

Light Contact

Children who stutter often produce hard articulatory contacts as they are speaking (Conture, 2001; Runyan & Runyan, 1999; Wall & Myers, 1995). At times, this tension may build and precipitate moments of stuttering (Ramig & Dodge, 1995).



Stops (b, p, d, t, g, k) and voiceless fricatives and affricates (f, voiceless th, s, sh, h, ch) are normally produced with either complete or partial constriction of the articulators. Therefore, these sounds are inherently more tense.

Light Contact reduces the articulatory tension inherent in these consonants and helps children to produce them in a light, relaxed manner (Peters & Guitar, 1991; Healy & Scott, 1995; Reardon-Reeves & Yaruss, 2004). When producing a Light Contact, students touch their speech articulators together gently, and then move into the next sound with a Smooth Movement and Easy Voice.

Light Contact reduces the articulatory tension inherent

Light Contact can be taught in the following way:

1. Explain the rationale (described above and on page 37 of the Student Workbook).
2. Guide students through steps 1–4 of “How to make a Light Contact” (see page 38 of the Student Workbook). Provide models as indicated.
 - » Encourage students to identify each movement and memorize the feeling of making a slow, relaxed Light Contact.
 - » Ask them to describe the place and manner of production for each consonant.

3. Model, and have students practice production of the syllables in the Light Contact Chart on page 39 of the Student Workbook.
 - » Remind them to start with a Relaxed Breath, to touch their articulators together lightly, and to make a slow, Smooth Movement as they transition into an Easy Voice.
 - » Encourage students to pay attention to *how* they reduce the articulatory pressure on the consonant and move into the subsequent vowel. They should make a conscious effort to feel their articulators as they use this strategy.
 - » Point out that when they first practice Light Contact, there may be a slight decrease in the intelligibility of the consonant being produced. Tell students that, with practice, they'll be able to touch these sounds lightly while maintaining good clarity.
4. Students should use Light Contact as they practice the Light Contact Words (see pages 40–41 of the Student Workbook) with Slow Stretched Speech. Again, each of these one-syllable words will be prolonged for about two seconds.