

L

Production: The tip of the tongue is raised to contact the hard ridge behind the teeth while the sides of the tongue do not touch the upper teeth.

Tricks for a lovely "L"

1. **Touch your tongue** tip your top lip to give an exaggerated visual when producing the "l." It also helps emphasize the fact that we use our tongue and not our lips when making this sound!
2. **Shape your "l"** from another sound. Have the child make an "ah" sound and then tell the child to lift his or her tongue up to the hard ridge behind his or her teeth and then drop it quickly.
3. Practice **singing**. La-la-la-la-la, loo-loo-loo-loo-loo. By practicing singing, your child gets to practice the tongue movement that is important for making that good "l"!
4. **Self-monitoring** is an important step for speech practice. Record audio/video of the child for him or her to watch or listen to and decide whether their production was good or needed some work. See if the child can figure out what he or she could have done better. Take data with the child (+ for a great production or - if the sound needs more work!) and calculate percentages. 80-100% accuracy consistently is ideal before the child moves to the next step, (i.e., isolated sounds ->syllables or words->phrases).

"w" for "l"

The most common "l" error is when the child substitutes "w" for "l." This is a developmental error and children are expected to outgrow it by around six years of age.

When we make "w," we use both of our lips, but when we make "l," we use just our tongue. A big part of working on "l" is training the child to not use their lips to make the sound, but their tongues! This can be a tricky habit to break, but with enough practice at school and home, it is possible!

How do we teach the "l" sound?!

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) use a variety of techniques to teach a good "l."

One way an SLP may teach a sound is by simply discussing where the articulators (the lips, tongue, teeth, etc.) are when the sound is made.

SLPs may also get in the mouth, literally (and with gloves), to help the student feel and place the articulators where they need to be.

Another method of instruction is called "sound approximation," where we use other sounds to help us bring about the target sound.

So we learned how to make an "l" ... Now what?

One of our first goals is to just make the sound all by itself, but our work does not stop there. We must be able to carryover that success into syllables, simple words, more complex words, phrases, sentences, readings, and conversation. Our techniques that we have learned now become cues that we can refer back to as we continue speech!

Source & Inspiration:

Secord, W.A. et al. (2007). *Eliciting Sounds: Techniques and Strategies for Clinicians, 2nd Edition*. Clifton Park, NY : Delmar, Cengage Learning.

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L Initial Words

lay lap
low lot
loo loop
lee leak

L Medial Words

mellow
yellow
below
marshmallow

L Final Words

bell roll
mall hole
call cell
doll gel

Carrier Phrases (for sentences)

"I see a _____."
"I am a _____."
"I am a _____."
"I have a _____."