An Oral Motor Approach to Correcting the Frontal and Lateral Lisp

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Frontal Lisp
- Public School Issues
- What We Know
- The Oral Motor Continuum
- Jaw Instability
- Tongue Instability

Public School Issues
- The frontal lisp is generally considered to have little to no adverse effect.
- Many SLPs are able to get these kids enrolled by looking at more than just the motor pattern.

Lateral Lisp
- Public School Issues
- Jaw Position
- Lip Position
- The False Lateral Lisp

Treatment
- The Stretchy /t/
- Using a Key Sound

The Frontal Lisp
Public School Issues
Public School Issues

- The frontal lisp is generally considered to have little to no adverse effect.
- Many SLPs are able to get these kids enrolled by looking at more than just the motor pattern.
- When the lisp interferes with all six sibilants, enrollment is sometimes possible because it can be considered more severe.

Here’s what we know

- A frontal lisp can occur on one or more of the target phonemes, but the problem usually includes both members of the cognate pairs.
- A frontal lisp on certain phonemes can occur alongside a lateral lisp on other phonemes.
Here's what we know

- A frontal lisp can occur along with interdental tongue placement on the other lingua-alveolars /t/, /d/, /l/ and /n/.
- A frontal lisp on certain phonemes can occur alongside a lateral lisp on other phonemes.
- A frontal lisp can occur with phonological impairment.

The Oral-Motor Continuum

No OM Problems  |  Mild-to-moderate OM Problems  |  Severe OM Problems

Clients with Frontal Lisps

Oral Motor Continuum

- No oral motor problem
- Severe oral motor problem

Oral Motor Continuum

- No oral motor problem
- Severe oral motor problem
- Somewhere in the middle
Jaw Instability

The jaw destabilizes in one of two ways when a frontal lisp occurs:

1. By lowering the jaw down to far
2. By protruding the jaw too far forward

The Frontal Lisp

Jaw Instability

Tongue Instability

Tongue mobility is dependent upon two stabilizing factors:

1. The jaw
2. The tongue

Tongue Instability

Tongue mobility is dependent upon two stabilizing factors:
Tongue Instability

• Recite the alphabet aloud rapidly as if you were speaking in a quiet conversational style.

• Think about the back lateral margins of your tongue as you do so. Where are they?

• Now repeat the same numerical sequence with a classic frontal lisp pattern.

• Pay close attention to the stability zones. Notice what happens.

Types of Lateral Lisps

• Right unilateral lisp
Types of Lateral Lisps

- Right unilateral lisp
- Left unilateral lisp

Types of Lateral Lisps

- Right unilateral lisp
- Left unilateral lisp
- Bilateral lisp
- Omni lisp

Assess direction of airflow

1. Place one end of the straw at the teeth. The end should be at midline, right at the point where air should be exiting the mouth at midline. Tip the straw down slightly to catch the airflow.

Assess direction of airflow

2. Ask the child to produce /s/ in isolation while the straw is held in place. If the air stream is directed correctly down the midline of the tongue, it should amplify as it rushes into the straw. However, if the child is producing a lateral lisp, no air will enter the straw at midline and the sound will not be amplified.
Assess direction of airflow

3. Slowly shift the position of the straw to the left and to the right along the teeth. Listen carefully to determine if air is escaping anywhere along this line. Air will amplify at the point where it escapes between the teeth.

Jaw Position: Types of Lateral Lisps

- A correct sibilant is produced with the jaw functioning at midline.
- If the jaw moves right, the tongue is carried to the right.
- This type of lisp is referred to as a Jaw-Based Unilateral Lisp.

The Lateral Lisp
Jaw Position

The Lateral Lisp
Lip Position
Lip rounding and retracting are affected when a child produces a bilateral or unilateral lisp. In essence, the following patterns are noted:

- Right side retraction
- Left side retraction
- Bilateral lip retraction

Lip retraction is the most visually distracting characteristic of the lateral lisp.

Lip retraction does not cause a lateral lisp. Instead, it is a secondary effect of the lateral lisp.
The Lateral Lisp

The False Lateral Lisp

- This is an error on /s/ and /z/ that masquerades as a lateral lisp, but actually isn’t one.

- This is a common error pattern in children with a repaired cleft palate.

The Stretchy /t/

- Begin treatment for a frontal or lateral lisp with a traditional therapy approach.

- The Stretchy /t/ is a technique that falls into the category of traditional therapy because we are just working with phonemes.
The Stretchy /t/

- It is usually best to start with /s/.
- The Stretchy /t/ method is a process of using the /t/ to shape oral position of the /s/.
- Most kids can produce the /s/ by using /t/ as a starting point.
- If a child has a final /t/ with correct tongue placement, we can use it teach final /ts/ with correct tongue placement.

- Gross-to-fine principle.
- All movements of the whole body develop from gross to fine.
The Stretchy /t/ Method

1. Instruct the child to say /t/ several times so he becomes familiar with the movement pattern. Use a straw to amplify the sound.

2. Ask the child to “blow more air through the /t/ in order to produce a long or “stretchy” /t/.

3. Rehearse the /t/ constantly.

4. Begin to shape the /t/ into /ts/.

5. DO NOT ask the child to produce /ts/.

The Stretchy /t/ Method

Instruct the child to say /t/ several times so he becomes familiar with the movement pattern. Use a straw to amplify the sound.
The Stretchy /t/ Method

4. Begin to shape the /t/ into /ts/.
5. DO NOT ask the child to produce /ts/.
6. A good /ts/ will result if the child focuses on the oral position for /t/.
7. Keep the air channel wide.
8. If not successful, try switching to /ʧ/.

IMPORTANT RULE

The Stretchy /t/ will only work if the child can produce a /t/ correctly.

SUCCESS VS. FAILURE

1. The tongue must be positioned behind the anterior teeth with the posterior lateral margins of the tongue up to the stability zones.
The Stretchy /t/

SUCCESS VS. FAILURE

1. The tongue must be positioned behind the anterior teeth with the posterior lateral margins of the tongue up to the stability zones.
2. The airstream should be midline.

Be aware that the Stretchy /t/ does not work for all kids. Use these guidelines to make decisions about changing directions:

- If your child with either the frontal or lateral lisp CAN produce /ts/ or /ʃ/ correctly by using the Stretchy /t/ approach, he is ready to move on to the Key Sound level.

- If your child CANNOT MAINTAIN a good /t/ or /ʃ/ production at any point, he is not ready to move on to the Key Sound level.
- If he PROTRUDES THE TONGUE during production of /t/, and if he also does so on /d/, /n/, and /l/, then this is a clear indication of a more pervasive oral-motor delay.
Frontal & Lateral Lisp Treatment
Using the Key Sound

The Key Sound Level
- A child with a frontal or lateral lisp who can produce /ts/ successfully using the Stretchy /t/ method has created a Key Sound.
- It should be rehearsed constantly!

This Key Sound becomes the foundation for the rest of the work we do, starting with a CC combination rather than a singleton.

The Key Sound Level
- Moving to Key Syllables.
- A VCC syllable shape is chosen because
  - /ts/ does not occur in the initial position of syllables or words in English.
  - Children naturally learn /s/ this way. As the child to practice /ts/ after each vowel in the quadrilateral.
The Key Sound Level

What if the /ts/ is not perfect?
The VCC syllable can be rehearsed even if the child can only produce the Stretchy /t/ and cannot produce a real /ts/.

The Key Sound Level

Key Sounds in Words
- The best way to begin work on words is to use five words that mirror the VCC syllable patterns.
- This keeps the oral movement pattern consistent and very simple.
- eight, its, oats, outs, eats

The Key Sound Level

Key Sounds in Phrases and Sentences
- After words, we move to phrases and sentences that contain the Key Words:
- Use phrases first and then move to sentences.

Examples of Key Phrases
- Five eights
- It’s okay
- Rotten oats
- Three Outs
- Good Eats.

The Key Sound Level

Key Sounds in Phrases and Sentences
- The sentences that you use need to be age appropriate and grammatically correct.
- I put the eights in the bucket.
- I think it’s that one.
- He ate oats out of the bucket.
- Two more outs and the game will be over.
- He eats at noon every day.

The Key Sound Level

Key Sounds in Paragraphs
- They contain the motor patterns of the same simple Key Words, but they are void of other sibilants. Here is an example with /ts/.
- My family eats a lot on the Fourth of July. My dad eats a hotdog and a hamburger. My mom eats a baked potato. David eats a lot of watermelon and Tammy eats a huge bowl of cobbler.
Moving Beyond Key Sounds and Words

- Begin to use words constructed with a slightly more difficult sequence of phonemes.

- Begin with the CVCC and CCVCC syllable structures in words.

- Add words to your list that have a variety of vowels.

Examples of words with medial /ts/
- Betsy
- Outside
- Pretzel

Medial position /ts/ practice
- Allow the child to pause before and after the /ts/.
- For example, pronounce the word Betsy as “Be-(pause)-ts-(pause)-y.”
- This gives him time to think through the required movements.

Examples of phrases with medial /ts/
- I know Betsy.
- Go outside.
- A big pretzel
**The Key Sound Level**

*Examples of sentences with medial /ts/*

- Betsy came through the door.
- I played outside and play with the dog.
- The pretzel is very good.

**Using /ts/ across words**

- Bat soap
- Hot soup
- Kite sink
- Coat sand
- Boot sail
- Right side
- Light saw

**Nonstandard initial position /ts/ practice**

- Kids' lack of skill in producing an initial /s/ should not stop us from moving forward in therapy.
- We do so by practicing words with a ts/s/ substitution.

**Examples of Words**

- 'sad
- 'sail
- 'sand
- 'soap
- 'sink

**Nonstandard initial position /ts/ practice**

- Tell child to pretend that the words have the /t/ in the front of them.
- I will write a little “t” in the front of the “s.”
- Any word that begins with /s/ can be used as long as there is no other /s/ sound in the word.
- Avoid clusters at first.

**Examples of Phrases – 1st word in phrase**

- 'sad man
- 'sail home
- 'sand man
- 'soap dish
- 'sink low
The Key Sound Level

Nonstandard initial position /ts/ practice
- Examples of Phrases – 2nd word in phrase
  - I’m ‘sad
  - my ‘sail
  - wet ‘sand
  - blue ‘soap
  - dirty ‘sink

The Key Sound Level

Nonstandard initial position /ts/ practice
- Examples of Sentences
  - I’m ‘sad about it.
  - He will ‘sail home.
  - The ‘sand is wet.
  - Use the bar of ‘soap.
  - The ‘sink is full of water.

The Key Sound Level

Increasing Skills
- Memory Game
  - SLP: ‘soap
  - Child: ‘soap, ‘sink
  - SLP: ‘soap, ‘sink, ‘sand
  - Child: ‘soap, ‘sink, ‘sand, ‘sail

The Key Sound Level

The Final Step
- Eliminate the preceding /t/.
  - Say /ts/ and then hold the /s/ for several seconds, resulting is /tssssss/.
  - Then tell child to hold that position and inhale and exhale through the opening without moving his tongue out of position.
The Key Sound Level

SUCCESS
- The Stretchy /t/ and Key Sound will be all the therapy that most kids will need.
- These two methods together completely train the oral mechanism to produce /s/ correctly.
- Most kids begin to generalize to other sibilants.

SUCCESS
- The Stretchy /t/ and Key Sound will be all the therapy that most kids will need.

Closing Thought

"Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn’t matter…
Going to bed at night saying we’ve done something wonderful…
That’s what matters."

Steve Jobs