



# Growing Together: Parents Tip-sheet

## Play Schemas

### How to Support & Embrace Play Schemas

Observe your child's interests and provide play opportunities that match their schema.

Encourage schema play by redirecting it safely if necessary.

Encourage exploration by providing open-ended materials like cardboard boxes, fabric, and natural materials.

Engage with your child's play by describing what they are doing and asking open-ended questions.

Recognise that schemas help children develop problem-solving skills, creativity, and independence.

### What Are Play Schemas?

Schemas are patterns of repeated behaviour that children naturally use to explore and understand the world around them. They are a vital part of a child's cognitive, physical, and emotional development. Observing these behaviours can help you understand how your child learns and makes sense of their environment (Grimmer, 2017).

By understanding and supporting your child's schemas, you help nurture their curiosity, confidence, and holistic development. Enjoy watching them learn and grow through play!

### Talking to Your Child's Early Childhood Teachers About Schemas

Observe & Note Behaviours – Identify repeated play behaviours and patterns at home.

Ask About Schema Play in the Classroom – “I've noticed my child loves moving objects—do they do this in preschool?”

Seek Guidance on Supporting Play at Home – “Are there activities I can do at home to extend their learning?”

Collaborate on Learning Approaches – Discuss how schemas are supported in the classroom.

Share Strategies That Work – Let teachers know what engages your child at home.

By understanding and supporting your child's schemas, you help nurture their curiosity, confidence, and holistic development. Enjoy watching them learn and grow through play!

Grimmer, T. (2017). *Observing and developing schematic behaviour in young children: A professional's guide for supporting children's learning, play, and development*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Inspired by the LINC + CPD Community of Practice Participants

**Rotation** – Fascination with things that spin or turn.

- **At home:** Spinning themselves around, playing with wheels, twisting lids.
- **Support strategy:** Provide wind-up toys, spinning tops, and bikes.



**Transporting** – Children love moving objects from one place to another.

- **At home:** Carrying toys in bags, filling and emptying boxes, pushing a toy stroller.
- **Support strategy:** Provide baskets, toy trucks, and buckets for transporting.

**Positioning** – Arranging objects in a specific order.

- **At home:** Lining up toys, arranging cushions, sorting items.
- **Support strategy:** Offer stacking toys, building blocks, and sorting games.



**Enveloping** – Wrapping objects or themselves up.

- **At home:** Covering toys in blankets, hiding under cushions, wrapping themselves in towels.
- **Support strategy:** Offer scarves, fabric, and boxes for wrapping or hiding objects.



**Trajectory** – Exploring movement in straight lines or arcs.

- **At home:** Dropping food, throwing toys, running in straight lines.
- **Support strategy:** Provide safe throwing activities, ball play, and water pouring experiences.

**Connecting** – Linking objects together.

- **At home:** Building with Lego, tying things together, playing with train tracks.
- **Support strategy:** Provide construction toys, paper chains, and threading activities.



**Transforming** – Experimenting with materials and changing their state.

- **At home:** Mixing playdough, mud play, water play, painting.
- **Support strategy:** Offer safe messy play experiences, such as baking, painting, and water-based activities.

