



The 'K' Sound

Welcome to "k" practice! We believe that parents and caregivers are a child's best teacher and there are many things that you can do at home to improve your child's communication skills.

Developmental Norms:

Most¹ children produce the 'k' sound correctly by 3 years of age in initial, medial, and final position of words.

1: Average age of acquisition using 90-100% criteria - McLeod S. & Crowe K. (2018). Children's consonant acquisition in 27 languages: A cross linguistic review. *American journal of speech language pathology*. 27. 1546-1571.

Position:

- *Initial position of words* (the sound occurs at the beginning of the word): **cat**, **key**, **cabin**, **koala**
- *Medial position of words* (the sound occurs in the middle of the word): **monkey**, **looking**, **pecking**
- *Final position of words* (the sound occurs at the end of the word): **back**, **take**, **peek**

How to make the “k” sound:

- Mouth is open, the tongue is up and high in the back and down and low in the front behind the bottom teeth.
- The sound comes from the throat and is exploded outward.
- The voice is turned off.

[Click to watch on YouTube: How to Teach K and G Sounds](#)

How to provide feedback for /k/:

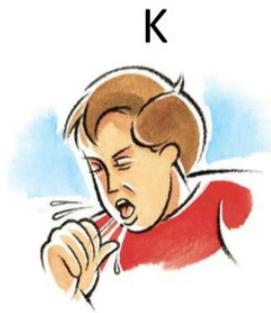
BE SPECIFIC!



When the sound was produced correctly: "That was a great 'k' sound!" OR "I really heard your 'k' sound when you said 'kangaroo.' Great job!"

When the sound was produced incorrectly: "Oops! You forgot the 'k' sound," OR "That sound like you said 'tandy' instead of 'candy.' Remember to use your 'k' sound."

You can give the sound a fun name. For example, the 'k' sound could be called the "coughing sound" or the "kangaroo sound." Feel free to get creative and find a name for the sound that works best for your child!



The Coughing Sound

How often should I be practicing with my child?

A useful analogy is to compare working on speech sounds to playing a video game. In many video games, there are different levels that need to be completed or mastered in a sequence.

The length of time a child stays on one level varies greatly from child to child, and can be impacted by a number of factors. These factors include:

- The amount of cueing needed to elicit the sound correctly - we call this stimulability. If a child can produce a sound given proper cueing techniques, they are said to be stimutable to produce that sound. Gradually, over time, we can fade the cues so that the child can make the sound by themselves.
- Attention span: A child who is able to focus on practicing his or her speech sound, pay attention to the cues given, and pay attention to their own production is likely to make progress more quickly than a child who might struggle with attention and focus.

If you feel that your child is not making progress as expected, please contact your school speech-language pathologist for more guidance in this area.



How to Master a Level?

For most 'levels', your child will be ready to move on once he or she is able to produce the sound at that level with 80% accuracy. You don't need to keep track of how your child is doing on each task unless you want to. You can simply estimate approximately how well your child is doing. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your school's speech-language pathologist.

Reps: 1 – 2 Activities/Practice sessions per day

Duration: 5 – 15 minutes

Levels:

- Level One: Isolation (e.g., the sound all by itself "k")
- Level Two: Syllable (e.g., "ko")
- Level Three: Word (e.g., "key")
- Level Four: Phrase (e.g., "big kangaroo")
- Level Five: Sentence (e.g., "There are three kittens in the basket")
- Level Six: Conversation (e.g., the sound in everyday conversation)

Why Practice? It's Like Exercise!

Think of practicing speech sounds as similar to exercising or lifting weights. If you start off by learning correct form, exercising every day, and gradually increasing the difficulty or weight, you will be able to make great progress towards your fitness goal! The same goes for working on speech sounds. We start by showing a child how to properly produce the sound. Then, we work with the child on saying the sound on its own (isolation), then in syllables (la, lee, lie, low, Lou). After that, we target the sound at the word level- beginning, end, middle, and in consonant blends. Gradually, we move to producing the sound at the sentence level, and then at the conversational level.





Short But Often!

Researchers have found that shorter but more frequent practice sessions are more effective than longer but less frequent sessions. For this reason, I recommend that you try to sneak in as many short sessions as you can throughout your week. The more you practice, the faster your child will progress. A few 5-minute sessions a day is a great place to start, but you can always do fewer if it doesn't fit into your schedule. Try practicing while driving in the car, while standing in line, or while waiting for a doctor's appointment to get in a few extra repetitions.

Phonological Processes for /k/:

A phonological process is a typical error pattern that young children use to simplify an adult speech sound they are not able to say. In the case of the /k/ sound, the typical error that children exhibit is called velar fronting. The word velar refers to the back of the throat, so children who exhibit velar fronting are using the front of their tongue instead of the back of their tongue to make the /k/ sound. When they use the tip of their tongue instead of the back, they end up substituting /t/ for /k/, so "cookie" is "tootie", "cup" is "tup", "back" is "bat", etc.

Most babies make /k/ correctly when they start to babble and say their first words, so velar fronting is a red flag for an articulation disorder. The earlier parents work with their children to modify their velar fronting, the less likely it is that this error pattern will become habituated and require speech therapy.

Tips for working on velar fronting at home:

Be specific: tell your children that they must use the back of their tongue instead of the tip of their tongue to make the /k/ sound.

Give an example: give your children examples of their errors (e.g. "You said tup when you meant to say cup").

Use a tactile aid: it sometimes helps to have your children hold the tip of their tongue down with their finger, or you can press down on the tip of their tongue while they try to make the /k/ sound. You have to press down firmly to keep it from going up!



The coughing sound: some children benefit from making coughing sounds and other noises made at the back of the throat, such as the "caw – caw – caw" sound that a crow makes, as this may help them to realize what portion of their mouth the /k/ sound is supposed to come from.

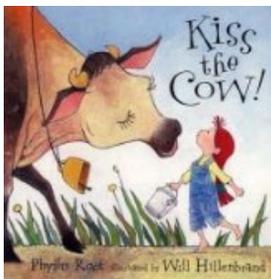
Lean back: have your children lean their head back or lie on their back and let their tongue fall back while trying to make the /k/ sound.

Learning with Games

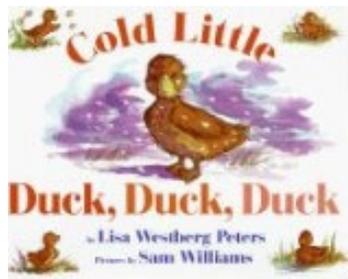
- **Make cakes out of Play Doh!** Use Play Doh to make cakes, cupcakes, or cookies! Other 'k' vocabulary to use while doing this activity: bake, cup, and candle!
- **Race cars!** Drive cars on a toy mat or race them! Other 'k' vocabulary to keep in mind: truck, brake, careful, crash, and corner.
- **Play "Silly Sentences"!** Place 1-3 cards in front of you and make up a silly sentence about the pictures. For example, if you get a picture of "king" and "ice cream", the sentence could be, "The king got ice cream all over his face."
- **Play Candyland!** Play the board game Candy Land! Or, play any favorite board game. Before each turn, each person has to name one or two picture cards with the "k" sound. Some other games that we commonly use during therapy are: Chutes and Ladders, Don't Spill the Beans, Don't Break the Ice, Connect Four, and Kerplunk.

Sound-Loaded Books: K

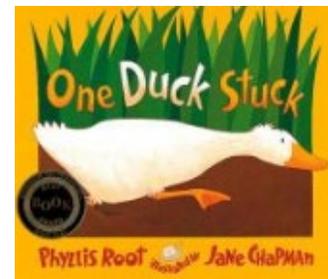
(Click the book to view through Saskatoon Public Library)



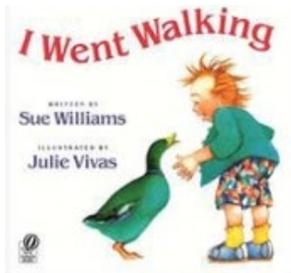
Kiss the Cow



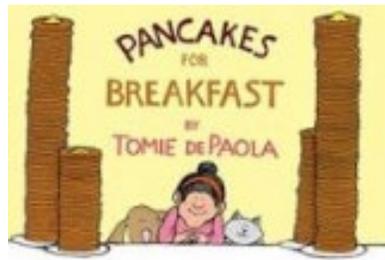
**Cold Little Duck, Duck,
Duck**



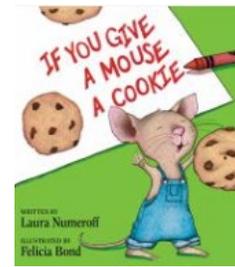
One Duck Stuck



I Went Walking



Pancakes for Breakfast



**If You Give a Mouse a
Cookie**

Helpful Websites

- [Practical Speech Therapy Activities for Home Practice: Mommy Speech Therapy](#)
- [Working Speech and Language into Daily Routines: Speech and Language Kids](#)
- [Fun Family Crafts](#)
- [Printables for Kids: KizClub](#)

Songs Featuring 'K'

- [YouTube: The Cat Came Back](#)
- [YouTube: Yes, I Can! Song](#)
- [YouTube: Who Took The Cookie? Song](#)

K Crafts

- [Cloud craft](#)
- [Cow Headband](#)
- [Racing caterpillars](#)