



Schemas and Forest School - summary

Introduction:

- What are Schemas and why are they important?
- How can we facilitate them at Forest School?

What is a Schema?

Repeated patterns of behaviour that allow children to assimilate ideas and information about the world around them.

They are building blocks for the brain.

Patterns are repeated until the situation/information is understood. Repetition cements the information. Schemas operate through different levels – sensorimotor; symbolic; functional dependency; abstract thought.

Important theorists:

Piaget & Vygotsky both believe children learn and develop through practical experience – practice and repetition. More recently Chris Athey's work has increased our understanding.

Common Schemas:

- Transporting – pushing and pulling
- Enclosure
- Enveloping – hide & seek, wrapping things up, digging, playing with containers
- Connection – making things to pull along, problem solving, rope & string, pulleys
- Trajectory (vertical, horizontal and diagonal)
- Rotation
- Positioning
- Transforming

Importance of Forest School:

Allows children time and space to act out and explore schemas...and therefore LEARN!

Enables repetition of behaviours, which cements information in the brain

By facilitating schemas at FS we (as educators) can aid and extend children's learning.

Through observation we can identify the schemas that children are trying to master – you may see children doing things with a stick like:

Rotation – spinning, twirling, drawing on ground, wheeled objects, mixing materials

Enclosure – picture frame, walls, dens, putting things in things,

Trajectory – dropping, throwing, rolling, bouncing, over, under, through, across

Positioning – lining up, patterns, smallest to biggest