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Hellos and Goodbyes – Teaching Children to Use Greetings

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Why Are Greetings Important?

When someone says “hello” to you, you probably don’t hesitate to respond with a greeting of your own. “Hello” and “goodbye” are more than polite words. These greetings are one of the basic functions of communication. These words help us connect with other people. When we say “hello” to another person, it opens the door for communication. Saying “goodbye” signals that the conversation is at an end for the time being. A friendly goodbye sets the stage for having another conversation with the other person the next time you meet.



Why Teach Greetings?

Children may find it difficult to use greetings. Some children with autism, children with delayed language skills, and even children who are typically-developing may have difficulty saying “hello” and “goodbye” to other people. Using greetings is an important part in the process of interacting with others to form and maintain friendships.

Tips to Encourage Children to Use Greetings

In order to become better at using greetings, children who have difficulty with this social skill should *practice*. Here are some tips you can use to help your children learn how to use greetings:

- **Teach Greetings** – Teach your children that when they meet someone, they should tell that person “Hello.” When they leave someone, they should say “Goodbye.” Talk to them about the various ways to say “hello” and “goodbye” (for example, “Hi.” “Hey.” “See you later.” and “Bye.”).
- **Be an Example** – Model the correct way to use greetings for your children. Greet people you know when you meet them and use appropriate parting comments when you leave.

- **Pretend Play** – Create a pretend situation where you and your children practice using greetings during play. For example, pretend you are a customer in your children’s store or pretend you are talking on the phone with your children.
- **Use Visual Supports** – Use pictures that represent “hello” and “goodbye” to help cue, or remind, your children of the greetings they are to use in different situations. Have one drawing or photo signifying “hello,” and have another drawing or photo that represents “goodbye.”
- **Read a Book** – Read books with your children that deal with the subject of using greetings, such as *Say Hello* by Jack & Michael Foreman, *Hello! Good-bye!* by Aliko, or *Oh No! Time to Go! A Book of Goodbyes* by Rebecca Doughty.
- **Sing a Song** – Use music as a great motivator to help your children learn social skills. There are many songs available that talk about using greetings. One example is *People Like it When I Say Hi* by Cathy Bollinger.



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Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit www.superduperinc.com and type in the item name or number in our search engine. Click the links below to see the product description.

Social Skills Chipper Chat®
[Item #CC-88](#)

204 Fold & Say® Social Skills
[Item #BK-293](#)

Communicate™ Junior Game
[Item #TPX-4401](#)

Go-To Guide for Social Skills
[Item #TPX-29401](#)

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