

Children's schemas

Connections to *Aistear* and *Síolta*

Aistear

Themes: Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking

Guidelines for good practice: Supporting learning and development through assessment (pp.72-102)

Síolta Standards

1: *Rights of the Child*, C1.1, 1.2, 1.3

6: *Play*, C6.7

7: *Curriculum*, C7.2, 7.6

Research Digests linked to the above Standards

What is a schema?

A schema is a repeated pattern of behaviour, actions or thinking.

Schemas are a way of understanding how children's thoughts and actions are linked together. If we observe children carefully, we can see that sometimes there is a common thread running through their actions. When a child has an urge or a preference for one activity, game or a series of similar experiences, for example, dropping items or lining up things, it could mean that he or she is working out or exploring an underlying concept. This may be short-lived, or it may go on for some time.

What do schemas look like in practice?

Supporting children's learning by observing and supporting their schemas helps in the development of positive dispositions for learning, such as curiosity, independence, and perseverance.

One of the earliest schema that can be observed is the **trajectory schema**. As babies move their arms and legs in different ways, and reach out for objects, they are exploring their own ability to move and to influence the world around them. They will repeat actions over and over, for example, he/she may go through a phase of repeatedly dropping objects for the adult to pick up. When we understand that through these actions the baby is assimilating knowledge about how objects move, we can join in the game and understand that it's important for their development.



