

# Meeting up with children's minds

Observe the details of children's play and connect these to learning and development theories and research.

## Schema Theory

A schema is a thread of thought that is demonstrated by repeated actions and patterns in children's play. These repeated actions suggest that children's play is a reflection of deeper, internal and specifically directed thoughts. When children are exploring their schemas they are building understandings of abstract ideas, patterns, and concepts. Some possible schemas are:

### Transporting

Picks things up, moves things, puts down or dumps. Uses things like strollers, wagons, bags, baskets, and trucks.

### Transforming

Uses materials to explore change in shape, color, consistency, etc.

### Trajectory

Explores the horizontal, vertical and diagonal movement of things and oneself. Makes things fly through the air, moves own body in these ways.

### Rotation and Circulation

Experiments with things that turn like wheels and balls, Explores curved lines and circles.

### Enclosing and Enveloping

Surrounds objects with other things. Uses self to get inside a defined area like blocks, boxes, etc. Hides, covers or wraps self and other things completely up.

### Connecting

Joins things together and ties things up.

### Disconnecting

Takes things a part, scatters pieces and parts.

Adapted from Van Wijk, Nikolien, *Getting Started with Schemas; Revealing the wonderful world of children's play*. New Zealand Playcentre Foundation, 2006.