Responsive Classroom Morning Meeting is a powerful way to create a classroom climate of respectful, engaged learning and the greeting component sets the tone by helping all students feel noticed and appreciated at the very start of the meeting. But how do you help ELL students participate fully in greeting? Here are a few ideas:

- Whenever an ELL student joins your class, whether at the start of the year or part way along, have your class use simple greetings that require only a word—or no words at all. You could begin with just a wave and a smile.
- After a few days, if your ELL student seems comfortable, add simple words or phrases such as “Hi,” “Hello,” and “Good morning.”
- Give the ELL student a chance to practice the greeting with a partner or small group first.
- Do a bit of research to find out if people have a different way of greeting in your ELL student’s home culture. For example, as a sign of respect, your student may have learned at home to avoid eye contact, especially with adults. If that’s the case, you could teach the class to turn their bodies toward the person they’re greeting without requiring direct eye contact. Greeting will still help everyone feel that they’re welcomed and respected members of the classroom community.
- Have all students learn to greet each other in the home languages of the ELL students. The ELL students may feel more welcomed, and the native English speakers may gain some insight into the challenges of functioning in a new language.
- Try greeting with songs or chants. They may help ELL students become comfortable with new language forms, since phrases that are hard to say fluently can be easier to manage when chanted or sung. (Be sure to display the words.) Here’s a simple but fun example for K–2 students:

**Friends in Our Class**

Children snap their fingers and sing to the tune of “The Addams Family” theme song—or they can simply chant rhythmically

Friends in our class [snap snap]
Friends in our class [snap snap]
Friends in our class, friends in our class
Friends in our class [snap, snap]

There’s [Robert] and there’s [Lia],
There’s [Wen] and there’s [Ian],
There’s [Tyler] and there’s [Lebron],
We’re here to learn and play!
As the class sings or chants together, insert the names of the first six children in order around the circle. Repeat the refrain and then continue around the circle, adding six more names. Continue until all students have been named. As everyone becomes comfortable with the greeting, you may add a friendly gesture (a bow or a wave) for students to do as they hear their names.