



Tacpac at Greenside



Tacpac is simply a course of actions using different textures to music. There are instructions on cards to follow and the music introduces each section. The session begins with the simple sense of touch with a familiar, easy-to-get-hold-of, everyday object, such as a kitchen sponge, a wooden spatula, or some furry fabric. The experience is then enhanced through the principle of 'sensory alignment'. There is a specially composed a piece of music specifically to match the texture, character, and even the emotional quality of the touch experience. The activity and object is announced before each piece of music starts. The receiving partner **hears** what they **see** and what they **feel** on their skin: sensory alignment and sensory reinforcement for seeing, hearing and touching. Their proprioceptive system is receiving regular steady input and giving them opportunities to further develop spatial awareness.

Tacpac can help our pupils find that 'just right place' through the principles of sensory integration. It is also a way of connecting physically with a group of pupils whose experience of touch is often only functional, during changing, to assist in feeding or as part of hand under hand assistance. Research has shown that we, as human beings, need to be touched in a variety of ways to promote feelings of well being and self esteem, (Field, T. Science of Touch, 2012).

Tacpac can be done in sessions with others in a group, with each child having a partner (if possible the same partner each time for a long period) who can be another child, or adult. It can also be done in 1-1 situations, or if a child needs some calming exercises, consoling, as a part of a daily program of touch.

Tacpac can be used in a variety of ways and as we become more familiar with the music and musicality of our partners, we will adapt our personal style to the individual situation and partner. We are not doing Tacpac **to** someone or merely to elicit response that we note and move on to the next one, but rather working **with** someone to complete an action, watch and listen for a response and then respond ourselves sensitively and with skilled interaction techniques taken from Intensive Interaction and our own personal experiences. We watch for the subtleties of communication as well as those large gestures we all know and understand. This will build and strengthen the relationships and by using Intensive Interaction techniques we validate the responses, further building on the communications. Through linking what becomes familiar music with objects, actions and people in a pattern of different activities, the partners communicate with each other.

For instance:

- a long slow sigh – can mean enjoyment, release, relaxation and more
- slowed breathing
- eyes closing
- body position becoming more relaxed
- wriggling
- leaning in (or out)
- looking intently at your hands, or eyes

and we may respond with our own gentle communications

- Speech
 - “You like/don’t like that. Shall i do it some more/stop?”
 - “You don’t like it on your arms? Shall i do it on your legs?”
- Deeper/softer pressure
- Quickening/slowing of pace

And many more. But there are many ways we communicate with each other without words and it is our role to interpret them and help the child to develop those communications so that others may also understand. Be prepared to stop and start during each tacpac session, waiting actively for responses can take time, but also the time you perform an action before you get a response can take time. Getting to know your partner is as important as the actions themselves. If your partner is not ready for tacpac, it is ok to take them away and try again later. Or you can stop using the objects and just apply the deep pressure through massage or wrapping in a blanket or have a hug.

Remember to use the music, the rhythm and pace, to wait, actively for response, to respond sensitively and to listen for communication with both your eyes and your ears.



Enjoy Tacpac, get to know your partner, let them Tacpac with you and share time. It’s precious time!