**Schemas in Early Years – know and understand them.**

Why do young children do what they do? Have you seen a toddler repeat an activity over and over again – tipping over the Lego box and emptying its contents on the floor, swishing the paint around in a circle, rolling their toy car over the uneven tiles and refusing to stop? It’s actually all part of their essential brain development and is called a schema.

*"A schema is a pattern of repeated actions. ... Each child is different, and some may display more than one schema while others show none at all. Schemas can be observed, identified and understood by early years practitioners and give a better awareness of each child's current interests and ways of thinking.*

Schemas are often described as children’s fascinations. There are many different types. Sometimes the activities may seem a little strange or even irritating to adults, but to the child, it’s a necessary step in their understanding of the world and themselves.

**Why are schemas important in early years?**

The importance of schemas in children's self-initiated and spontaneous play has become a valued and embedded part of early childhood practice. Schemas are those repeated patterns seen in children's behaviour, and they link directly to the development and strengthening of cognitive structures in the brain.

Each child is different, and some may display more than one schema while others show none at all.

**What type of schemas are there?**

There are many different type schema and here are some of the most common:

* **Trajectory** - creating lines in space by climbing up and jumping down. Dropping items from up high.
* **Positioning** - lining items up and putting them in groups.
* **Enveloping** - covering themselves or objects completely. Wrapping items up or placing them in containers.
* **Rotating** - enjoys spinning items round and round. Likes to run around in circles or being swung round.
* **Enclosing** - adding boundaries to play areas e.g. fences around animals. Adding borders to pictures.
* **Transporting** - carrying or moving items from one place to another; carrying items in containers or bags.
* **Connecting** - setting out and dismantling tracks, constructing, joining items together with tape or glue.
* **Transforming** - exploring the changing states of materials, transforming them from a solid to liquid state and back again.
* **Orienteering** – an interest in positioning themselves or objects in different places or positions e.g upside down or on their side.

**Remember these activities are all developing a young child’s brain so be patient with them – if you know what Schema a child enjoys encourage them.**

**If you would like more information on Schemas or some basic activities to follow your child’s interest/schema please do ask a member of staff we would be very happy to help.**