

Schemas & The Child with Special educational Needs

'A schema is a pattern of repeated behaviour into which experiences are assimilated and gradually co-ordinated. Co-ordinations lead to a higher and more powerful schema. 'Chris Athey, quoted in Again! Again!

' A schema is a repeatable pattern of organisational behaviour which the child generalises, e.g. the trajectory(banging, jumping, climbing up & down, throwing etc).' Tina Bruce, quoted in Again! Again!

Early patterns of behaviour seen in babies become more complex and more numerous, eventually becoming grouped together so that babies and young children do not perform single isolated behaviours but coordinate their action. Toddlers work hard collecting a pile of objects in the lap of their carer, walking to and fro, backwards and forwards, bringing one object at a time. They are working on a pattern of behaviour which has a consistent thread running through it. Cathy Nutbrown , quoted in Again! Again!

Good Observation of play skills is key

When observing the child with SEN challenges. It is particularly important to analyse the pattern of the play. The practitioner needs to question:

What is happening?

How is the child playing?

What is the child doing in the play?

What is the child learning from their actions?

Is the play sequence developing?

Resources Schemas & The Child with Special educational Needs

References Again! Again! Understanding schemas in young children: Stella Louis, Clare Beswick, Liz Magraw, Lisa Hayes Edited by Sally Featherstone (2008) A& C Black Publishers

Understanding Schemas in young children: Again! Again! 2013 By Stella Louis & Claire Beswick

Threads of Thinking: Young Children Learning & The Role of Early Education Cathy Nutbrown (2006) Sage

This is the way I like to play: 50 exciting ideas to support investigative Play through Schemas. By Andrina Flinders March 2015

Uncovering Childrens Learning: Children Parents and childminders in dialogue

www.leics.gov.uk/penn_green_schemas.pdf

Schemas in Action at Thanet Early Years Project:
Thanetearlyyearsproject.blogspot.co.uk

An example: George is aged 3 years and he doesn't talk. George loves his dinosaur toy & keeps it close at hand. He often goes to the Home Corner or the play tent. George is observed to build a broader picture of his needs. George moves backwards and forwards across the room holding his dinosaur all the time. Over several sessions this behaviour is repeated. When a practitioner tries to join George in his play by introducing other dinosaurs George screams, runs away and hides.

The observations in the dinosaur play add to a picture of George's needs. He is exhibiting more than a limited schematic behaviour and is requiring further support.