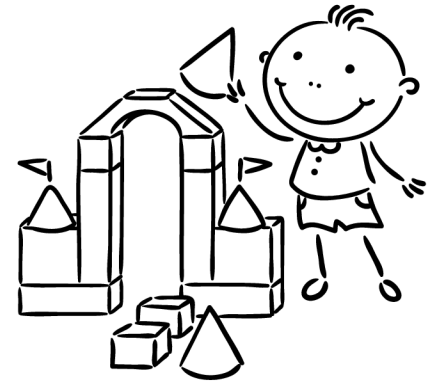




Unlocking the Learning

M5.1 Schema Theory in Home Child Care

Schema theory is a valuable framework for understanding how children organize, interpret, and make sense of their world. It posits that children develop cognitive structures, or "schemas," which are mental frameworks for categorizing and processing information. These schemas help children navigate their experiences, make predictions, and construct meaning. As family child care providers, grasping the fundamentals of schema theory can empower you to support children's cognitive development effectively.



Common Schemas in Children While children can develop a wide range of schemas based on their unique experiences and interests, there are several common schemas that appear frequently in early childhood. Here are some of these common schemas:

1. Transporting Schema:

- **Description:** Children with a transporting schema are often fascinated by moving objects from one place to another. They might carry toys, objects, or even imaginary items, exploring the concept of movement and displacement.
- **Activities:** Encourage activities involving pushing, pulling, carrying, or rolling objects. Provide materials for loading and unloading, such as toy trucks or wagons.

2. Trajectory Schema:

- **Description:** Children with a trajectory schema are intrigued by the path that objects take when they are in motion. They enjoy watching the movement of objects and are curious about where they will go.
- **Activities:** Provide opportunities for tracking the path of objects in motion, such as rolling balls down ramps or launching objects and observing their trajectory.

3. Connecting/Disconnecting Schema:

- **Description:** Children with this schema are interested in connecting and disconnecting objects, such as building and taking apart structures, fastening and unfastening things, or joining and separating components.
- **Activities:** Offer building materials like blocks, interlocking toys, puzzles, or construction sets that allow children to explore the concepts of connection and disconnection.

4. Enveloping/Enclosing Schema:

- **Description:** Children with an enveloping schema enjoy activities that involve enclosing or covering objects. They might be interested in putting objects in containers, wrapping items, or creating hideaways.
- **Activities:** Provide containers of various sizes and materials, along with fabrics, blankets, or cardboard boxes that children can use for enclosing and hiding objects.

5. Positioning/Order Schema:

- **Description:** Children with a positioning/order schema like to arrange objects in specific ways. They may be particular about the order of items, lining things up, or categorizing objects by size, color, or type.
- **Activities:** Supply materials that allow children to sort, categorize, and arrange objects, like sorting games, stacking blocks, or arranging items in a particular sequence.

6. Transforming Schema:

- **Description:** Children with a transforming schema enjoy changing the shape, form, or state of objects. They might be interested in activities like molding clay, mixing substances, or altering the appearance of objects.
- **Activities:** Offer materials that encourage transformation, such as playdough, water play with containers and tools, or art supplies for painting and sculpting.

7. Rotation Schema:

- **Description:** Children with a rotation schema are drawn to activities that involve circular objects and spinning. They may enjoy spinning in circles, spinning tires on a overturned car or turning taps on and off over and over again.
- **Activities:** Provide activities with toys that spin or roll, and opportunities for children to safely spin and roll their bodies as well!



Incorporating Schemas into Practice

Recognizing and accommodating children's dominant schemas can significantly enrich your child care practice.

Here's how you can incorporate schema theory into your care:

- **Observation:** Observe children's play and interactions to identify their predominant schemas. Pay attention to their interests and recurring behaviours.
- **Offer Materials:** Provide a variety of materials and activities that align with different schemas, ensuring that each child has opportunities to explore their schema of interest.
- **Flexible Environment:** Create a flexible and adaptable environment that can be easily modified to support various schemas.
- **Documentation:** Keep records and notes on children's schema-related activities to inform your planning and curriculum development.
- **Engage and Extend:** Engage with children in discussions about their schema-related activities and encourage them to extend their learning through open-ended questions and challenges.



Understanding schema theory and the common schemas children exhibit can help you create a child-centered and engaging learning environment in your family child care setting. It allows you to support individual interests, promote holistic development, and foster a love for learning.