



How To Produce The Y Consonant

The /y/ consonant sound is made by placing the tip of the tongue just behind the lower front teeth and raising the middle of the tongue towards the roof of the mouth. The sides of the tongue actually come in contact with the top of the mouth, but the middle of the tongue does not touch the roof, creating a passageway for air from the lungs through the mouth. The /y/ sound is voiced, so the air that comes through carries the sound from your vibrating vocal cords.

- **Verbal cues**

Begin by pronouncing the sound slowly and clearly for your child, “/y/, /y/, /y/.” Encourage your child to repeat the sound for themselves. If your toddler has particular trouble pronouncing the sound, try first having her say “ee, ee, ee” and “uh, uh, uh.” Then have her combine the sounds, “ee-uh”. As she says the sound combination more quickly and with more confidence, it will resemble the /y/ sound. Once she masters the /y/ sound in isolation, add vowels to it to create simple syllables such as “ya, ya, ya,” “yo, yo, yo,” and “ye, ye, ye.” Gradually move on to words, phrases and sentences.

- **Visual Cues**

Verbal cues are a great way to remind kids to be aware of how their mouth is moving while they make the sounds. Help your child with the /y/ sound by placing your thumb and your middle finger on opposite sides of your cheeks near your top molars. As you say the /y/ sound, bring your fingers down to suggest the opening of your mouth or the dropping of your jaw. Encourage your child to do the same thing with his own hand as he says the sound. Practice this motion in front of a mirror for even more visual feedback.