



## How to produce the /r/ sound

The /r/ sound is a particularly tricky letter to teach because the way your mouth produces the sound changes depending on the other letters it is combined with. The website SayItRight.org is a great resource devoted entirely to understanding and facilitating the pronunciation of the /r/ sound.

Generally, the sound is made by bringing the tongue up and to the back of the mouth. While the bulk of the tongue rests on the roof of the mouth between the hard palate and the soft palate, the tip of the tongue hovers just below the hard palate. The lips are rounded in an O shape. The sound is voiced, which means that the sound that /r/ produces comes from the vibration of the speaker's vocal cords.

- **Verbal cues**

Because the /r/ sound changes with the vowel it is attached to, it often helps to use a vowel sound to lead into the pronunciation of /r/. Begin by saying a long “eee” for your child. Hold it for a few seconds, to show that the sound continues. Gradually combine it with the /r/ sound, “eeee-rrrr”. Your child should be able to turn the /e/ sound into the /r/ sound this way. Practice the same with other vowels.

- **Visual Cues**

The /r/ sound happens inside of the mouth and is guided by the movement of the tongue, which is difficult to see and to communicate to your little one. To help with this, use a visual cue to show the tongue movement to your child. Kim Marino at TheSpeechMama.com details several great cues, such as putting your arm out in front of you and then pulling it up and in towards your body as you make the /r/ sound to demonstrate how your tongue is moving to your little one.