

Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

How to support a tipping, scattering and heaping schema.



Why?

- The word schema was first introduced by Jean Piaget in 1952. In simple terms, schemas are 'patterns of play' that help children to develop their knowledge and understanding about how things work.
- Schemas are part of child development. For children with SEND schemas are likely to be in line with their developmental stage and may last for a longer period of time.
- Some schemas will fulfil a child's sensory needs as well as being exploratory learning.
- Children find schemas motivating so they can be a useful way to plan 'next steps' for a child with SEND.
- Tipping, scattering and heaping are schemas. When a child tips objects out and watches them scatter on the floor they are learning.

Learning gained from exploring tipping, scattering and heaping can be:

- Cause and effect.
- Weight and force.
- Co-ordination and control.
- Understanding of the materials e.g. liquids pour, small objects flow, large objects scatter.
- Sensory feedback e.g. noise, visual arrangement, touch.
- Linking and building on experiences.

Related Vocabulary: Tip, pour, drop, scatter, heap, scoop.

How?

- Provide opportunities for the child to engage in positive tipping, scattering and heaping activities e.g. playing with coloured rice, building towers and knocking them down.

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Tipping and scattering can cause problems when lots of objects end up on the floor or tipping interrupts another child's play. To overcome these problems:

- Make putting objects back into a game.
- Support the child to use a dust pan and brush to tidy up.
- Redirect the tipping to a suitable activity or area.
- Reduce the number of objects available to tip e.g. have 8 cars in the basket instead of 25.
- Many children who enjoy tipping and scattering also enjoy heaping so build gathering up the resources into their play.

Things to note:

This resource sheet is part of the Schemas – Tipping, Scattering and Heaping Tool Kit.

- [Help Sheet – How to support a tipping, scattering and heaping schema.](#)
- Resource – Resource to support a tipping, scattering and heaping schema.

Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Jean Piaget, Psychologist – Piaget's Theory 1952

Chris Athey, Lecturer in Education – The Froebel Early Education Project 1973-78

Tina Bruce, Honorary Professor in Early Childhood Education – The Froebel Block Play Project 1987

Understanding Schemas in Young Children Again! Again! – Sally Featherstone