



How to Greet Others

Basic greetings are important skills for kids to master. Help your child understand *why* the greeting is important and *how it makes the recipient feel*.

What You Could Do	What You Could Say
● Practice with two puppets; keep it non-threatening by making it about the toys and not yet about your child. ● Practice greeting your child in silly ways-use a pouty face and mumble-and ask them how they felt. Then give them a proper greeting and reflect on that. Switch and give your child a chance to practice. ● Role-play - Pretend with your child that they're the birthday child hosting a birthday party. ○ Now, you've come to the party but you just simply enter the room and do not say "Hello" to your child. Ask your child how that made them feel. Did they feel ignored? Did they feel disliked? ○ Let your child know, "If I didn't say 'Hello' to you, you might not even have known that I was in the room, and then we wouldn't have been able to play together!"	● "People appreciate it when you look at them and say 'Hello' or 'Goodbye' in a friendly and polite way. It shows them that you respect them." ● "When you say 'Hello' to your friend, it tells them 'I see you!' and that makes their heart happy." ● "It's important to say 'Goodbye' so that your friend knows you've left. Without checking in to say 'Goodbye' your friend doesn't know if you're safe."

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How to Make Eye Contact

While a simple concept, eye contact can be difficult for young children.

What You Could Do	What You Could Say
• Practice by doing the opposite. Have your child say 'Hello' to you while you look away and mutter a reply. Ask your child how it felt and then do it again, this time making eye contact with your child. Talk about the difference and then let your child practice on you. • Put a sticker between your eyes and let your child practice looking there. For some children, direct eye contact is very difficult. Allowing a child to look between the eyes or at eyebrows may be easier. Nighttime is a great time to practice-when tucking your child in - have a quick staring contest!	• "When we look at people in the eyes, it shows them that we are interested in them." • "When we greet someone, ask them a question, or answer a question, we look them in the eyes until we or they are finished talking." • Try the simple rhyme, "Look in my eyes and reply." • When your child asks you for something (and hasn't done so with eye contact), say, "Let's try that again. This time, please look in my eyes when you ask me." Make sure you do the same when you ask your child for something.

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How to Join an Activity

Many children have the experience of wanting to join an existing game or group of children and do not know how to do so.

What You Could Do	What You Could Say
● Example: If your child is at the playground and seems unsure of how to play with other children. You could: ○ Remind your child that they can ask, “What are you playing?” if they want to join a group of friends. Then offer to walk over and help your child join in. ○ Some children may require more scaffolding to engage in a group. You could, hold your child’s hand, walk over to a group of kids, and ask them (model) “What are you playing?” and help them start to play together. ● Practice with puppets - engage in play and have your child approach and practice asking, “What are you playing?” or “That looks fun. What are you doing?” ● Role-play - Tell your child <u>“You can’t play”</u> and watch their reaction. Coach them to reply, “You can’t say ‘You can’t play’ because it’s not kind to exclude people.” ○ Sometimes a child will exert power, but reminding them that exclusion is not a <u>characteristic of a ‘good’ friend</u>, or is not allowed, especially at school, can help. ● Empower your child with an <u>“I” message</u> to assert their feelings when they’re excluded.	● Teach your child to ask, “What are you playing?” instead of “Can I play?” ○ Teach your child to ask for information, not permission, so they can decide if they want to join. ○ Engaging in a way that doesn’t allow another child to say “No” will up your child’s chances of being included in play. ● Example <u>“I” message</u>: “I feel so sad when you play ‘family’ without me. Please include me. I can be the sister in the family.” ● But let your child know that sometimes, friends may have a special play date or time together, and that sometimes, they simply won’t be able to play.

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