

Clinically reviewed by Alissa Fox, M.S. CCC-SLP and Mari Gottlieb, M.A. CCC-SLP · 2026-10-10. Reviewers are SpeechLP co-founders.

L sound practice: word beginnings and endings differ

L at the beginning of a word and L after a vowel can sound different in English. A useful practice plan identifies the word position and the family's dialect. If a child has been assigned initial L, a final-L list is not automatically the next step.

Key facts

- Educational guide for caregiver discussion, not a diagnostic checklist.
- Intended target and level: the child's individual SLP plan.
- A word's spelling does not reliably identify its sound.
- The examples below use common U.S. English pronunciations; adapt for dialect and language.

Word list by position

Initial: leaf, lamp, lemon, ladder

Medial: balloon, pillow, elephant, jelly

Final: ball, bell, seal, bowl

A living-room treasure hunt

Search for a lamp, a leaf picture, and something lemon-colored. The caregiver describes an item and the child finds it. Say the assigned word naturally rather than asking for constant repetition. If the SLP has chosen phrases, combine the word with a familiar descriptor. Use a different set for final L rather than mixing positions in one round.

Use only words your child understands. Allow pointing, play, or another communication method; participation does not require a spoken response on every turn. Ask your SLP what to model, which cue to use, and whether to practice listening, single words, or phrases. If the child is tired or

frustrated, finish the activity and discuss the plan with the clinician. Do not make a practice score a reward or a condition for ending play.

Sound development in context

The U.S. English review places /l/ in the 4-year acquisition band at its 90% criterion. This population summary does not diagnose an individual child. Assessment considers communication needs, hearing, languages, dialect, and the whole sound system. If you are concerned, ask a licensed SLP for an evaluation rather than waiting for an app milestone.

Details that matter for this target

English varieties differ in the realization of final L. Avoid using written letter rules or insisting every L sound has exactly the same tongue position. A licensed SLP should choose cues for the individual child.

Using SpeechLP alongside the plan

Ask whether the goal is initial, medial, final, or a blend. Keep the chosen context when selecting game words. SpeechLP offers articulation games and target settings. Confirm that the selected game words fit the clinician's plan before beginning. Automatic feedback can disagree with a listener and is not a diagnostic result or proof of clinical improvement. Use the practice report to discuss what happened, including difficult words, with your SLP.

Printable activity sheet

[Download this printable guide](#), or print the word list and activity on separate pages. Leave out the child's name and any medical details. Circle the clinician-selected words and note the chosen position and activity level privately.

Related reading

- [SpeechLP for families](#)
- [AI articulation practice and its limits](#)
- [Find an SLP](#)
- [SpeechLP product facts](#)

Sources

- [Crowe and McLeod \(2020\), Children's English Consonant Acquisition in the United States](#). Acquisition bands describe a pooled 90% criterion, not mandatory individual treatment ages.
- [ASHA Practice Portal: Speech Sound Disorders](#). Individual assessment and linguistic variation.