

Foundation Phase: Talking Point

Outdoor Risky Play and Schema Development in the Early Years Part Two

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Key words: Risky play; outdoors; affordance theory; loose parts; schemas

In a 2-part series of articles for Early Years Wales' Foundation Phase Talking Point, Dr. Amanda Thomas and Pavla Boulton, from the University of South Wales, Newport explore outdoor risky play and schema development in the Early Years. In this smalltalk issue part two of the article looks at definitions of schema, schema development in the Foundation phase and Curriculum for Wales 2022 and why it is important for early years practitioners, in the non-maintained and the maintained sectors, to recognise and develop schemas.

At the end of the article you will find 'work group supervision' (Louis, 2021) or reflective questions that can be used to support you and your team to apply your 'professional knowledge and experience' (Louis, 2021, p.75) to your reading and observations, maybe as part of reflective journaling and supervision work or as part of your staff meetings.

There are numerous definitions of schemas and what they mean. Many philosophers and theorists have researched 'schemas' and each has a slightly different approach to offer. Piaget suggested that children organise their knowledge and understanding of the world into cognitive structures which he called schemas (1959

and 1970). Athey (1990) stated that schemas were, 'a pattern of repeatable behaviour into which experiences were assimilated and that are gradually co-ordinated'. Nutbrown defines schemas as a 'pattern of behaviour which has a consistent thread running through it' (2006, p.10).

In this article schemas are seen as "a repeated pattern of behaviour usually seen in young children's play, supporting knowledge and understanding of how the world works" (Thomas, 2019).



What is a schema?

A schema is a repeated action, often seen in the behaviours of young children.

Schemas are biological.

We are born with them but the offered environment helps to support and develop them.

Schemas and learning?

Schemas help us to organise our thoughts and actions. They are often seen when young children are allowed to lead their play.

Why are they important?

Schemas link to developments in the brain. They support children's development and learning.

Fig.1 provides an overview of schemas to help construct a working understanding (Thomas, 2019).

There are many different dynamic action schemas (Athey, 1990). Figure 2 illustrates the most common schemas seen in Early Years settings. Each of these schemas is broken down and explained in the 'Planning for Schemas Toolkit' (Thomas, 2019) and each is supported by suggestions, resources, activities, and vocabulary that Early Years practitioners can utilise, as well as links to the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase and the Curriculum for Wales. These ideas will help to support practice to nurture children's schematic development.

1 Trajectory -
up and down and along and back movements

2 Transporting -
moving objects and themselves from one place to another

3 Enveloping -
covering things and themselves up

4 Enclosing/Containing -
putting things into containers

5 Connecting -
joining things together

6 Rotational -
things that go around

7 Positioning -
putting items in particular places

8 Transforming -
changing things



Fig. 2. Toolkit for Schema Development



Observing children's schemas provides the practitioner with a window into the child's world, it is an insight into how they think and how they are processing what is going on around them.

It is important for Early Years practitioners to recognise schemas because:

- We can identify where children are at in their development.
- It provides an understanding of what otherwise may be seen as a series of disconnected and random actions by the child.
- It encourages practitioners to observe children closely
- Recognising a child's schematic interests allows you to provide resources and activities that match their schemas, i.e. you afford the child the opportunity to connect with objects and experiences in their own unique way
- It supports children's development through exploration and investigation; pedagogy becomes child focused and child centred.

(Boulton and Thomas, 2021b)

Researchers believe that recognising and nurturing these schemas is important because by using schemas to make sense of the world young children are equipping themselves with the knowledge and skills that are the foundations for almost everything they will do in later life.

Currently there is little contained within curriculum policy documentation in Wales about schemas or their development in early years children:

'By repeating a learning experience, they develop schema or patterns of thoughts that are strengthened until they are able to make connections' (WAG, 2008, p.9).

'Observation may draw attention to particular schema or patterns of thinking that predominate a child's play' (WAG, 2008, p.22).

There is limited guidance available on how to recognise and develop schemas in young children in these policy documents. We need to address this in the Curriculum for Wales 2022, both in non-maintained and maintained settings. Nutbrown (2011) however makes this important observation 'Children's ways of learning do not change because national policies or the prescribed curriculum changes' (p128).

Read our blog extracted from the book Schemas, written by Stella Louis and published by Early Years Wales to find out how why schemas are an important part of a child's development and how parents, carers and practitioners can support a child's schematic interest.



Early Years Wales members can claim their **FREE** copy of the book via the link below - <https://www.earlyyears.wales/en/news/blog-schemas>

Conclusion

In summary of the articles in this two-part series about risky outdoor play and schema development, we can see that being outdoors affords a more heightened use of the senses (Carson 1956) and enables children to use the outdoor environment and materials and loose parts in ways that have meaning and value that are unique to the child perceiving them (Gibson, 1979). Children will choose to engage with loose parts as a significant part of their play if the opportunity is provided, especially when accessed in an outdoor environment. Children will 'tinker' with the objects available to them, taking them into places, spaces, and orientations outdoors that would be difficult to replicate indoors. Practitioners do not need to teach children how to play with loose parts, but just need to step out of the way, enabling children's imaginations to nurture their schemas. Schemas are an essential element of children's development; they are a key cognitive process through which they construct knowledge and actively make meaning of the world around them.

Resources and further professional learning opportunities

You can find ideas and supporting materials in the Schema development Toolkit: Planning for Schemas in the Welsh Curriculum (Thomas, 2019) <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/4be12be2-3180-4619-963d-b62c4f252423/Toolkit%20supporting%20schemas.pdf> which will provide all the guidance needed to plan your provision using schema development as a core focus in your practice.

The full list of references used in both articles can be found: <https://www.earlyyears.wales/en/foundation-phase> (scroll down)

Join us at the Early Years Wales Foundation Phase Excellence Network events to continue your exploration of outdoor play and schemas. We would like to hear from early years practitioners and settings so that we can develop case studies about schema development. Please contact smalltalk@earlyyears.wales for more information.



Ideas for 'work group supervision' (Louis, 2021) and reflective questions:

Journal/draw/record your initial reactions to the article and give examples of ideas you felt comfortable with and ideas that you felt uncomfortable with.

Journal/draw/record your thoughts about this article and explore what makes you think this way.

- What images and observations could you use from your practice to illustrate your thoughts?
- What other reading have you explored that could illustrate your thoughts? What 'affordances' or loose parts have the children been exploring and have you recognised any schematic patterns of behaviour?
- What questions do you have about supporting schemas in your setting?
- How could you enrich schemas in outdoor play in your setting?
- What new ideas did you meet in the article? What ideas will you explore further?

Use 'work group supervision' (Louis, 2021), team meetings or time with a mentor, tutor or colleague to share your reflections, observations and learning.



You may also be interested in:

Outdoor Risky Play and Schema Development in the Early Years Part One, *smalltalk*, (autumn 2021), pg 26 - 30
Cover story: The importance of play, *smalltalk*, (spring 2021) pg 10 - 22
'The Lost Words Project' at the University of South Wales, Newport, *smalltalk*, (spring 2020), pg 18 - 20

Don't forget

Early Years Wales members can download back issues of *smalltalk* for free: earlyyears.wales/shop

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Mae'r erthygl hon wedi'i thynnu o rifyn gaeaf 2021/gwanwyn 2022 o gylichgrawwn smalltalk - cylchgrawwn aelodaeth Blynyddoedd Cymru Cymru

I lawrwytho a darllen y rhifyn yn llawn ewch i:

earlyyears.wales/cy/shop. Fel arall, beth am ddod yn aelod AM

DDIM a derbyn eich copi wedi'i bostio'n uniongyrchol at eich drws.

Am mwy o wybodaeth am ddod yn aelod ac i gofrestru ewch i:

earlyyears.wales/cy/membership



I grynhofir ertihyliau yn y gyfres dwy ran hyn ynghylch chwarae mentrus yn yr awyr agored a datblygiad sgemâu, gallwn weld fod ein synhwyrau'n cael eu defnyddio fwy yn yr awyr agored (Carson 1956) a bod plant yn gallu defnyddio amgylchedd yr awyr agored a defnyddiau a rhannau rhydd mewn ffyrdd sydd ag ystyr a gwerth sy'n unigrwy'r plentyn sy'n eu canfod (Gibson, 1979).
Bydd plant yn dewis cysylltu â rhannau rhydd fel rhan arwyddocaol o'u chwarae os bydd cyfif, yn enwedig yn yr awyr agored.
Bydd plant yn 'chwarae' gyda'r gwrthrychau sydd ar gael, yn mynd â nhw i mewn o leodd, gofodau a chyfeiriadau yn yr awyr agored a fyddai'n anodd eu hail greu o dan do. Does dim angen i ymarferwyr ddyfysu plant sut i chwarae gyda rhannau rhydd. Dim ond camu allan o'r ffordd, gan alluogi dychymyg y plant i feithrin eu sgemâu. Mae sgemâu yn elfen hanfodol o ddatblygiad plant; mae nhw'n broses wybyddol allweddol; trwyddi maen nhw'n adediladu gwymbodaeth ac yn gwneud synnwyr o'r byd o'u cwmpas.

Adnoddau a chyfleoedd dysgu profesiynol pellach

Mae syniadau a deunydd cefnogi yn y Pelynn Gwaith datblygu Sgemâu: Cynllunio ar gyfer Sgemâu yng Nghwricwlwm Cymru (Thomas, 2019) <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/4be12be2-3180-4619-963d-b62c4f252423/Toolkit%20supporting%20schemas.pdf?preview=true> gyda'r holl arweiniad angenrheidiol i gynllunio'r darpariaeth gan ddefnyddio datblygu sgemâu fel canolbwynt craidd yn eich ymarfer.
Mae rhestr lawn o'r cyfeiriadau a ddefnyddiwyd yn y ddiwy ertihylgi <https://www.earlyyears.wales/cy/cfnod-syffae> (sgrowllwch i lawr) Cysylltwch â smalltalk@earlyyears.wales am ragor o wybodaeth.



Syniadau ar gyfer 'arolygu gwaith grŵp' (Louis, 2021) a syniadau myfyrgar

Ysgrifennwch / tynwch lun / recordiwch eich syniadau ynghylch yr ertihylgi hon a thradodwch beth sy'n gwneud i chi feddwl hynny. Ysgrifennwch / tynwch lun / recordiwch eich syniadau cyntaf ar yr ertihylgi hon a rhwch enghreifftiau o syniadau roedddech chi'n teimlo'n gyfforddus â nhw a rhai roedddech chi'n anghyfforddus â nhw.

- Pa ddelweddau a sylwadau allech chi eu defnyddio o'ch ymarfer i egluro eich sylwadau.
 - Beth arall ydych chi wedi'i ddarllen a allai egluro eich syniadau? Pa 'affordances' neu rannau rhydd mae'r plant wedi bod yn eu harchwilio ac a ydych chi wedi canfod unrhyw batrymanu sgematig yn eu hymddoglyd?
 - Pa gwestiynau sydd gennych chi ar gyfer cefnogi sgemâu yn eich lleoliad?
 - Sut allwch gyfoethogi sgemâu yn eich chwarae yn yr awyr agored yn eich lleoliad?
 - Pa syniadau newydd ddaethoch chi ar eu traws yn yr ertihylgi? Pa syniadau fyddwch chi'n eu trafod ymhellach?
- Defnyddiwch 'arolygiaeth grŵp gwaith' (Louis, 2021), cyfarfoddydd tm neu amser gyda mentor, tiwtor neu gydweithiwr i drafod eich syniadau ar hyn rydych chi wedi'i weld a'i ddyfysgu.



Efallai y byddwch chi hefyd â diddordeb mewn:

Chwarae Mentrus yn yr Awyr Agored a Datblygiad Sgemâu yn y Blynyddoedd Cynnar Rhan Un, *smalltalk*, (hydref 2021), tud 26 - 30
Stori glawr: Pwysigrwydd chwarae, *smalltalk*, (gwanwyn 2021) tud 10 - 22
'The Lost Words Project' ym Mhrifysgol De Cymru, Casnewydd, *smalltalk*, (gwanwyn 2020), tud 18 - 20

A pheidiwch ag anghofio



Gall aelodau Blynyddoedd Cynnar Cymru lawrlwytho ôl rhifynnau o *smalltalk* am ddim: <https://www.earlyyears.wales/cy/shop>



Mae arsyliw! sgmâu plant yn rhoi ffenestr i'r ymarferdd i fyd y plentyn, sy'n nodi o sut maen nhw'n meddwl a sut maen nhw'n prosesu beth sy'n mynd ymlaen o'u cwmpas.

Mae'n bwysig bod ymarferwyr Blynyddedd Cynnar yn adnabod sgmâu oherwydd:

- Byddwn yn gallu nodi ble mae plant yn eu datblygiad.
- Mae'n rhoi dealltwriaeth o beth fyddai fel arall yn cael ei weld fel cyfres o weithgareddau digyswllt ac ar hap gan y plentyn.
- Mae'n annog ymarferwyr i arsyliw'n ofalus ar blant.
- Trwy ddod i adnabod diddordebau sgmâtig plentyn byddwch yn gallu darparu adnoddau a gweithgareddau sy'n cyd-fynd â'u sgmâu, h.y. rydych yn rhoi cyflwr i'r plant i gysylltu gyda gwrthrychau a phroffadâu yn eu ffordd unigryw eu hunain.
- Mae'n cefnogi datblygiad plant trwy archwilio ac ymchwilio; bydd yr addysgu'n canolbwyntio ar y plentyn gyda'r plentyn yn ganolog.

(Boulton and Thomas, 2021b)

Mae ymchwilwyr o'r farn fod adnabod a meithrin y sgmâu yn bwysig, oherwydd, trwy ddefnyddio sgmâu i wneud synnwyr o'r byd, mae plant ffanc yn gallu cael yr wybodaeth ar sgiliau sy'n syffiaen ar gyfer bron iawn bopeth y byddent yn ei wneud yn iweddarach mewn bywyd.



"Gall arsyliw! dynnu sylw at sgmâu benodol neu batrymau o feddwl sy'n oruchaf chwarae plant";

Ychydig o arweiniad sydd ar gael yn y dogfenau polisi hyn ynghylch sut i adnabod a datblygu sgmâu mewn plant ffanc. Dylid talu sylw i hyn yng Nghwricwlwm Cymru 2022, mewn lleoliadau nas cynhelir a rhai a gynhelir. Mae Nutbrown (2011) fodd bynnaeg yn gwneud y sylw pwysig hwn 'Nid yw ffyrdd plant o ddysgu'n newid oherwydd newidiadau mewn polisiâu cenedlaethol neu yn y cwricwlwm' (tud. 128)

Darllewch hefyd ein blog gyda detholiad o'r llyfr Schemas, wedi ysgrifennu gan Stella Louis a'i gyhoeddi gan Flynnyddedd Cynnar Cymru, canfod pam fod sgmâu yn rhan bwysig o ddatblygiad plentyn a sut y gall rhieni, gofawyr ac ymarferwyr gefnogi buddiant sgmâtig plentyn.

Gall aelodau Blynyddedd Cynnar Cymru hawlio eu copi **AM DDIM** o'r llyfr trwy'r ddolen isod <https://www.earlyyears.wales/en/news/blog-schemas>



Wrth ail adrodd profiad dysgu, maen nhw'n datblygu sgmâu neu batrymau o feddyliau sy'n cael eu cryfhau nes eu bod yn gallu gwneud y cysylltiadau' (Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, 2008, tud. 9)

Ar hyn o bryd, ychydig sydd yn nogfennau polisi'r cwricwlwm yng Nghymru am sgmâu neu'n datblygiad mewn plant blynyddedd cynnar:



Fig. 2. Pecyn Gwaith ar gyfer Datblygiad Sgema (Thomas, 2019)

- 1 **Symudiadau -** llwybr i fyny, i lawr ac ar hyd a chefn
- 2 **Cludo -** symud gwrthrychau a'u hunain o un lle i un arall
- 3 **Gorchuddio -** yn gorchuddio pethau a nhw eu hunain
- 4 **Gorchuddio/Frwyno -** gosod pethau mewn cynhwysyddion
- 5 **Cysylltu -** uno pethau gyda'i gilydd
- 6 **Cylichol -** ethau sy'n mynd mewn cylch
- 7 **Lleoli -** gosod eitemau mewn lleoedd penodol
- 8 **Trawsfurfiol -** newid pethau



Mae yna lawer o wahanol sgemâu gweithredol deinamig (Athey, 1990). Mae Ffigwr 2 yn dangos y sgemâu mwyaf cyffredin a weilir mewn lleoliadau Blynyddoedd Cynnar. Mae pob un o'r sgemâu hyn yn cael eu trafod a'u hegluro yn y 'Pecyn Gwaith Cynllunio ar gyfer Sgema' (Thomas, 2019) a phob un yn cael ei gefnogi gan awgrymiadau, adnoddau, gweithgareddau a geirfa y gallai ymarferwyr Blynyddoedd Cynnar eu defnyddio, yn ogystal â dolenni i feysydd dysgu yn y Cyfnod Sylfaen a Chwricwlwm Cymru. Bydd y syniadau hyn o gymorth i gefnogi ymarfer i feithrin datblygiad sgematig plant.

Mae'r trosolwg yn Ffigwr 1 o sgemâu yn helpu adeiladu dealltwriaeth wath (Thomas, 2019).

Mae sgemâu'n gysylltiedig â datblygiadau yn yr ymennydd. Maen nhw'n cefnogi datblygiad a dysgu plant.

Pam eu bod yn bwysig?

Mae sgemâu yn folegol.

Rydyn ni'n cael ein geni gyda nhw ond mae'r amgylchedd o'n cwmplas yn helpu eu cefnogi a'u datblygu...

Beth yw Sgema?

Sgema yw gweithred sy'n cael ei hail adrodd ac mae i'w weld yn aml mewn ymddygiad plant franc.

Sgemâu a dysgu?

Mae sgemâu yn ein helpu i drefnu'n meddylliaid a'n gweithredadau. Fe'u gwelwn yn aml pan mae plant franc yn cael rhyddid i arwain eu chwarae.

Y Cyfnod Sylfaen: Pwnc Trafod Chwarae Mentrus yn yr Awyr Agored a Datblygiad Sgema yn y Blynyddoedd Cynnar Rhan Dau

Dr. Amanda Thomas a Pavia Boulton, Prifysgol De Cymru, Casnewydd.
Geiriau allweddol: Chwarae mentrus, yr awyr agored, damcaniaeth 'affordance', darnau rhydd, sgema

Mewn cyfres ddwy ran o erthyglau ar gyfer Pwnc Trafod Cyfnod Sylfaen Blynyddoedd Cymru, mae Dr Amanda Thomas a Pavia Boulton, o Brifysgol De Cymru, Casnewydd, yn trafod chwarae mentrus yn yr awyr agored a datblygiad sgema yn y Blynyddoedd Cynnar. Yn y rhifyn hwn o smaltalk mae rhan 2 o'r erthygl yn trafod diffiniedau o sgema, datblygiad sgema yn y cyfnod Sylfaen a Chwricwlm Cymru 2022 a pham ei bod yn bwysig bod ymarferwyr blynyddoedd cynnar, yn y sectorau nas cynhellir ar sectorau sy'n cael eu cynnal, yn cydnabod ac yn datblygu sgemâu.

Ar ddiwedd yr erthygl, fe welwch 'arolygu gwaith grŵp' (Louis 2021) neu gwestiynau myfyrgar y gellir eu defnyddio i'ch cefnogi chi a'ch tîm i ddefnyddio 'gwybodaeth a phrofiad profesiynol' (Louis, 2021, t.75) wrth ddarllen ac arsylwi, efallai fel rhan o gofnodi gwaith myfyrgar a gwaith arolygu neu fel rhan o'ch cyfarfoddydd staff.

Mae yna nifer o ddiffiniedau o sgemâu a beth maen nhw'n ei olygu. Mae llawer o athronwyr a damcaniaethwyr wedi ymchwilio 'sgemâu' ac mae gan bob un rywbeth ychydig yn wahanol i'w gynnig. Awgrymodd Piaget fod plant yn trefnu eu gwybodaeth a'u dealltwriaeth o'r byd mewn strwythurau gwybyddol y maen eu

Yn yr erthygl hon gwelir sgemâu fel 'patrwm all adroddus o ymddygiad sy'n cael ei weld fel arfer mewn chwarae plant ifanc, yn cefnogi gwybodaeth a dealltwriaeth o sut mae'r byd yn gweithio' (Thomas, 2019).

galw'n sgemâu (1959 a 1970). Datganodd Athey (1990) fod sgemâu yn 'patrwm o ymddygiad all adroddus ble roedd profiadau'n cael eu cydwedd ac sy'n cydlynu'n raddol'. Mae Nutbrown yn diffinio sgemâu fel 'patrwm o ymddygiad sydd ag edefyn cyson yn rhedeg trwyddo' (2006, tud. 10)

