

## **Tacpac™ - a review**

from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (Robert Orr)  
In-service training officer for children with multiple disabilities

Tacpac™ brings the skills of the music therapist and special educationists to the child with profound multiple disabilities. Together they provide a series of musical accompaniments to specific activities in a movement and sensory curriculum. Three half-hour CDs with three matching laminated cards provide all the information a parent or teacher would need to set up an early communication through touch ritual. Wainer, Stormont and Wright show how simple household utensils can become the tools for beautiful moments of contact.

Their booklet illustrates the care with which you need to gather the materials and set up an interruption-free and draught-free environment before embarking on the sensitive process of contacting the child who has very little power to communicate. The stereo recordings with Dolby noise reduction invite the 'therapist' to move with appropriate tempos and rhythms for suggested activities. The first session is for fanning, slapping with spatulas, flicking with a little mop, squashing with a scouring pad and then massaging with oil to finish. The others include stroking with fur fabric, tapping and rolling with chopsticks, sponges, rollers, brushing, rolling a bag of marbles, drumming with hands, dragging a chain and feather duster stroking.

These would be ideal for a teacher to give assistants and volunteers to run their own sessions as they almost guarantee a consistency of approach. A little training would enable such people to become observant and responsive to the child's reactions and expressions of preference. Without this the whole exercise would be entirely passive and the declared intention to communicate would not arise.

The set is a welcome support to people who like to introduce variations of musical experiences - these sound like improvisations rather like an Orff Schulwerk creative music session with orthodox and quirky combinations. They might even encourage people to have a go at providing live accompaniment of their own if extra hands are available.

Children would eventually come to associate particular pieces of music with the activities and sensations and enable them to anticipate events, especially if they were allowed to hold the materials prior to each section. There are sensible pauses between each piece and a voice announces what is going to happen. I can imagine a child coming to have an appreciation of what happens on which happens on which days if these were to be repeated weekly on a particular day. A confused multi sensory impaired child would be helped to settle and recognise what is going on in what can be an unpredictable world of shifting impressions.

**To find out more about TACPAC™**

**visit [www.tacpac.co.uk](http://www.tacpac.co.uk)  
email: [info@tacpac.co.uk](mailto:info@tacpac.co.uk)  
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