

Introduction

Teaching a child to correctly pronounce the vocalic /r/ sound can be both challenging and rewarding.

Why is it challenging?

- The /r/ phoneme is a later developing sound, usually acquired by the age of 6 years.
- The child's oral motor skills need to be fully developed to produce the /r/ sound. The child needs to be able to simultaneously position the jaw, lips, and different parts of the tongue. Slight placement errors significantly alter the accuracy of the /r/ production.
- There are multiple ways to correctly produce /r/, and none of them are easy to see for imitation.
- It is difficult for a child to feel his tongue shape and position while saying "er."
- The tongue position for /r/ varies depending on the phonetic context, especially for the post-vocalic /r/ sounds.

What is the reward? The /r/ sound is one of the most frequently used sounds in English, and it is the only consonant that significantly alters the sound of the preceding vowels. Remediating the /r/ sound will significantly increase the intelligibility of the child's speech.

The purpose of *Vocalic R To Go* is to give speech-language pathologists a comprehensive, systematic program to successfully remediate the vocalic /r/ sounds. The program includes:

- Deep testing of articulation and oral motor skills
- Auditory stimulation exercises
- Elicitation techniques
- Seven vocalic /r/ contexts: stressed "er," unstressed "er," "ar," "air," "ear," "ire," and "or"
- Challenging "rI" contexts
- Lots of practice for each context and level
- Activities that zero in on specific levels (isolation and syllables as well as initial, final, and medial positions in words, phrases, and sentences)
- Fun-filled carryover activities, puzzles, jokes, and games rich with vocalic /r/ words
- Worksheets at all levels that can be used both in therapy and as home practice

Student-friendly vocabulary is targeted whenever possible throughout the book. Occasionally, in order to provide sufficient practice for each vocalic /r/ in each word position, less common words are included. Use these words to introduce new vocabulary or omit the words as appropriate for your students. Similarly, some open-compound words are included for sufficient word-level practice (e.g., *soccer ball* for medial "er") since the child coarticulates a medial unstressed "er" in these instances.

I hope that you find these materials easy-to-use, effective, and motivating for your students.

Beverly