are making sense of their world.
- ♥ By understanding schemas, we can better support children's curiosity, confidence and learning.

SIGN-OFF

With warmth,
The Little Grove Learning Co.
♥

